



Whitstable Harbour Pilotage Directions

(Issue 5 – September 2026)

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1. Introduction

Whitstable Harbour Board is the Competent Harbour Authority (CHA) for Whitstable Harbour under the terms of the Pilotage Act 1987 (The Act) and the Whitstable Harbour Act 1957.

To maintain and enhance safety of navigation within the Harbour, it is important that Masters, Deck Officers and ships staff are aware of current Whitstable Harbour Byelaws, Directions and Notices to Mariners.

It is therefore vital that owners/agents ensure that all such relevant information and publications are promptly distributed to vessels.

2. Pilotage Areas of Jurisdiction

[Appendix 1](#) identifies the Whitstable Harbour Pilotage Areas

3. Ships Affected

The statutory exemption dictates that these directions generally do not apply to ships under 20 metres in length, foreign warships, or fishing boats under 47.5 metres

These directions are compulsory for:

- a) All ships with a length overall of greater than 20 metres
- b) All ships carrying marine pollutants in bulk
- c) All ships carrying dangerous goods
- d) All ships engaged in towing or pushing where the composite length overall of the tug and tow or tug and vessel being pushed is greater than 50 metres

Due to the nature of staffing at Whitstable Harbour, requests for entry and departure to the Harbour must be made to the Harbour and Foreshore Office, with 24 hours' notice. Less notice may be accepted in specific circumstances.

Any ship navigating to Whitstable Harbour and liable to pilotage should approach the Whitstable Street Bouy 1 hour before the notified 'alongside' time. Ships should not proceed closer without further direction from the Harbour and Foreshore Office. Radio contact will be established with the ship on VHF Channel 09 approximately 45 minutes prior to the 'alongside' time.

4. Procedure for Shore to Ship Pilotage

Prior to the arrival of any vessel over 50 metres LOA, the ship's Master will receive a Pre-Arrival Passage Plan by email from the Shipping Agent. This information pack includes:

- An aerial photograph of the harbour showing its approaches and berths
- A chartlet showing the port approaches, navigational aids and direction of tidal influences
- Details of the proposed passage and general information

Declarations are received from the ship's Master, confirming they understand the Pre-Arrival Passage Plan to enter the port safely given the information received and that the vessel has no issues affecting the safe navigation into the Harbour.

Under these procedures, a ship's Masters' first passage into Whitstable Harbour must take place during daylight hours. If the ship's Master has not visited Whitstable Harbour within one year of that first passage, their next passage must also be completed during daylight hours.

Following the ship's arrival and prior to departure, the Harbour and Foreshore Manager or Senior Harbour Officer will meet with the ship's Master to discuss any concerns they may have.

5. Pilotage Exemption Certificates

Whitstable Harbour does not provide Pilotage Exemption Certificates

6. Reporting of Incidents and Navigational

Purpose of incident reporting

Pilotage incident reports are an important part of monitoring the effectiveness of the Pilotage Directions. Reports must include sufficient detail to support an objective assessment of the incident and any follow-up action required.

Information to include

Reports should be open, transparent and factual, and should provide a complete picture of the circumstances. Where relevant, reports should include:

- Accurate times and sequence of events;
- Engine, rudder and thruster configurations;
- Any damage, defect or equipment limitation;
- Bridge manning at the time of the incident; and
- Any other relevant comments or supporting information.

Where, in the opinion of the Harbour and Foreshore Manager, a report does not provide sufficient detail for impartial and objective examination, it may be rejected and a revised 'Pilotage Incident Report' requested.

When a report is required

A 'Pilotage Incident Report' form must be completed following any incident involving collision, fire, grounding, heavy contact with any pier, breakwater or harbour structure, or any near miss with another vessel or structure within Whitstable Harbour limits. A report must also be completed when requested by the Harbour and Foreshore Manager or Deputy.

Submission deadline

Completed reports must be submitted to the Harbour and Foreshore Manager within 24 hours using the Whitstable Harbour Navigational Incident Form.

7. Communications with Pilotage Authority

Any queries concerning the information contained in this document should be addressed to the Harbour and Foreshore Manager at the following address:

Harbour and Foreshore Services
Canterbury City Council
West Quay Building
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 1AB

Telephone: 01227 266 719
E-mail: whitstable.harbour@canterbury.gov.uk

8. Amendments

Whitstable Harbour Authority reserve the right to amend all or part of these directions as appropriate.

9. Appendices

Appendix One - Whitstable Harbour Limits

