

Local Notice to Mariners

Number 14 of 2026

01/01/2026

NAABSA Berths (Not Always Afloat, But Safely Aground)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, following the 2019 consultation, safe operation of a berth that is declared as NAABSA (Not Always Afloat, But Safely Aground) is the responsibility of the berth operator. This responsibility includes ensuring that when inviting a vessel to take the ground alongside the berth, that it is safe and fit for this purpose.

Annually, berth operators wishing to nominate their berth as a NAABSA berth for operations should seek the Harbour Master's permission by emailing to hmsouthampton@abports.co.uk

The declaration should include:

1. A commitment to regular inspections to ensure there are no obstructions or changes to the bed level that could damage a vessel; this is to be completed Bi-Annually, as a minimum and the survey should be of high resolution multibeam quality.
2. The berth owner / operator has the responsibility that the berth has been dredged and monitored for depth and profile including the expectations that undulations may exist.
3. The berths are kept as reasonably flat as possible and are not known to have any obstructions on them, meaning that vessels may be able to lie safely on the soft mud/silt bottom.
4. The decision as to whether it is safe for a vessel to lay on the berth is the responsibility of the vessel's Master, but to help them make that decision, the following advice is given: -
 - a. Masters should risk assess the use of the berth taking into account factors including, but not limited to, their vessels hull profile and any protrusions from the hull;
 - b. The Master is advised to keep all watertight openings closed and monitor bilge levels and alarms;
 - c. The Master is advised to tend the vessel's mooring lines and monitor its attitude and position as the tide falls/floods;
 - d. Where necessary, the Master is advised to rig extra lines to ensure the vessel remains in position as the vessel takes the ground.

Further information can also be found within [Port Users Information and Navigational Guidelines \(PUNG\)](#).

Current Approved Southampton NAABSA Berths
Marchwood Wharf
Hythe Marine Park

**Steven Masters,
Harbour Master**