

WHITSTABLE HARBOUR

PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE

SAFETY MANAGEMENT

SYSTEM

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SAFE MARINE OPERATIONS POLICY

Whitstable Harbour Board are cognisant of their responsibility and accountability for the harbour's role and powers in relation to marine operations and port undertakings within its control.

The Harbour Board understands its statutory and common law duties which include an obligation to conserve and facilitate the safe use of the harbour and an express duty to take such action it considers necessary for the maintenance, operation, improvement and conservation of the harbour.

The Harbour Board is committed to the management of marine operations in a way that safeguards the harbour, its users and the public. Consultations will take place with all those who work in and use the harbour to ensure that they are fully consulted and involved in the preparation of safety policies and procedures.

Full and comprehensive risk assessments are undertaken in respect of all activities and facilities within the harbour leading to the development of a comprehensive Risk Assessment and Safety Management System for marine operations.

The Harbour Board acknowledges its role in protecting the port marine environment from the risk of pollution, excessive disturbance or misuse, by the adherence to relevant legislation, safe working practices and diligent monitoring of operations.

The Harbour Board is committed to the continuous improvement of safety within this harbour by the implementation of appropriate policies and procedures of management.

This Safety Management System will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

2.0 Introduction

The Port Marine Safety Code is based on the principle that harbour authorities will formulate plans, policies and procedures relating to port marine operations on a formal safety assessment of the hazards and risks encountered. Under the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code harbour authorities should maintain a formal safety management system developed from the risk assessment process.

The purpose of this document is to illustrate how risks are reduced to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP) through the identification and implementation of supporting plans, policies and procedures within the overall structure of a Safety Management System.

3.0 Overview of Harbour Operations

Whitstable Harbour's primary commercial activity is the importation of aggregates. In 2020 a total of 25 ships carrying 47,950 tons of stone aggregate were handled.

Ship lay-by facilities for hull inspections and light repairs are provided on the west side of the West Quay.

An active fishing and shell fishing fleet in addition to a number of small work boats operate from the port. There are currently 16 such vessels berthed in Whitstable Harbour.

A limited number of leisure craft and passenger carrying vessels visit the port, predominantly during summer months. In addition, 4 leisure boats are based in the harbour over the summer months. One of these boats is the barge Greta which berths on the harbour's South Quay. A pontoon has been installed on the harbour's East Quay and 3 passenger carrying boats are allocated berths here.

The allocation of berths for passenger carrying boats is based on a number of qualifying criteria such as: crew qualifications and experience, local knowledge, boat certification and insurance.

A diverse number of ancillary services are based in Whitstable Harbour in support of the above mentioned activities.

Numerous shops, restaurants, leisure sailing facilities and associated retail traders are based on the quayside of the harbour. Twenty four fishermen's huts are available for short term lease.

4.0 Authority, Responsibility & Organisation

4.1 Competent Harbour Authority

The Competent Harbour Authority for Whitstable Harbour as defined under the Pilotage Act 1987 is Canterbury City Council. The Harbour is classed as a Municipal Port.

The harbour's statutory responsibilities, general powers and limits of jurisdiction are defined in the Whitstable Harbour Act 1957 and supported by the Whitstable Harbour Byelaws 2008.

The Harbour Authority will keep under review these powers, and the extent of its jurisdiction, to ensure they are sufficient for maintaining the overall safety of the harbour and its approaches.

4.2 Harbour Board

The overall strategy and performance of the harbour is managed by the Whitstable Harbour Board. This Board consists of six elected councillors and three independent members. The Board meets approximately 6 times per year.

4.3 Duty Holder

The role of Duty Holder as defined in the Port Marine Safety Code is Canterbury City Council.

4.4 Designated Person

The role of Designated Person as defined in the Port Marine Safety Code is Mr Peter Steen.

4.5 Harbour Staff

The responsibility for implementation of the plans, policies and procedures of Whitstable Harbour rests with the Harbour Master and his staff. The delegation of responsibilities is in accordance with the detailed job description held for each officer.

The standard of port services that the harbour delivers is influenced by the quality of its personnel. The harbour authority is committed to providing training and development opportunities for all personnel.

Harbour staff attend the arrival and departure of all large commercial ships. A local port service is maintained by the Duty Port Controller on VHF Channel 9. The depth of water, tidal and weather conditions, shipping movements and any defect to navigational aids are relayed to the ship by VHF.

Linesmen services for both ship arrivals and departures are provided by harbour staff. At least two linesmen attend each arrival and departure of ships

A shipping log detailing the particulars of each ship arrival and departure is maintained by the Duty Port Controller.

5.0 Health & Safety at Work

The harbour authority is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees.

The harbour authority accepts its responsibilities for other persons not in their employment who may be affected by the harbour authority's activities by ensuring that they are not exposed to undue risks to their health and safety.

Life-saving and buoyancy appliances are provided and placed in a number of locations on the quayside. Regular inspections of these appliances are maintained and logged.

Harbour staff, fishermen and other harbour users are encouraged to raise any safety related issue with the Harbour Master at any time and not wait until a safety meeting or any other forum is convened.

6.0 Conservancy

6.1 Navigational Aids

Whitstable Harbour carries out its responsibilities as a Local Lighthouse Authority (LLA) by providing a comprehensive and well-maintained system of navigational aids in the harbour and its approaches.

The Whitstable Street Buoy is owned and operated by Trinity House. All other navigational aids are owned and maintained by the harbour authority.

The Oyster Buoy at the fairway entrance to the harbour is owned by Canterbury City Council and is maintained by harbour staff.

The Whitstable Harbour navigational aids are regularly inspected by harbour staff.

A computerised database managed by Trinity House called *PANAR* is maintained for all navigational aids. Reports on the operation and maintenance of these navigational aids are submitted to Trinity House as required.

6.2 Wrecks

In the event of a vessel becoming a wreck in or near the approaches to Whitstable Harbour the harbour authority will mark the wreck and if necessary exercise their powers to remove it. In this respect a Risk Assessment will be undertaken to evaluate the danger to navigation that the wreck presents.

6.3 Admiralty Charts

Admiralty charts 2571 and 1607 refer to Whitstable Harbour and its approaches.

6.4 Hydrography

Hydrographic records of the harbour are maintained. The harbour is surveyed approximately every three years prior to and after maintenance dredging operations or as required.

Hydrographic information from local surveys is submitted to the UK Hydrographic Office.

Regular inspections of the seabed, specifically in areas subject to high siltation build-up and high use are undertaken by CCC engineers Department and harbour staff.

6.5 Dredging

Maintenance dredging is undertaken annually

6.6 Notices to Mariners

Notices to Mariners are issued by the Harbour Master. Copies of these notices are sent to a number of people & organisations including the following:

The UK Hydrographic Office
Medway Ports Authority
RNLI
Thames Coastguard
HM Coastguard
Armac Shipping
Local fishermen

Whitstable Yacht Club
Whitstable Sailing School
Dept for Transport Trinity House
CCC Foreshore Services Dept.
Sailing Barge Association
Vestas / Vattenfall
Leisure boat operators

7.0 Marine Environmental Protection

Whitstable Harbour provides appropriate facilities for the reception and disposal of solid and liquid wastes and rubbish.

The environmental protection measures carried out are outlined in the Whitstable Harbour Marine Environmental Protection Policy.

An MCA approved Port Waste Management Plan is in operation. Ships agents or owners submit a Waste Notification Sheet to the Harbour Office prior to their vessel's arrival.

Hazardous or dangerous cargoes are not handled at Whitstable Harbour.

8.0 Pilotage Operations

Whitstable Harbour has adopted a shore to ship pilotage information system in lieu of direct pilotage. With the cooperation and agreement of the MCA this new system has been in trial for the past two years and will continue to be monitored.

Prior to the arrival of any vessel over 50m LOA the ship's Master will receive a document pack by email from the Harbour Office. This information pack includes:

An aerial photograph of the harbour showing it's approaches and berths.

A chartlet showing the port approaches, navigational aids and direction of tidal influences.

Details of the proposed passage and general information.

A declaration sheet which the ship's Master must sign confirming his acceptance to enter the port safely given the information he has received.

A further stipulation of these procedures is that the passage must be conducted during daylight hours.

Following the ship's arrival and prior to departure the Harbour Master or Deputy Harbour Master will meet with the ship's master to discuss any concerns he may have.

9.0 Severe Weather

Forecasts of severe weather and large tidal surges are received from the Environmental Agency and Canterbury City Council's Engineers Dept.

10.0 Port Security

Whitstable Harbour has a Port Security Plan in place. This plan was initially approved by TRANSEC in June 2004 and has been subject to various updates & amendments which have also been formally approved. The new DfT division of Maritime Security & Resilience conducts audits of the Whitstable Harbour plan.

The Harbour Master is the designated Port Security Officer. The Deputy Harbour Master is the designated Deputy Port Security Officer.

The Whitstable Harbour Port Security Committee meets at least twice per year or at any other time as outlined in the Port Security Plan. Ships calling at Whitstable Harbour notify the port authority of all relevant security information prior to their arrival. These notification sheets are maintained online.

11.0 Enforcement & Prosecution

The Harbour has statutory powers to regulate the conduct of vessels, harbour users, commercial operators and visitors within its designated area of jurisdiction.

The harbour authority will take firm action, including prosecution where appropriate, against those people or organisations who flout the law or act irresponsibly.

The harbour authority will carry out enforcement and prosecution in a fair, equitable and consistent manner and will liaise with other enforcement bodies as appropriate.

Harbour staff are on duty from 0900 to 1700 from Monday to Friday and at any other times depending on tidal conditions, shipping movements or operational demands. During these times patrols of the harbour estate are conducted.

Closed circuit television surveillance of the harbour estate is maintained and operated from Canterbury City Council's Control Centre.

A 24-hour call-out system is maintained and harbour staff are available at all times to respond to a general call out or any emergency situations.

12.0 Tugs and Towing

Should a tug and towage operation be proposed the Port Manager and Harbour Master should ensure the operation is comprehensively risk assessed prior to taking place.

13.0 Emergency Contingency Planning

An MCA approved Oil Spill Contingency Plan is in place. Periodic exercises and appropriate training is carried out to familiarise staff with their responsibilities under this plan.

Whitstable Harbour's Tier Two provider is Edge Enviro Services based in Ramsgate.

The harbour maintains a basic stock of oil pollution equipment including booms, absorbent material and personal protective equipment.

A copy of the Canterbury City Council Major Emergency Plan is maintained in the Harbour Office.

14.0 Incident Reporting & Investigation

Harbour staff maintain records of any incident or accident reported, together with all routine port marine shipping operations.

A Canterbury City Council Accident/Incident Report Form system is maintained..

Where appropriate an investigation into the causes of an accident will be carried out. Photographic or physical evidence together with written statements will be collected. Where appropriate the MAIB and HSE will be informed.

15.0 Audit & Review

The Harbour Authority acknowledges that the process of port marine safety assessment is a continuous and on-going one. New hazards and changing risks should be identified promptly and addressed.

Independent audits of the Whitstable Harbour Safety Management System and level of compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code are carried out.

Internal audits by the Canterbury City Council's Health and Safety Officer of the Safety Management Systems and compliance with the Council's Health and Safety standards are carried out.

The Whitstable Harbour Board, which meets approximately six times per year, are routinely updated on any matters pertaining to safe port marine operations and the harbour's compliance with the PMSC.

An annual review of the operational procedures and the effectiveness of this Safety Management System is undertaken by the Harbour Master.

Regular staff meetings are held at which each member of staff is given the opportunity to raise any issue relating to port marine safety.

Harbour staff, fishermen and harbour users are encouraged to immediately report any health & safety related issue to the Harbour Master and not wait until the next safety meeting or forum.

Independent external checks and reviews of port marine operations are conducted by the following agencies:

Port Marine Safety Code	: Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Navigational Aids	: Trinity House
Port Waste Management	: Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Oil Spill Contingency Planning	: Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Environmental Management	: Natural England
Port Security	: Maritime Security & Resilience Division
