



Marine Operations Manual – Section 08

Leisure Zone Management Policy

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1. Introduction:

The Port of Dover is a busy area for leisure/recreational activities on the water including swimming, sailing, Kayaking, power boating, windsurfing and rowing. These activities predominately take place in two distinct areas, namely the Western Docks Marina complex and the Outer Harbour Recreational Area, which encompasses the seafront and associated sections of beach.

In line with the principles of the Port Marine Safety Code, the Port of Dover has recognised and taken a proactive approach to the risk management of such leisure activities. Having consulted with appropriate stakeholders and utilising the Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations, the Port has developed a Leisure Zone Management Policy which should enable all users to safely enjoy their particular activity.

Responsibility for monitoring the effective management of the recreational areas rests with the Harbour Master and his deputies (as defined in Port of Dover Marine Safety Code, Section 01 – Compliance Plan – Section 6.1, d), who will as necessary and through stakeholder meetings carry out regular consultations to review the policy and reinforce compliance when required.

Whilst the Port has responsibility under the Port Marine Safety Code to ensure that marine activities are effectively managed to keep risks as low as reasonably practicable. It should be noted that all those who use the Harbour, whether in charge of a vessel or swimming, also have an important part to play to ensure a safe environment for all. (See Section 7 – General Safety Advice for Leisure Users other than Swimmers and Section 8 – General Safety Advice for Swimmers).

2. Western Docks Marina Complex:

Dover Marina provides extensive facilities and specialist management for the recreational navigation user. The navigation of all craft to and from the Marina confines are regulated by two centres, in the first instance by 'Dover Port Control VTS' on VHF Channel 74, controlling the movements in the Port's main navigational fairways and then by 'Dover Marina' on VHF Channel 80, once within the Tidal Harbour and enclosed dock areas.

General navigational directions are issued and promulgated to local yacht clubs, yachting publications, Nautical Almanacs and also available on the Port of Dover website e.g. speed limits are in place for the Harbour (8kts) and Marina (4kts) and details of safe water marks published. Detailed information concerning the use of the Harbour by leisure craft is published in the Marina Guide issued to all berth holders.

3. The Outer Harbour Recreational Area:

The Outer Harbour Recreational Area is a large but relatively shallow part of the Harbour extending seaward from the beaches to the edge of the main shipping fairway crossing the Harbour and the Eastern Docks Exclusion Zone; it is an area that encompasses all of the regular seafront beach based leisure activities.

There are numerous types of leisure activities that take place within this area, such as Dinghy Sailing, Sail Boarding, Stand-up Paddle Boarding, limited Yachting, Power Boating, Rowing, Kayaking and Swimming. High speed leisure activities involving the use of power craft at high speed such as Power Boats, Jet Skis or Kite Surfing are not permitted within the Harbour, unless manoeuvring at the permitted speed limits. It should be noted that recreational Scuba Diving is also not permitted in the Harbour.

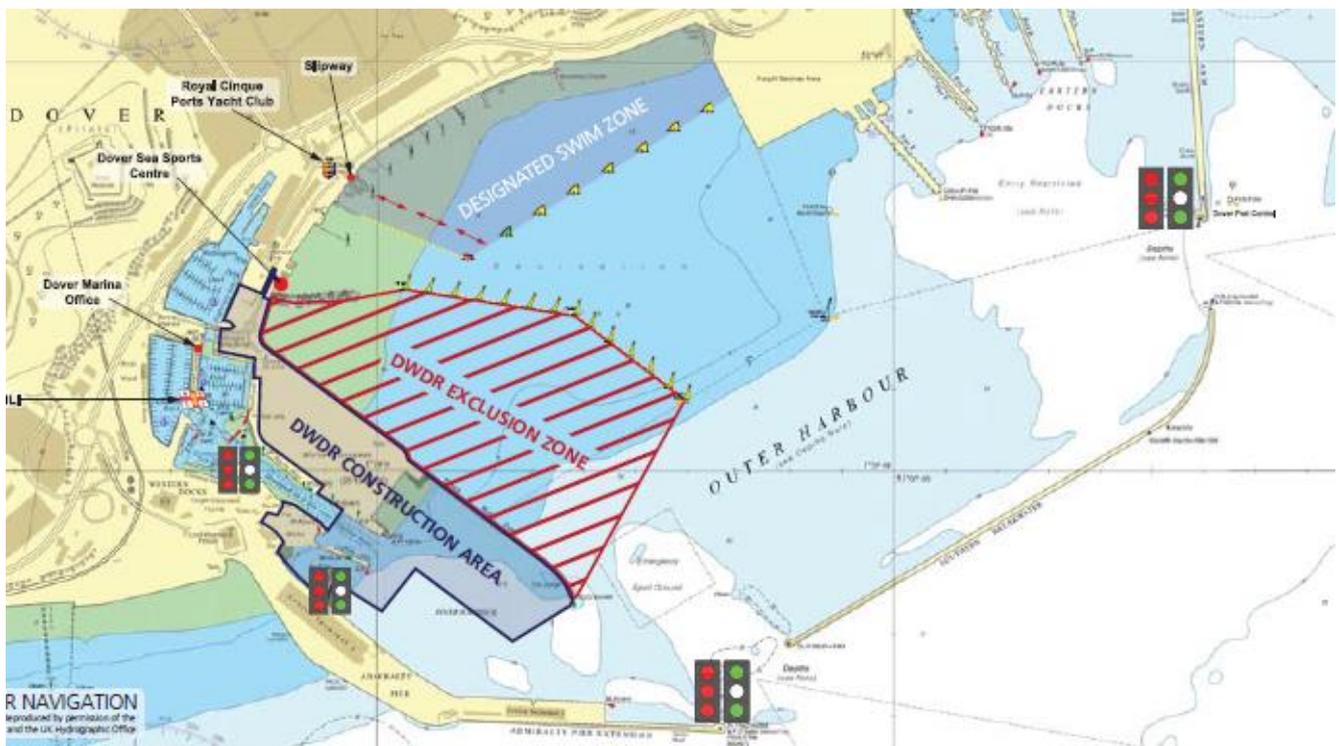
Fishing is not permitted from the beach or anywhere within the Outer Harbour Recreational Area, due to its incompatibility with Swimmers and small watercraft. The Admiralty Pier is the only designated area for fishing in the Port and this activity is managed by the Dover Sea Angling Association.

Whilst all of these activities take place within a common area, the prime strategy for the effective safety management is one that so far as reasonably practicable separates or delineates conflicting activities.

During the summer months from 1st April until 31st October a line of yellow pellet buoys will be laid running North East/South West as marked on the chartlet below, to separate the designated swimming area from other users. The designated swimming area is to the North West/ beach side of the pellet buoys. Dinghies, Yachts, Power Boats, Personal Water Craft's (PWC's), Sail Boards, Stand-up Paddle Boards, Rowing Boats or Kayaks should only cross into the bathing area to the North West of the line of buoys to access the slipway by means of the 'gate' defined by the green and red lateral buoys. Before launching or returning to the public slipway through the designated Swimmers Area, all craft should make contact with Dover Port Control VTS on VHF Channel 74 for permission.

A further line of yellow pellet buoys has been laid to the East of the Prince of Wales Pier, to mark the Dover Western Docks Revival (DWDR) works exclusion zone. These pellet buoys will remain in place all year round until the DWDR project has been completed. The location of the buoys may be altered from time to time as required to facilitate construction works and maintain a safe exclusion zone. All stakeholders will be advised in advance of any changes to the location of yellow pellet buoys and exclusion zone. All leisure craft and Swimmers are to remain strictly clear of this area, due to the potential hazards involved with the DWDR construction works.

There is a designated area between the DWDR exclusion zone and the designated Swimmers Area allocated to Dover Sea Sports Centre only. This is to allow the Sea Sports Centre and associated clubs to have direct access to the beach for their Sailing Dinghies, PWC's, Kayaks, Stand-up Paddle Boards, Sail Boards and Rowing Boats without compromising the safety of other leisure users. This will also enable the Sea Sports Centre to deliver starter training sessions from the beach as well as safely monitor their training activities afloat.



4. General Public Access and Use:

The public have direct access to all the beaches from the promenade and a public slipway for the launching of small craft on trailers is provided at a single location. Prominent information signs are displayed on the promenade in the vicinity of the slipway and at the most populous access routes to the town beaches. These notices contain simple guidance as to the conditions of use of the Recreational Area and give specific advice with regard to the 'multi-use' nature of this part of the Harbour, detailing specific buoyed areas designated for each activity and the access channel through recreational area for boats launched from the slipway. Further navigational information is supplied for those wishing to proceed beyond the recreational area.

Similarly in areas where specific dangers are known to exist, appropriate warning or prohibition signs are displayed, e.g. 'No Diving' where the water is too shallow or where the seabed is rocky. Signs are also placed at strategic locations warning bathers of the possibility of large waves caused by ferry movements. Contact numbers are provided in case of emergency.

Supervision of the recreational area is the responsibility of the Port of Dover Police and Harbour Patrol Launch. Patrols are conducted as required throughout the day dependent on activity at any particular time, but especially so in the main swimming season (April – Oct).

In addition to this direct management and monitoring policy, Port Control maintain a visual watch on small craft navigating within the area, as does the Dover Sea Sports Centre, who have the ability to report directly to Port Control when any incident does occur. When it is necessary to warn or advise of anything that may temporarily affect the use of the recreational area, additional signs are displayed along the promenade and if considered appropriate formal notices can be placed in the local press and Local Notice to Mariners issued.

5. Dover Sea Sports Centre (DSSC):

The leisure operations for Dover Sea Sports, Dover Sea Safari, Dover Rowing Club and Dover Lifeguard Club, are based in a single building known as the DSSC, with direct communication and facilities also available for the Channel Swimming Associations.

The DSSC are tenants of the Port of Dover site and are therefore subject to the terms and conditions of the Port's 'Access and Use Guide'. The purpose of this guide is to draw attention to the key issues to be considered when using Port premises, including the recreational area of the Harbour as part of the lease arrangements.

In furtherance of this aim, Port of Dover sets its own standards and procedures to apply specifically to the use of its land including the application of health and safety regulations and actions to be followed in the event of an incident. The Port of Dover aims to minimise and control any risks so that the Harbour remains a safe place for all who use and visit it.

It is therefore now possible to route the water safety management strategy for virtually all of the organised leisure activity in the leisure zone area through this single facility for these formally independent organisations.

The agreed water safety management procedures relate specifically to the beach area that falls within the footprint of the building and boat storage area, down to the waterfront and include the Recreational Area within the Harbour. They are provided to ensure clubs and organisations operating from the Sea Sports Centre are aware of the safety issues surrounding their sport or activity and the impact of the activity on the general public.

DSSC and the partner organisations have a responsibility to ensure the safety of their members and participants at all times and to consider and minimise any risks that may be presented to other users of the beach and the

water. DSSC and partner organisations do not have any responsibility for the actions of the general public or any other user of the Harbour or beach area. Users of the Sea Sports Centre however may from time to time offer advice to recreational Harbour users should they be deemed to be putting themselves or others in danger.

The agreement between leisure organisations is for Sail to give way to Rowers and Swimmers, Rowers give way to Swimmers and Power Boats give way to all.

6. Incident/Accident Reporting:

An incident afloat where assistance is required must be reported to Dover Port Control. It is also a requirement that Port Safety is notified in the event of any reportable incident or accident, if in doubt please seek clarification direct from Port Safety (01304 240400). It is recognised that DSSC, RCPYC, individual clubs and other organisations will have their own reporting procedures.

7. General Safety Advice for Leisure Users other than Swimmers:

The person in charge of a vessel is responsible for its safety and must at all times comply with the International Collision Regulations, the General Directions for the Port, Local Notice to Mariners and any Special Direction the Harbour Master may issue. It is the responsibility of those in charge of a vessel to familiarise themselves with these regulations and non compliance may result in prosecution.

Prior to going afloat, the person in charge of the vessel should check the current weather forecast and determine whether sea conditions will be suitable for the period they intend to be afloat. They should be familiar with the charted depth of water and hazards within the area they intend to operate.

Particular care must be taken when proceeding from or returning to the public slipway on the beach, ensuring they remain within the designated approach channel marked by the red and green lateral buoys, maintaining a sharp lookout for Swimmers crossing the channel, proceed at a maximum speed of 4 Knots or less and communicate with Dover Port Control VTS on VHF Channel 74 before launching or returning to the public slipway.

It is essential that lifejackets and or buoyancy aids are maintained as per manufacturer's instructions and worn at all times. It is advisable to carry means of obtaining assistance if required in emergency, such as flares, smoke floats and VHF Radio.

Please note that the speed limit in the Outer Harbour is 8 Knots, in the Tidal Basin approaches to the Marina it is 4 Knots and the approach to and from the public slipway through the designated swimming area it is 4 Knots.

8. General Safety Advice for Swimmers:

Dover Harbour has become a favourite open water training area for Swimmers preparing to cross the Channel. It is also popular with the recreational bathers.

The Harbour offers some degree of shelter and, in the Port's opinion, its beach is considerably safer than many locations along the UK coastline, with lifeboats and Harbour Patrol Launches regularly operating in the vicinity. In addition, the Port of Dover has a designated swimming area to ensure that interaction between bathers and watercraft is kept to a minimum.

However, the beach does not have a lifeguard service. In common with other beaches in Britain, Swimmers enter the sea at their own risk.



Swimmers and Bathers should:

- Never dive or jump into water of an unknown depth.
- Never dive or jump from any pier or structure.
- Never swim near moving boats, boats running their engines or boats which may depart their moorings.
- Never swim outside the designated swimming area.
- Be aware of strong tides and currents which run along the beach, and that the beach shelves steeply into the water.
- Avoid swimming alone.
- Always swim within their limitations.
- Always tell someone ashore where they are swimming and when they expect to return to the shore. Make sure the person ashore knows what to do if the swimmer encounters trouble.
- Consider wearing a high visibility swim cap and using a high visibility buoy to identify their position.
- Be aware that wash from ships can result in a sudden change of sea surface conditions.
- Never swim near manmade structures. These may have hidden hazards or generate unpredictable currents.
- Keep a lookout for boats and leisure craft crossing the designated swimming area between the slipway and the red and green lateral buoys.
- Be mindful of the weather – poor visibility, prolonged exposure to heat or cold, and strong winds could put Swimmers at risk.
- Avoid the use of inflatable beach dinghies, lilos etc – these are susceptible to offshore winds.
- Never leave young children unsupervised.
- Always seek medical attention when having breathed water into their lungs, even if they appear to have recovered.
- Never swim while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or after consuming a meal.
- Be aware that some aquatic life around the UK coast (jellyfish, weaverfish etc) can sting.
- Wear appropriate footwear on Dover's shingle beach.
- Never swim after dark – Swimmers may not be spotted if they get into difficulty.
- Take advice from the Port of Dover, RNLI, established Harbour Users, or beach front signage if there are aspects of sea conditions or Port operations that lead to uncertainty.

In addition, long distance / Channel Swimmers should:

- Carry out a risk assessment.
- Check tides and currents.

- Have a spotter ashore capable of raising the alarm and competent in recognising the symptoms of cold / hypothermic casualties and administering first aid.

The above list is not exhaustive, for further information visit:-

The Royal Life Saving Society www.rlss.org.uk

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution <http://rnli.org/safety/respect-the-water/Pages/Safety.aspx>

The Channel Swimming Association <http://www.channelswimmingassociation.com>



If you see someone in trouble, dial 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard. If you have a VHF radio, call Dover Port Control on VHF Ch74.

Dover Port Control is manned 24/7 and will be able to co-ordinate a response to any emergency you may have. Dover Port Control can also be contacted either 01304 206063.

9. Event Planning:

Any recreational event which represents a departure from what is recognised as regular or routine activities within the Harbour should not take place until permission from the Harbour Master has been sought and granted.

Those intending to hold a recreational event for which any form of risk assessment will be required should be encouraged to consult the Harbour Master at the earliest opportunity. Formal approval to such events can then be made subject to a proper risk assessment conducted by the event organiser. Where an event occurs regularly, the scope of subsequent risk assessments may be adjusted accordingly.

In approving any event, the Harbour Master needs to be satisfied that any risk to the general public, the safety of navigation, or other Port users has been effectively mitigated. The Harbour Master also needs to ensure that the event organiser has consulted with, and has met the requirements of, the Police, the MCA (Coastguard), the RNLI, local emergency services, and the local authority where appropriate. Also, if applicable the event should be conducted in accordance with the guidance provided by, and with the approval of, the national bodies representing the types, or classes of craft participating in the event.

Any requirement for additional Harbour Authority resources be they additional navigational marks, craft to patrol, control, or escort the event, or any emergency or SAR response resources, would normally be at the expense of the event organiser. The same would normally apply to any public safety or emergency provision considered necessary by the Police or other emergency services.