



Safety Advice

Although the Port has undergone several new developments in recent years and the commercial shipping levels have reached record-breaking figures, an increasing number of leisure users happily co-exist with the commercial traffic. In fact the majority of the 22 miles for which we are responsible, is devoted entirely to recreational use.

It is therefore important that you clearly understand the constraints under which large vessels operate. It is also important that those in working vessels have consideration for the sport and pleasure user and we recognise that safe enjoyment of the waterway is becoming increasingly dependent on all water users awareness of other peoples activities and showing consideration towards them. Therefore, in pursuit of a safe navigational environment, Milford Haven Port Authority is committed to informing and educating both recreational and commercial users and requires all users to operate responsibly to ensure their own safety and that of others.

Some facts you should keep in mind:

1. The number of commercial and recreational vessels operating in the Milford Haven Waterway is increasing. It is essential that close quarter situations are avoided.
2. All vessels in the haven are required to monitor VHF Channel 12.
3. Large commercial vessels may, at times make passage at higher speeds than expected to maintain proper control and steerage.
4. At 6 knots, a vessel travels 1 nautical mile in 10 minutes; at 15 knots it takes only 4 minutes.
5. Despite some of the deepest recorded depths for a natural harbour, many of the deep draught commercial vessels can only navigate safely through the port within the maintained navigation channels. Confined as they are such vessels may not be able to easily avoid small craft within the navigable channels – it is up to you to stay clear.
6. A large vessel that is slowing down does not steer as well; it needs the propeller action on the rudder to respond. When the vessels engines are put “full astern” its manoeuvrability will be affected. Remember that it takes time and distance for a large vessel to stop.

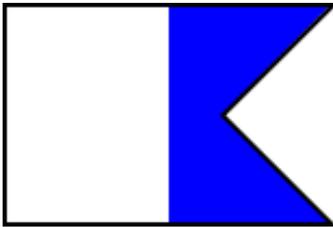
7. There are numerous other small vessels operating within waterway. Watch out for pilot boats, ferry, tugs, workboats, barges, fishing vessels and other recreational vessels (especially at night).
8. All users of the waterway should be aware of and abide by Port Byelaws and the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea (ColRegs).

What can you do?

1. **Avoid sailing in the commercial ship channels when you can**, especially in poor visibility and when deep draft vessels are manoeuvring. If you cannot sail outside the channel Obey Rule 9 of the ColRegs for conduct in narrow channels by keeping as near to the outer limit of the channel which lies on the starboard side (right) of your vessel as is safe and practicable, crossing only when it will not impede the passage of a large vessel confined to the channel by draught.
2. **Do not underestimate the speed of ships.** Monitor the approach of vessels and remain clear when required. If your boat is slow, allow sufficient time to take effective evasive action or cross channels in the vicinity of large ships.
3. **Be visible.** At night make sure your navigation lights can be seen. If you see the navigation lights of a vessel and you think you have not been seen, get out of the way. Use torches, search lights or a spotlight on sails or prominent structures on your vessel. Carry a radar reflector high on your boat. Remember, from the bridge of a large vessel, the captain or pilot may lose sight of you more than a third of a mile ahead. *If you can't see the bridge they can't see you!*
4. **Be alert.** Keep a good look out so you are aware what is going on around you. *Don't forget to look behind you!*
5. **Keep watch at night.** Even on a clear night you may have difficulty seeing vessels approaching or objects in the water.
6. **Watch the ship's lights.** If you see both sidelights (red and Green), you are dead ahead – MOVE CLEAR. Be aware that ships alter course on passage through the Waterway. You must be sure of your position and be aware of other vessels operating around you.
7. **Know sound signals.** Vessels often use sound or light signals to communicate. If you hear 5 short blasts, the master or pilot of a vessel is trying to tell another vessel that they are unsure of its intentions. The master may be concerned about how close it is, or concerned with the course and speed another vessel is following. Check and see if it is for you - and if it is make your intentions clear and **GIVE WAY**. If in any doubt about who a

vessel is signalling at the very least make your intentions obvious, allow sufficient sea room for the vessel to pass. The Meaning of other sound signals regularly used on the waterway can be found on the Flags and Sound signals page.

- 8. Know flag signals and shapes.** Vessels also use flags and shapes to communicate. A common flag seen in the waterway is the Code Flag 'A'. It indicates that divers are in the water. Divers may also deploy inflatable surface marker buoys which come in different shapes and styles. You should stay clear of any vessel flying this flag and keep a good lookout for surface marker buoys as divers may be some distance from the vessel. For other more signals visit the Flags and Sound Signals and Lights and Shapes pages.



Code Flag 'A'



Surface Marker Buoy

- 9. Keep a VHF Radio tuned to channel 12,** the Port working channel, and listen for traffic information from Port Control; Call Sign Milford Haven Port Control.
- 10. Be considerate to other users,** your activity, speed, wake, course and other actions may cause inconvenience danger or injury to others
- 11. Remember it doesn't stop when you're ashore.** When you go ashore be it to enjoy the beach and local facilities or when you head home at the end of the day. Make sure your vessel is secured so that it cannot drift off particularly if you intend to leave the vessel afloat for some time. Also at the end of your day afloat make sure those ashore and the coastguard are aware of your safe return.
- 12. Abide by activity zoning schemes and follow the rules.** At many ports, harbours and beaches around the country local byelaws, zoning schemes and other restrictions apply which are enforceable through the courts. It is important you check before if any apply before going afloat as you might find yourself being stopped by patrol staff.