

Local Notice to Mariners

Number 01 of 2026

01/01/2026

PORT OF SOUTHAMPTON AND DOCKYARD PORT OF PORTSMOUTH - TRAFFIC CO-ORDINATION AND VHF COMMUNICATIONS IN THE SOLENT

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a port operations and information service covering The Solent and Southampton Water, including the ports of Portsmouth and Southampton, is established to monitor and co-ordinate shipping movements. This Notice is published in agreement with the King's Harbour Master, Portsmouth to ensure the continuity of communications and co-ordination of shipping movements between the two Harbour Authorities involved.

2. Harbour Authorities. - The "de facto" Harbour Authority for Portsmouth is the King's Harbour Master, Portsmouth (KHM) who has jurisdiction within the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth as shown on Admiralty Charts and defined in the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth Order 2005. Co-ordination of shipping movements within The Solent is carried out by Vessel Traffic Services (Callsign "Southampton VTS"), Port of Southampton. KHM Harbour Control (Callsign "Portsmouth VTS") controls the traffic entering/leaving Portsmouth Harbour north of a line between Fort Gilkicker and Horse Sand Fort, although navigational direction will need to be established before passing Outer Spit Buoy (OSB).

3. Southampton VTS. - To co-ordinate shipping within The Solent and approaches, Southampton VTS maintains radar surveillance of the Eastern Solent and Nab. VHF communications are maintained on VHF Ch 12 (primary) and Ch 14 (secondary).

4. KHM Portsmouth. - KHM Harbour Control maintains radar coverage of the Eastern Solent including the Portsmouth Harbour Approach Channel. A continuous listening watch is maintained on VHF Ch 11 and 13, Ch 11 being the primary channel for the coordination of shipping movements entering and leaving Portsmouth. Ch 13 is normally used to control Naval movements within the Naval Base but on occasion KHM may authorise its use in the event of Ch 11 being busy.

5. Mandatory procedures. - The following procedures are mandatory:

- a. For all vessels over 20m in length:
 - i. All vessels entering or leaving the Eastern Solent are to report to "Southampton VTS" on VHF Ch 12 at the following points:
 - ii. When on an arc 10 NM from the Nab Tower;
- b. When passing latitude 50 40.0N giving their position as a distance east or west of the Nab Tower.
 - i. Within the Solent and remaining south of a line between Fort Gilkicker and Horse Sand Fort, vessels should maintain a continuous listening watch on VHF Ch 12. They are to report to "Southampton VTS" when passing the appropriate reporting points and at other times, as designated in the Admiralty List of Radio Signals Volume 6(1).
 - ii. Vessels proceeding to an anchorage in the Solent for shelter or subsequent berthing must report to "Southampton VTS" when anchored giving their approximate position. While at anchor vessels must maintain a listening watch on VHF Ch 12. Vessels leaving their anchorage must also report to "Southampton VTS" and advise of their intended destination or whether they are leaving via the Eastern or Western Solent.
- c. For all vessels:
 - i. All gas tankers, before navigating within the area between the Warner and North Sturbridge buoys, are to establish communications with "Portsmouth VTS" on VHF Ch 11 to advise of their transit and to ascertain movements into and out of Portsmouth Harbour.
 - ii. Any vessel which has sustained damage outside the limits of the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth and the Port of Southampton which affects or is likely to affect the seaworthiness of that vessel are to inform the Harbour Master of the respective port before entering the port limits. If oil or dangerous or inflammable substances are escaping or are likely to escape from that vessel permission to enter the port limits must also be requested.

6. Vessels entering Portsmouth Harbour. - KHM coordinates all shipping movements within Portsmouth Harbour and its approaches to the north of a line joining Fort Gilkicker and Horse Sand Fort. In addition to making reports to "Southampton VTS", vessels intending to enter Portsmouth Harbour approaching from the east should notify "Portsmouth VTS" on VHF Ch 11 of their position when passing the Nab Tower and the Warner buoy and vessels approaching from the west are to report their position to "Portsmouth VTS" when passing the Prince Consort and North Sturbridge buoys. Vessels approaching from either direction are to request permission to enter Portsmouth Harbour when in the vicinity of the Saddle Buoy. Navigational direction will need to be established before passing OSB. Listening watch should be maintained on Ch 12 until north of a line between Fort Gilkicker and Horse Sand Fort at which point listening watch is to be changed to Ch 11.

7. All vessels over 20m in length underway in Portsmouth Harbour and remaining north of a line joining Fort Gilkicker and Horse Sand Fort are to maintain a continuous listening watch on VHF Ch 11. Vessels over 20m must request permission from "Portsmouth VTS" before moving within the Harbour or leaving their berth.

8. This notice is issued jointly by the Kings Harbour Master Portsmouth, the Harbour Master Southampton and the Harbour Master Portsmouth International Port.

**Steven Masters,
Harbour Master**