

Harbour Code

Whilst all users of Christchurch Harbour should be able to enjoy themselves, users are asked to be respectful and treat the Harbour's wildlife & environment with due care and consideration. Users are asked to observe the following code of conduct while visiting or using the harbour. The code gives some thoughtful do's and don'ts for different harbour users - it is not an exhaustive list, just key guidance to help ensure safety for all on the water.

Motor Boats, Yachts, Ribs & Jet-skis

- Limit your speed to 4 knots on the river and within the harbour area - make yourself aware of the tide running (speed over ground versus boat-speed). On exiting the harbour after the Mudeford Run, a 6 knot speed limit applies through the red/green buoyed channel and within the yellow summer buoys along the coastline.
- Ensure no wash is created by your boat - have particular consideration for other water users who may be more vulnerable on the water (inflatable dinghies, paddleboards, kayaks etc.)
- Know the 'rules of the road' (COLREGS): keep a good lookout at all times, give due consideration to others & give way where need dictates, especially vessels constrained by their draught or with restricted ability to manoeuvre
- Ensure all checks & precautions are taken before setting off (engine, weather conditions, tides etc.) Use the RYA SafeTRX phone/tablet App to track your journey and facilitate a quick way of calling for help if the need arises
- Ensure everyone aboard your boat wears an appropriate buoyancy aid or life jacket at all times when on the water. Always attach your kill-cord if one is fitted.
- Do not anchor within the channel (unless in emergency)
- Avoid alcohol - safe boating and alcohol do not mix
- Report incidents to the appropriate authority promptly - see guidance on **Reporting Incidents**

Paddleboards & Kayaks

- Check the weather & tidal currents before setting off and be aware of potential dangers: especially strong wind & currents - know your limits
- Dress for the water temperature as well as the air temperature - ensure you wear appropriate protection: a buoyancy aid or lifejacket - and preferably a wetsuit
- Wear the appropriate type of leash for the type of boarding you are doing to avoid being separated from your board if you fall off
- Paddle with someone else rather than alone or at least ensure someone onshore knows where you are heading and when you would expect to return
- Keep to the right when paddling in channels and waterways where there is an implied channel e.g. between moored boats or where only red or green buoys are present but not both. Wherever possible paddle outside the channel and avoid the centre of the channel or river
- If necessary to cross a boating channel do so at 90 degrees in order to cross as quickly as possible - if crossing the path of a vessel pass behind rather than in front
- Take a fully charged mobile phone with you in a waterproof case - and preferably another means of attracting attention such as a waterproof whistle

Rowers

- Pass to the right - give way to sailing vessels that have right of way under sail
- If sufficient water, row outside the channel to allow safe passage to other water users
- Rowing Coach launches should not create wash outside either of the rowing or Sailing Clubs and exercise greater awareness from Steepbanks upstream. Give way to scullers.
- Coaching launches encountering another boat in the opposite direction in the harbour should slow down and follow in the wake of their crew
- Report incidents to the appropriate body (e.g. collisions or inconsiderate water usage by others) - see guidance on ***Reporting Incidents***

Swimmers

- If wild swimming in the harbour or river, keep well clear of the marked boating channels and preferably use a bright swimming buoy with a leash to make yourself visible to others
- Check for hazards upstream and downstream and where you're swimming - remember that rivers can contain hidden dangers such as submerged objects and snags (shopping trolleys, metal objects, glass etc.)
- Stay clear of reeds and algae and ensure you have a convenient exit route from the water
- Observe the guidance given for paddleboards that is relevant to swimmers

Fishing

- Avoid disturbing vacant moorings and casting across them
- Boats will try to avoid set fishing lines – similarly, try to avoid casting lines across boating lanes
- Be aware that yachts have limited room to manoeuvre because of their draft
- Don't leave unwanted fishing line and hooks lying around that could ensnare wildlife

Reporting Incidents

In most instances the appropriate authority to report to will be **Dorset Police** - see the Crime Reporting Poster for further details (the poster has been widely displayed and is posted on the Christchurch Harbour Watch Facebook page).

- **Dorset Police** - for theft and other criminal or anti social or violent behaviours
- **Coastguard (MCA)** - for dangers presented to maritime safety
- **BCP Local Authority** - for local bylaw infractions, derelict boats etc.