

Sydney Harbour Superyacht Guidelines



Guidelines for Masters Operating Superyachts on Sydney Harbour

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
PORT PROCEDURES	5
DIRECTIONS FOR NAVIGATION	5
DIRECTIONS AND REGULATIONS TO BE OBSERVED	5
Harbour Master	5
REQUIRED CHARTS	5
PORT SERVICES	5
Pilotage	5
Tugs	6
Passages Plans	6
PILOTAGE REQUIREMENTS	6
WIND AND WEATHER	6
HARBOUR CONTROL	7
REPORTS TO HARBOUR CONTROL	7
ARRIVAL PROCEDURES	8
SUPERYACHTS UNDER PILOTAGE	8
SYDNEY HARBOUR – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS	9
GENERAL	9
SPEED LIMITS	9
Speed limit for Port of Sydney Northern Area	9
Speed limit for Port of Sydney Central Area	9
Speed limit for Port of Sydney Western Area	9
SPEED RESTRICTED AREAS	10
Sydney Harbour Transit Zone	10
Darling Harbour – White Bay – Rozelle Bay – Blackwattle Bay	10
The Spit	12
CONDUCT WITHIN SYDNEY HARBOUR	12
General Conduct	12
Priority Over Sail	13
Hovercraft, Jetcats and Rivercats	13
Personal Watercraft (PWC)	13
Bradleys Head Safe Water Mark	13
Diving Operations	13
Helicopter Operations	13
PROHIBITED AREAS FOR GENERAL NAVIGATION	14
GENERAL	14
RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS	14
Cockle Bay	14
Sydney Cove (Circular Quay)	14
Campbells Cove	14
Naval Waters	14
Parramatta River	15
NAVIGATION MARKS, BRIDGES AND WHARVES TO BE LEFT CLEAR	15
MORTLAKE TO PUTNEY VEHICULAR FERRY	15
COLLISION OR INCIDENT REPORTS	16
BERTHING AT COMMERCIAL WHARVES	16
POLLUTION, NUISANCE OR DANGER	16
MARINE POLLUTION ACT 1987	17
PUMP-OUT FACILITIES	17
GARBAGE	17
CAUSING OF NUISANCE OR DANGER	17

QUALIFICATIONS AND REGISTRATION	18
BOAT LICENCES & CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY	18
REGISTRATION OF VESSELS	18
PROTECTED ANIMALS	18
APPROACH DISTANCES	19
SPEED	19
APPROACH DIRECTIONS	19
ACTION IF A MARINE MAMMAL APPROACHES	20
BRIDGES IN SYDNEY HARBOUR	20
SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE	20
THE GLEBE ISLAND BRIDGE	20
ANZAC BRIDGE	20
IRON COVE BRIDGE	20
GLADESVILLE BRIDGE	20
PYRMONT BRIDGE	21
RYDE ROAD BRIDGE	21
RYDE RAILWAY BRIDGES	21
THE SPIT BRIDGE	21
COMMUNICATIONS	22
VHF CHANNELS	22
IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS	22
USEFUL WEBSITES	23
PHOTOGRAPHS	24
ROZELLE BAY SUPERYACHT MARINA	24
CAMPBELLS COVE	25
SYDNEY COVE – CIRCULAR QUAY	27
FARM COVE	28
GARDEN ISLAND NAVAL BASE	28
WALSH BAY	29
JONES BAY WHARF, PYRMONT	30
WATSONS BAY	30
SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE	31
GLEBE ISLAND BRIDGE	31
ANZAC BRIDGE	32
WIND FREQUENCY ANALYSES	33

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to Sydney.

The aim of these Guidelines is to assist superyacht masters with their preparations for a visit to Sydney Harbour and to provide a reference document during the visit.

These Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with, and are subordinate to, NSW and Commonwealth legislation, as amended from time to time, and the information promulgated on relevant websites. In the event of any inconsistency between these Guidelines and the legislation or information promulgated on relevant websites, then the requirements of the legislation and relevant websites take precedence.

For the purposes of these Guidelines superyachts are recreational vessels with an LOA of more than 24 metres which are used for private (non commercial) operations.

Vessels of any size and length used solely for recreation do not require a Pilot or Local Knowledge Certificate holder onboard in order to operate on Sydney Harbour.

Despite there being no requirement for recreational vessels to take a Pilot, superyacht masters may request this service for any passage within the harbour. A master is encouraged to request these services if in any doubt regarding the Guidelines on the harbour or regarding his/her ability to safely manoeuvre within the harbour.

In certain circumstances the Harbour Master may require a Pilot to conduct the vessel on its movement into, out of or within the port.

If the vessel is to be engaged in commercial activity, including any form of charter, then the vessel must comply with the provisions of the [Marine Safety Act 1998](#) and the National Marine Safety Committee [Superyacht Policy](#).

Superyachts are free to enter and move around Sydney Harbour subject to compliance with the following requirements:

1. Superyacht masters operate on Sydney Harbour in accordance with the requirements outlined in these Guidelines.
2. Superyachts operating on Sydney Harbour, or within 5 nautical miles of the port limits, must at all times maintain a listening watch on VHF Ch 13, report to Harbour Control on VHF Ch 13 at the required times and follow all directions issued by Harbour Control.
3. Superyacht masters are aware of, and comply with, the restrictions and all other requirements for operating on Sydney Harbour.
4. International and NSW Special Rules of the Road contained within Schedule 2 of the [Marine Safety \(General\) Regulation 2009](#).

PORT PROCEDURES

DIRECTIONS FOR NAVIGATION

The ports of Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay fall within the jurisdiction of the [Sydney Ports Corporation](#).

DIRECTIONS AND REGULATIONS TO BE OBSERVED

Harbour Master

Sydney Ports' Harbour Master has powers under the [Marine Safety Act 1998](#) to direct and control the time and manner in which any vessel may enter or leave the port.

The master of any superyacht navigating in Sydney Harbour must comply with any direction given by the Harbour Master, the NSW Special Rules and the *International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea* (Colregs).

Schedule 2 of the [Marine Safety \(General\) Regulation 2009](#) provides the NSW Special Rules and Colregs.

Additionally, the master is required to comply with all relevant State or Federal Legislation and International Conventions.

Safe navigation in the port area is maintained through an ongoing process of risk evaluation and mitigation of which pilotage, Harbour Control (Vessel Traffic Services) and port procedures are all integral components.

Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay are both working harbours and areas of great recreational boating enjoyment. During daylight hours large commercial ships are escorted through some navigation channels by Sydney Ports' patrol craft to ensure an adequate and safe separation between these ships and recreational craft.

All commercial ships and Charter Vessels arriving at, departing from or moving within Sydney Harbour must comply with the provisions of the [Marine Safety Act 1998](#).

REQUIRED CHARTS

The following paper charts, or equivalent electronic charted areas, are to be held onboard the superyacht:

Aus. 197	Approaches to Sydney Harbour [Port Jackson]
Aus. 200	Port Jackson
Aus. 201	Port Jackson Eastern Sheet
Aus. 202	Port Jackson Central Sheet
Aus. 203	Port Jackson Western Sheet

PORT SERVICES

Pilotage

Sydney Ports employs 21 pilots, all experienced Master Mariners. Experience in command of a vessel is a necessary entry qualification to the pilotage service.

Using four pilot vessels, Sydney Pilots offer around-the-clock service. The Pilot Station is manned continuously and the services of a pilot can be obtained at any time with two hours notice.

Pilot vessels are 16 metre aluminium semi-planing hulls, of about 35 tonnes displacement. They are readily distinguishable with yellow and orange topsides on which the word 'PILOT' is painted. When engaged on pilotage duty they carry international flag or light signals prescribed for pilot vessels on station.

Bookings can be made by an authorised shipping agent through [Sydney's Integrated Port System \(ShIPS\)](#).

Having arranged to take a Pilot, if the superyacht is unable to enter into Sydney Harbour within 1 hour after the time stated in the application for a Pilot, the Pilot may defer pilotage and cease attendance.

Tugs

Tugs bookings can be made by an authorised shipping agent through [Sydney's Integrated Port System \(ShIPS\)](#).

Passages Plans

A selection of Sydney Harbour passage plans, for different vessel lengths, has been recommended by the Sydney Pilots and is available for download from the [Sydney Ports](#) website (follow links through Port Operations and Sydney Pilot Service). Access to Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) format is required to view these plans.

PILOTAGE REQUIREMENTS

Sydney is a pilotage port and pilotage is compulsory for vessels with an LOA of 30 metres or more.

However, under Section 75 of the [Marine Safety Act 1998](#), a recreational vessel is exempted from pilotage.

Despite there being no requirement for recreational vessels to take a Pilot, superyacht masters may request this service for any passage within the harbour. A master is encouraged to request these services if in any doubt regarding the procedures on the harbour or regarding his/her ability to safely manoeuvre within the harbour.

In certain circumstances the Harbour Master may require a Pilot to conduct the vessel on its movement into, out of or within the port.

If the vessel is to be engaged in any commercial activity then the vessel must comply with the provisions of the [Marine Safety Act 1998](#), the National Marine Safety Committee [Superyacht Policy](#), and take a Pilot as required.

For details of what is considered commercial activity refer to the [Marine Safety Act 1998](#).

WIND AND WEATHER

The weather and sea conditions in Sydney Harbour are subject to sudden severe changes throughout the year. During settled weather in summer (December to February) the predominant wind is the strong, north easterly sea breeze. This breeze is often interrupted by the Southerly Buster, an intense line squall bringing a sudden wind shift from a southerly direction, freshening rapidly - often to gale force. After a Southerly Buster the wind usually returns to its former direction and strength.

During autumn (March to May) and early winter, strong southerly and easterly winds are frequently associated with cyclones in the Tasman Sea, off the central coast of New South Wales.

During settled weather in winter (June to August) and early spring, strong westerly winds are predominant. The visibility is generally good, but fog, misty rain, dust and haze, sometimes occur. Intense easterly winds are sometimes experienced. These cause heavy seas along the coast which break heavily at Sydney Heads and occasionally pass through the entrance to break on to the harbour's western foreshore. Easterly gales are frequently accompanied by haze-banks which might affect the visibility of lights.

Wind Frequency Analyses are attached at the end of these Guidelines.

HARBOUR CONTROL

Harbour Control operates a marine radio, radar, AIS and CCTV service to assist vessels arriving, departing or operating within Sydney Harbour and beyond. The Sydney Harbour working channel is VHF Ch 13.

Harbour Control provides a continuous communication service to vessels within its areas of responsibility, and records all transmissions on the working frequencies.

Harbour Control;

- a. maintains and expedites a safe and orderly flow of shipping traffic within the Ports of Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay,
- b. provides an efficient communications base during any emergency situation which may develop in these ports,
- c. advises on the initiation, continuation and termination of activities within Sydney Harbour areas which may affect the safe passage of vessels, and
- d. notifies the appropriate organisations about vessels known or believed to be in distress and in need of assistance.

REPORTS TO HARBOUR CONTROL

Masters of superyachts are required to contact Harbour Control on VHF Ch 13;

- a. to notify ETA when 5 miles from port limits,
- b. prior to passing port limits to request permission to enter Sydney Harbour,
- c. if disabled, leaking, on fire or has been on fire,
- d. if involved in collision, grounding or close quarters situation,
- e. if pollution has occurred or is sighted,
- f. to request permission to depart from a marina or anchorage and move to another location or anchorage on the harbour, or proceed to sea,
- g. to report when they pass a reporting position,
- h. to advise when they have arrived at their destination marina, anchorage, or have departed and are clear of the Heads,

- i. when port safety or the environment may be compromised or the master considers a report is warranted, and
- j. if they are in any doubt or require any clarification concerning safe navigation.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Harbour Control services the ports of both Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay. Masters should indicate their destination port when making initial contact with Harbour Control.

When requesting permission from Harbour Control to enter Sydney Harbour, superyacht masters should indicate the preferred route to their destination (via Eastern Channel or Western Channel).

Once superyacht masters have established contact with Harbour Control on VHF Ch 13 they are required to maintain a listening watch on VHF Ch 13 and advise Harbour Control when reaching the following reporting points:

- a. Line Zulu (an imaginary line between outer North Head and Macquarie Light House).
- b. Sea Buoy (Northern Cardinal Buoy at entrance to Western Channel).
- c. Bradleys Head.
- d. Fort Denison.
- e. Arrival at the berth, marina or anchorage.

Masters of superyachts are advised to test thrusters and engines before entering the harbour.

Harbour Control broadcasts navigational, weather, tidal and shipping movement information via VHF Ch 13 at approximately 5 minutes past each hour. Masters are requested to monitor these broadcasts while approaching Sydney Harbour to familiarise themselves with local traffic movements.

Superyachts must keep well clear of any commercial or naval traffic which is constrained by its draft or navigating within the channels.

SUPERYACHTS UNDER PILOTAGE

Sydney Ports' Pilot Boarding Ground is 4.15 nautical miles east of Cape Solander (34° 01.02'S 151° 18.88'E).

By prior arrangement, Pilots may board four nautical miles east of Hornby Light (33° 50.05'S 151° 21.68'E).

Disembarkation is at the Pilot Boarding Ground off Port Botany.

Superyachts expecting to embark a Pilot should call Harbour Control on VHF:

- a. Ch 16/12 as early as possible to provide notification of ETA.
- b. Ch 16/12 when 4 hours from the pilot boarding place. Harbour Control will advise on pilot ladder requirements; request confirmation of draft and displacement; request engine and thruster testing results and discuss any other special requirements.
- c. Ch 16/12 when 2 hours and 1 hour from the pilot boarding place.

- d. Ch 13 when 5 miles from the pilot boarding place.
- e. Ch 13 when requiring approval to enter the harbour.
- f. Ch 13 when passing a reporting position.
- g. Ch 13 when anchored, or on arrival at the destination berth.

The Pilot will establish radio contact on VHF Ch 13 and then use a working channel (normally VHF Ch 6) for boarding instructions and for the boarding operation.

SYDNEY HARBOUR – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

GENERAL

The following information explains some of the NSW Special Rules and local expectations for navigation in Sydney Harbour. Superyacht masters and bridge crews should make themselves familiar with these requirements.

Sydney Harbour is a unique waterway which is used extensively by a diverse range of recreational and commercial vessels including large ships, ferries and charter boats, tugs, tugs towing barges, superyachts, private cruisers and yachts, runabouts, sailing skiffs, dinghies, sailboards, rowing shells, kayaks and dragon boats.

It is a busy waterway which requires all masters to be aware of their responsibilities, to take care when operating in busy navigational channels, and to make allowances for commercial activity. There is a need to consider paddlers, rowers and sailors as well as accommodating the needs of commercial operators, and those wishing to cruise, ski and fish on the harbour.

The number and variation of activities on the harbour may lead, on some occasions, to some operations not being compatible. Therefore, there is a need for thorough understanding and absolute commitment to water safety by all mariners.

SPEED LIMITS

The following speed limits apply for all vessels with an LOA of 30 metres or more. Clauses 23 to 26 of the [Marine Safety \(General\) Regulation 2009](#) refer.

Speed limit for Port of Sydney Northern Area

Between a line from Inner South Head to Inner North Head and a line from the stone pillar at Bradley's Head to Hermit Point and including Middle Harbour and North Harbour a person must not operate a vessel at a speed of more than 12 knots.

Speed limit for Port of Sydney Central Area

Between a line from the stone pillar at Bradley's Head to Hermit Point and a line from Balls Head to Ballast Point a person must not operate a vessel at a speed of more than 10 knots.

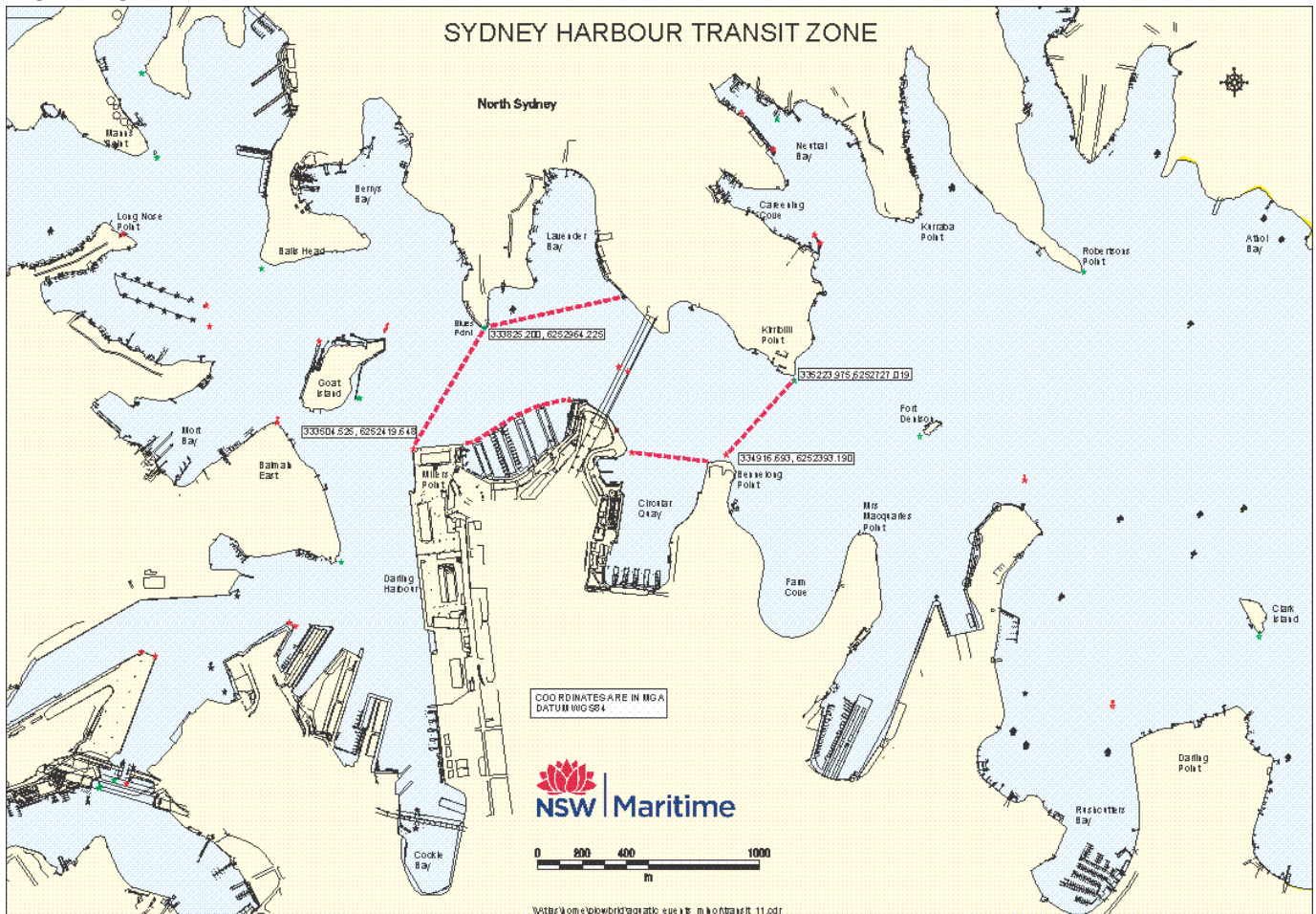
Speed limit for Port of Sydney Western Area

In the navigable waters, including all connected rivers and creeks, west of a line from Balls Head to Ballast Point extending to Silverwater Bridge a person must not operate a vessel at a speed of more than 6 knots.

SPEED RESTRICTED AREAS

In addition to the speed limits specified above for vessel with an LOA of 30 metres or more, the following areas on Sydney Harbour are subject to speed restrictions for all vessels.

Sydney Harbour Transit Zone



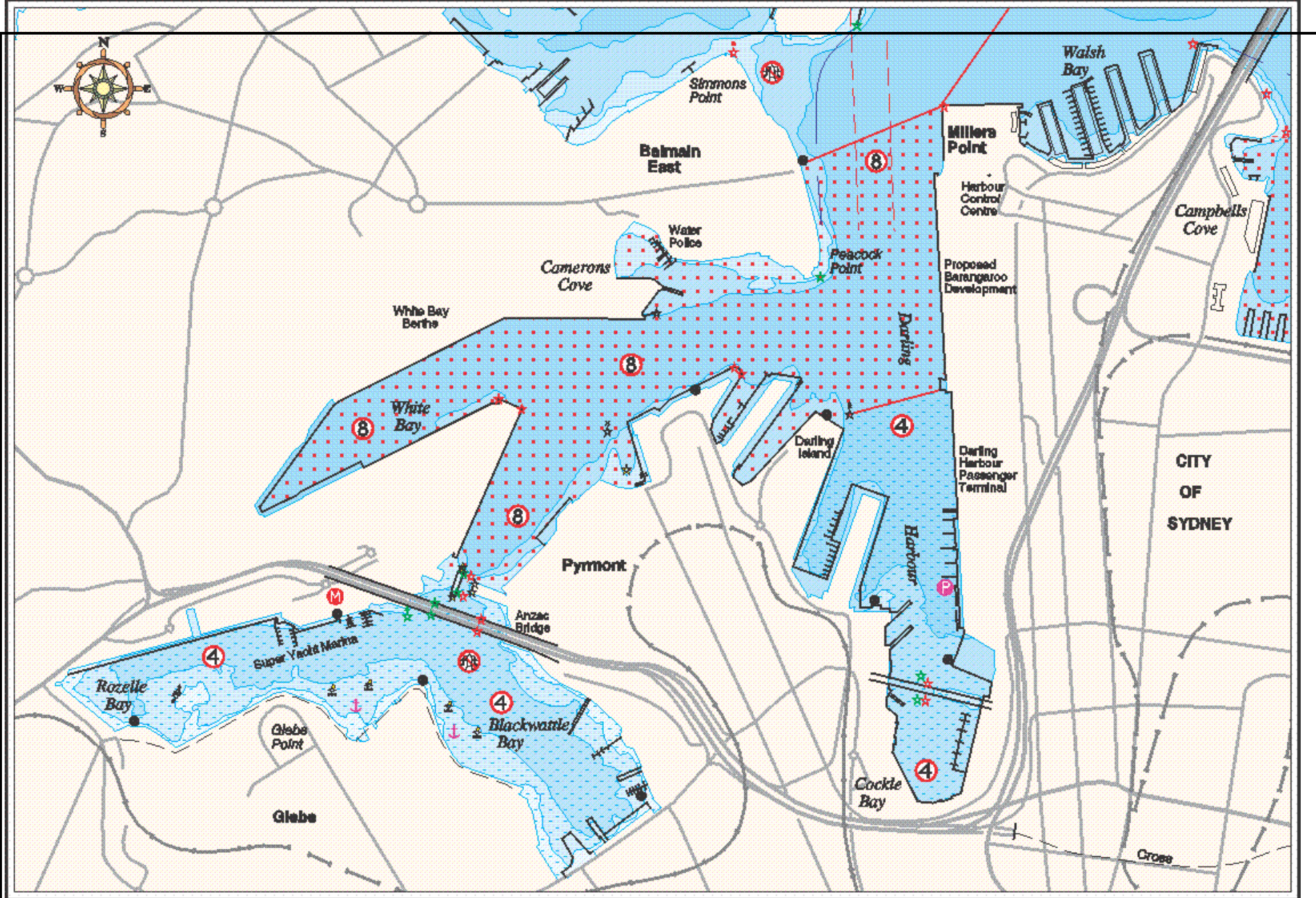
A transit zone has been established in the vicinity of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. A 15 knot maximum speed limit is enforced in this zone. The zone is defined as the area bounded by;

- at the eastern extremity; a straight line drawn between Bennelong Point and Kirribilli Point, and
- at the western extremity; a straight line drawn between Millers Point and Blues Point, and
- excluding Walsh Bay, Sydney Cove and Lavender Bay.

Within this zone anchoring or drifting is prohibited unless in the event of an emergency. Vessels may only travel through the zone to reach an area adjacent to or outside of the transit zone.

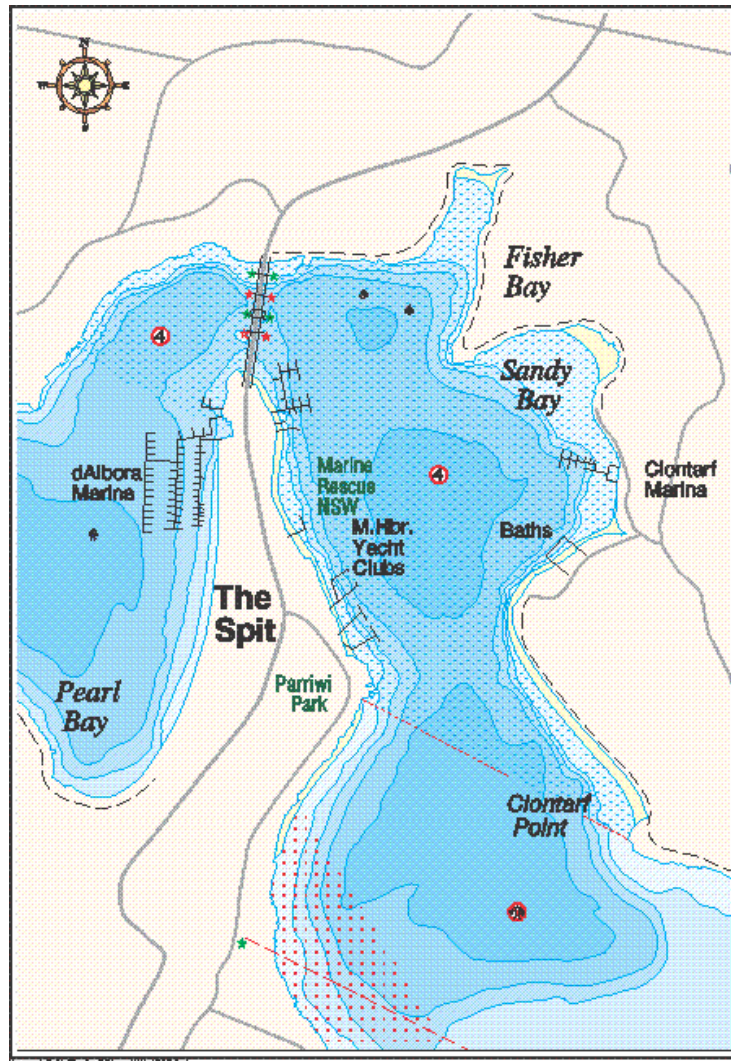
Darling Harbour – White Bay – Rozelle Bay – Blackwattle Bay

Speed limits are as indicated below.



The Spit

Speed limits are as indicated below.



CONDUCT WITHIN SYDNEY HARBOUR

General Conduct

To assist with the management of maritime traffic on Sydney Harbour, masters of superyachts are required to maintain a listening watch on VHF Ch 13 at all times and advise Harbour Control when passing reporting points.

When sightseeing close to the shore, it is advisable to passage in an anti-clockwise direction, keeping to the starboard side of the waterway in order to be consistent with the flow of the majority of traffic engaged in similar operations.

Special attention should be given when navigating in the vicinity of the Harbour Bridge, Sydney Cove and the Opera House, giving due regard to the increased traffic density and ferry operations in this area.

Special attention should be also given when navigating in the vicinity of Darling Harbour, giving due regard to the increased traffic density in this area.

Superyacht masters should use VHF Ch 13 as required to state their intentions to other large vessels, commercial vessels and ferries on the Harbour.

Priority Over Sail

Masters of sailing superyachts, when under sail, are required to give way to ferries displaying an orange diamond shape which grants ferries priority over sailing vessels by day.



Hovercraft, Jetcats and Rivercats

These craft carry the normal lights for a power-driven vessel underway and, in addition, they exhibit an all-round flashing yellow light. This light does not provide any priority over sailing vessels.

Personal Watercraft (PWC)

Operating a PWC in Sydney Harbour is prohibited. In order to operate a PWC in other areas of NSW waters, a person is required to hold both a General and PWC licence (the [Safe Boating Hand Book](#) refers).

Bradleys Head Safe Water Mark

Superyachts passing Bradleys Head in an easterly direction are required to keep the Safe Water Marker to port. This marker is in place to help ensure all vessels comply with channel routing and to provide sufficient room for vessels heading in different directions to pass one another.

Diving Operations

No diving operations are to be undertaken within 100 metres of any fairway or channel except with the permission of Harbour Master.

All diving operations are to be accompanied by a vessel showing the appropriate flag signal. This vessel is required to maintain radio communication with, and provide mobile phone contact details (for use in the event of VHF failure) to, Harbour Control throughout the operation. Harbour Control is to be notified of the following:

- a. on arrival at the site and the commencement of the diving operations; and
- b. on completion of the operation and when exiting the area.

Helicopter Operations

Helicopter operations are permitted on Sydney Harbour subject to certain restrictions and requirements, and compliance with [Civil Aviation Safety Authority](#) and [Airservices Australia](#) regulations. The following are the Harbour Master's requirements:

- a. The master provides a statement on VHF to Harbour Control (or provides hard copy evidence to Harbour Control) that the vessel has:
 - CASA and NSW Maritime approval for helicopter operations, and
 - Certificate of Currency (or similar) for insurance cover that includes aviation hull and third party liability.

- b. Harbour Control is to be notified well in advance of the location and timing of the helicopter operations so that Navigation Warnings can be broadcast to other harbour users.
- c. Operations are to be conducted well clear of concentrations of other vessels such as yacht races, anchoring zones and shipping channels.
- d. Operations may be conducted only when there is at least 100m clearance from other craft, (excluding the vessel's own escort/rescue tenders), wharves, bridges and fixed mooring areas.

PROHIBITED AREAS FOR GENERAL NAVIGATION

GENERAL

Areas in Sydney Harbour prohibited for navigation without specific approval are;

- a. the waters of Sydney Cove including Campbells Cove,
- b. an area 100 metres from a tanker secured at Gore Bay, Darling Harbour, White Bay or Glebe Island,
- c. an area 30 metres from all moored commercial ships, and
- d. the waters near all naval bases, marked by yellow buoys.

Superyacht masters should familiarise themselves with the latest exclusion zones, navigation warnings, shipping movements and weather information as broadcasted by Harbour Control to all ships on VHF Ch 13 at 5 minutes past the hour, 24 hours per day.

RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS

Cockle Bay

The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority controls Cockle Bay. Vessels may enter whenever a closure notice is not displayed on the red neon notice panel on the centre of the Pyrmont Bridge. Contact may be made with the bridge controller to check on closures by calling *Pyrmont Bridge* on Channel 13. Vessels may berth at the visitor's marina on the eastern side of the Bay, for which there is a fee. Use of the wharves on the western and southern sides is by arrangement with the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority only.

Sydney Cove (Circular Quay)

Circular Quay is essentially a ferry and passenger ship terminal. Access for recreational vessels is prohibited without written permission from NSW Maritime.

Campbells Cove

Masters of superyachts wishing to enter Campbells Cove must first receive written permission from NSW Maritime. If access is approved then superyacht masters will receive a copy of the *Sydney Cove Code of Conduct* prior to entry.

Superyacht masters are required to contact *Harbour Control* on VHF CH 13 prior to entering and departing Campbells Cove.

Naval Waters

Naval Waters are indicated on the chart. A vessel may enter these waters, although Naval authorities are at liberty to restrict access when necessary. A vessel may not anchor in Naval Waters.

For security reasons, people are prohibited from climbing, attaching themselves or helping another person to attach themselves to a naval vessel.

A moving exclusion zone operates for naval vessels underway in NSW waters. This zone extends 200m from bow and 60m on either side and astern of a naval vessel.

A 'distance off' of 60m from a naval vessel which is moored, anchored or berthed applies at all times. Yellow buoys delineate prohibited zones around Garden Island and other naval installations. Penalties apply.

Parramatta River

Waters west of Silverwater Bridge are closed to all vessels other than ferries.

NAVIGATION MARKS, BRIDGES AND WHARVES TO BE LEFT CLEAR

No vessel shall be secured to;

- a. any buoy, navigation aid, or any part of a bridge, or
- b. any floating plant belonging to the Sydney Ports Corporation.

No vessel shall anchor within;

- a. 100 metres of the following bridges: Glebe Island, ANZAC, Iron Cove, Gladesville, Ryde, Silverwater, FigTree, Pyrmont or The Spit, or
- b. 100 metres from any wharf.

MORTLAKE TO PUTNEY VEHICULAR FERRY

Vessels navigating in the Parramatta River, in the vicinity of the Mortlake to Putney vehicular ferry, must exercise great caution. The following information is provided:

- a. Between sunset and sunrise the ferry shall display, at each end of the vessel, an all-round red light and also an all round green light when underway at the fore-end of the vessel, to indicate the direction of travel. Such lights shall be visible for a range of at least 1000 metres.
- b. A passenger ferry, a vessel of more than 20 metres in length or a tug pushing a barge, wishing to cross the chains of the Mortlake to Putney ferry when it is at a landing on either side of the river shall, about 500 metres distant from the ferry, sound a long blast on the whistle or siren and slow down to 4 knots or less when within 100 metres. On hearing such a signal from an approaching vessel, the ferry shall remain at the landing until the vessel has passed.



COLLISION OR INCIDENT REPORTS

If a superyacht navigating within Sydney Harbour has grounded, or has been involved in a collision with another vessel, navigation mark, wharf, or structure, or has been in serious danger of grounding, or in a close-quarters situation with another vessel, then the master is required to immediately report the incident to Harbour Control.

The master of a superyacht involved in such an incident shall;

- a. comply with any direction from Harbour Control,
- b. if required, make themselves available to furnish a verbal and written report to the Harbour Master, and
- c. within 24 hours, notify NSW Maritime in writing of the circumstances of the collision or incident. A Vessel Incident Report is available for download from:
www.maritime.nsw.gov.au/docs/forms/vessel_incident_report.pdf

BERTHING AT COMMERCIAL WHARVES

Where the Sydney Ports Corporation has approved the occupation of a commercial berth by a superyacht for a specified period the master shall ensure that;

- a. the superyacht arrives and is secured to the berth only during that period,
- b. Harbour Control is advised each time the superyacht arrives at, or departs from, the berth, and
- c. the superyacht departs the berth before expiry of the approved period of occupancy.

POLLUTION, NUISANCE OR DANGER

NSW Maritime views seriously any kind of pollution occurring in State waters. The Regulations provide for heavy penalties upon conviction of offenders and NSW Maritime Officers can issue on-the-spot fines for polluting.

Under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* and the *Marine Pollution Regulations 2006*, it is illegal to discharge treated or untreated sewage into the waters of NSW.

Any incidents of pollution are to be reported immediately to Harbour Control who will initiate an immediate pollution response.

MARINE POLLUTION ACT 1987

If discharge of oil or of any oil mixture or a liquid substance occurs from a superyacht into State waters, the master and the owner, and any other person whose act caused the discharge, are each guilty of an offence, punishable upon conviction by a court imposed fine of up to \$A500,000.

If the offender, in the above circumstances, is a Corporation the penalty is increased to a court imposed fine of up to \$A10 million.

A person who fails to inform of discharge or escape is liable to a court imposed fine of up to \$A120,000.

The Sydney Ports Corporation may recover from the master or owner all costs and expenses incurred by it in respect of action taken for the recovery or dispersal of pollutants. (Section 46 of the *Marine Pollution Act 1987* refers).

PUMP-OUT FACILITIES

Superyacht operators have a variety of options available to properly manage sewage pollution from vessels. Vessels with a toilet fitted should install a holding tank. It is illegal to discharge raw sewage from holding tanks or portable toilets into NSW waters or effluent produced by on board sewage treatment plants.

Public pump-out facilities are provided in a variety of locations throughout NSW. For a list of pump-out facilities, visit the NSW Maritime website www.maritime.nsw.gov.au/rec_boating/pumpout.html or ring the Info Line 13 12 56.

Superyachts may discharge their sewage at marinas fitted with sewage pump-out facilities or into a barge or road tanker suited for this purpose.

GARBAGE

The *International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973* (MARPOL 73/78) applies to all vessels including dinghies, yachts and fishing vessels. All garbage must be retained on board for disposal ashore.

CAUSING OF NUISANCE OR DANGER

Under the *Marine Safety Act 1998*, administered by NSW Maritime, the master of a vessel in port may be penalised where the vessel interferes unreasonably with the lawful use of waters (or adjoining land) by other persons.

It is therefore obligatory that spotlights and floodlights on board superyachts be prevented from interfering with either the safe navigation of other vessels or the lawful use of adjoining land. The *Marine Safety Act 1998* provides for an 'on the spot' fine of \$A500.00.

Superyacht masters should be aware of the wash generated by their superyacht or auxiliary tenders' wake and are advised to operate at a speed which results in minimum discomfort to other users of the harbour. Excessive wash may also constitute an offence in certain circumstances.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REGISTRATION

BOAT LICENCES & CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY

Any person who operates a mechanically propelled vessel on NSW waters at a speed of 10 knots or more must hold a general boat driving licence.

It is neither the size of a vessel nor the power of an engine which determines whether a person needs to be licensed. It is the speed at which a vessel is operated.

Holders of NSW and interstate Certificates of Competency as a master, mate or coxswain are exempt from the requirement to hold a general boat driving licence.

A NSW general boat driving licence is not required by a master if that person is;

- a. not ordinarily resident in NSW, and
- b. has been operating power-driven recreational vessels in NSW waters for less than three months, and
- c. is authorised under the law of another State or Territory to operate the vessel concerned.

If the vessel is a commercial vessel the master and crew may require a NSW Certificate of Competency. Masters and crew holding overseas Certificates of Competency must apply to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority for recognition of their certificate. Recognition granted by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will be automatically recognised in NSW. Certificates of competency issued interstate are automatically recognised in NSW.

On a case by case basis, NSW Maritime may grant exemptions from the requirement to hold a general boat driving licence or Certificate of Competency.

REGISTRATION OF VESSELS

All commercial and recreational vessels operating in NSW waters are required to be registered unless exempt. A vessel is exempt from registration if it;

- a. is not ordinarily operated in State waters, and
- b. has been in State waters for less than 3 months, and
- c. is registered under the law of another State or Territory, or of another country, and is operated in accordance with that law.

PROTECTED ANIMALS

All native mammals, birds and reptiles are protected in NSW. Vessel operators must look out for and avoid harming these animals. Protected aquatic animals include whales, seals, dolphins, penguins and turtles, as well as a variety of water birds.

Boat-based whale watching has become a popular activity. To safeguard whales and minimise danger to vessels, there are certain rules governing vessel speeds and approach distances around whales (diagram below refers).

Large whales are known to enter Sydney Harbour during their migration season.

APPROACH DISTANCES

The approach distance for a vessel is 100m from a whale or 50m from a dolphin.

When calves are in the pod, the approach distance for a vessel is 300m from a whale and 150m from a dolphin.

SPEED

Vessels must always travel at a safe speed which will enable them to stop in time to avoid distressing or colliding with an animal. This speed will vary according to the circumstances and conditions. In the Caution Zone (a distance of between 100 m and 300 m from a whale and between 50 m and 150 m from a dolphin) vessel speed must be constant and slow, and leave a negligible wake.

Whales and dolphins rely on sounds underwater to communicate, find food and navigate so vessel operators must travel at a speed which will minimise the noise around them, and ensure their vessel does not suddenly change its direction.

APPROACH DIRECTIONS

Assess the direction in which the animals are travelling, then plan a course so that your vessel will not cut across their path, or put the vessel directly in front of or behind them. Approach the Caution Zone at an angle of not less than thirty degrees from their direction of travel at a steady constant speed, and remain aware of changes in animal behaviour or direction.

Whale and dolphin watching

Whale approach distances

- 300 metres
- 100 m if only adult
- 100 metres
- 300 m if calf is present
- NO WAITING
- NO APPROACH
- Slow

Dolphin approach distances

- 150 metres
- 50 m if only adult
- 50 metres
- 150 m if calf is present
- NO WAITING
- NO APPROACH
- Slow

If a whale approaches your vessel, slow down to a 'no wash' speed and move away or disengage your vessel's gears, make no sudden movement and minimise noise.

No hovering

- 300 metres (1000 feet)
- 500 metres (1650 feet)
- 300 m NO FLY ZONE
- 500 m NO FLY ZONE
- 30 metres

When approaching whales or dolphins, start at an angle of at least 30 degrees to their direction of travel.

Skippers should go slow when within 300 m of whales and 150 m of dolphins.

NSW MARITIME

Department of Environment & Climate Change NSW

JULY 2008

Under the [National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009](#), a vessel operator cannot enter the caution zone if there are more than two other vessels already in it. This may mean waiting for other vessels to leave. If there are two or fewer vessels in the caution zone, continue on course at a constant slow speed and travel alongside the animals, no closer than 100m away from a whale or 50m from dolphins.

If there is a calf in a group (defined as half the length of the adult of the same species), it is illegal under the Regulation to enter the caution zone.

Be aware of other vessel movements and changes in animal movement or behaviour. Never chase or encircle a whale or dolphin or pass through the middle of the group.

ACTION IF A MARINE MAMMAL APPROACHES

Whales and dolphins sometimes approach vessels, or dolphins may ride the bow wave (it is an offence under the Regulation to encourage them to do so). In these situations, a master should not suddenly change speed or direction, and should slow down, engage neutral and wait until the animal has moved beyond the approach distance. The vessel should then be navigated at a constant slow speed until out of the Caution Zone.

Procedures and the Regulation can be found at [Approaching whales and dolphins in NSW](#).

Penguin colonies in the Spring Cove area are protected by a 4 knot speed limit and a no anchoring or fishing zone.

For further details about the protection of whales, penguins and other aquatic animals, visit the [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#) website or ring their Info Line 131 555.

Little penguins are another endangered species, and parts of Sydney Harbour have been declared a 'critical habitat' to better protect these birds. Special rules apply in these areas during the penguin's breeding season (1 July–28 February), including restrictions on anchoring and approaching habitats.

BRIDGES IN SYDNEY HARBOUR

A brief description of the primary bridges in Sydney Harbour is provided.

SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE

A single span arch bridge. Length of span clear of arch ring is 290 metres. Clear headway at centre is 53.4 metres at Indian Spring Low Water. There are two painting gantries which reduce the headway by 3.28 metres. Superyachts with an air draft greater than 49.0 metres should contact Harbour Control for clearance to pass under the Harbour Bridge.

THE GLEBE ISLAND BRIDGE

Clear opening through the swing spans is 18.7 metres on the western (Glebe Island) side, and 18.8 metres on the eastern (Pyrmont) side. Clear headway under each swing-span varies from 4.9 metres at the inner end to 6.8 metres at the outer end, the under side of each span forming a convex curve.

ANZAC BRIDGE

A fixed arch bridge, single span crossing the full width of the waterway with a maximum clearance of 28.5 metres above high water.

IRON COVE BRIDGE

Seven fixed spans, minimum clear opening 47.8 metres, maximum headway 12.3 metres but travelling gantries, when in use, decrease the headway to 10.4 metres. Headways stated are above high water.

GLADESVILLE BRIDGE

A fixed arch bridge with a single span crossing the full width of the waterway. Red triangles by day and fixed red neon lighted triangular shapes by night, mark the points of clearance of 24.3 metres above low water on both the downstream and upstream sides of the bridge. Masters of vessels should navigate under the bridge with due regard for depths of water available.

PYRMONT BRIDGE

Horizontal clearance of the swing span is 20.8 metres on the Sydney side and 21.4 metres on the Pyrmont side and through the side spans 22.4 metres. Clear headway under the side spans is 7.4 metres. Headways stated are above low water. The Pyrmont side spans are closed to shipping.

RYDE ROAD BRIDGE

Eight fixed spans, two fixed truss spans, and one truss span of the vertical lift type. Horizontal clearance of 29.8 metres under liftspan and 42 metres under each fixed truss span. Vertical clearance under liftspan of 11.8 metres above low water and under the two fixed truss spans of 11.5 metres above low water. The vertical lift span is permanently closed. The navigational span is now marked by fixed red and green lights.

RYDE RAILWAY BRIDGES

Two bridges, the downstream consisting of six fixed spans, the upstream 5 fixed spans, have been constructed 15 metres apart. The least headway under all spans is 11.5 metres and the minimum horizontal clearance 45 metres.

THE SPIT BRIDGE

Spit Bridge opens several times during the day. These times are promulgated on the [Roads and Traffic Authority](#) website (following links through 'Using NSW Roads' and 'Spit Bridge').

A vessel seeking passage through the Spit Bridge should arrive in the vicinity about 10 minutes prior to the scheduled opening time, or specially arranged opening, and manoeuvre close to the structure in such a way that the operator cannot mistake the intention:

- a. Approximately 5 minutes before opening the bridge the operator will switch-on control lights for both marine and road traffic.
- b. At the appropriate opening time the traffic lights will be turned to red and gates in the roadway raised to halt all vehicular flow across the bridge.
- c. The bascule span, hinged at its northern end, will be raised and when the channel is clear the marine lights will be switched from red, through amber, to green on one side of the bridge to allow vessels on that side to proceed.
- d. Vessels on the opposite side of the bridge, who still face a red light, shall keep clear of the channel through the bridge and not hamper the passage of any vessel proceeding through the opened span.
- e. Signals for such waiting vessels shall change from red, through amber, to green and until this fixed green light is shown no vessel shall attempt to pass through the opening in the bridge.

At weekends and holidays, especially in summer months, many small vessels may be waiting on either side of the Spit Bridge for scheduled openings and large ferries operate cruises to coincide with the bridge timetable. Masters of small craft wishing to make passage through the bridge at such times must exercise great caution in the navigation of their vessels to avoid collision.

COMMUNICATIONS

VHF CHANNELS

VHF Channels generally utilised for communication are:

Channel 12	Harbour Calling / Working
Channel 13	Harbour Control / NSW Maritime Patrol Vessels
Channel 16	Distress and Calling
Channel 6	Pilot Boarding
Channel 68, 69, 72	Tugs - Sydney Harbour
Channel 8, 10	Tugs – Botany Bay
Channel 16 / 67	Water Police & Marine Rescue NSW

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

NSW Maritime	9563 8511
Info Line	131256
Water Police	9320 7499 – 24 hr
Harbour Control	9296 4001 – 24 hr
Harbour Control Email	shipping@sydneyports.com.au
Sydney Ports Corporation	9296 4999
Sydney Ports Emergency Response	9296 4000 – 24 hr
Weather Report	8302 0429
AQIS Sydney	8334 7202 0409 045 217 0408 179 487 (after hours)
Australian Customs (National Communications Centre)	03 9244 8973 – 24 hr (located in the State of Victoria – note prefix '03')
Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority	9240 8500

USEFUL WEBSITES

Airservices Australia www.airservices.gov.au

Approaching Whales and Dolphins
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/animals/WhaleRegulation.htm

Australian Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au

Australian Customs www.customs.gov.au

Australian Department of Immigration www.immi.gov.au

Australian Maritime Safety Authority www.amsa.gov.au

Australian Quarantine Inspection Service www.aqis.gov.au

Civil Aviation Safety Authority www.casa.gov.au

National Marine Safety Committee www.nmsc.gov.au

National Parks and Wildlife Service www.environment.nsw.gov.au

NSW Acts and Regulations www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

NSW Maritime www.maritime.nsw.gov.au

NSW Superyacht Industry Association www.superyachtsydney.com.au

Roads and Traffic Authority www.rta.nsw.gov.au

Superyacht Base Australia www.superyachtbase.com

Sydney Ports Corporation www.sydneyports.com.au

The Great Southern Route Directory www.greatsouthernroute.com

Tourism Australia www.australia.com

Tourism NSW www.visitnsw.com.au

PHOTOGRAPHS

ROZELLE BAY SUPERYACHT MARINA



CAMPBELLS COVE



(Photo: A Francolini)



(Photo: A Francolini)





SYDNEY COVE – CIRCULAR QUAY



FARM COVE



GARDEN ISLAND NAVAL BASE



WALSH BAY



JONES BAY WHARF, PYRMONT



WATSONS BAY



SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE



GLEBE ISLAND BRIDGE



ANZAC BRIDGE



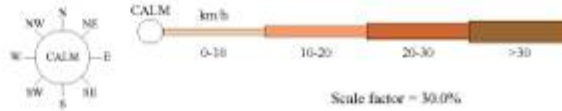
WIND FREQUENCY ANALYSES

WIND FREQUENCY ANALYSIS (in km/h)

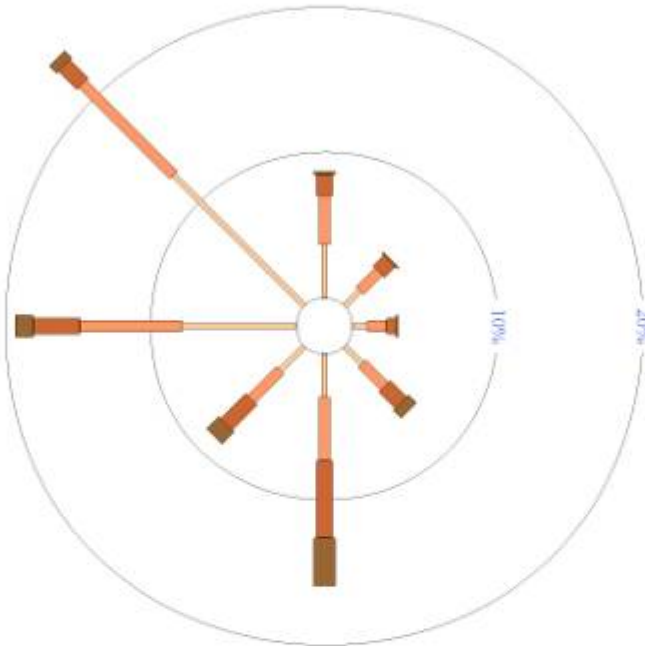
SYDNEY AIRPORT AMO STATION NUMBER 066037

Latitude: -33.94 ° Longitude: 151.17 °

9 am
23333 Total Observations (1939 to 2004)



Calm 10%



Wind directions are divided into eight compass directions. Calm has no direction.
 An asterisk (*) indicates that calm is less than 1%.
 An observed wind speed which falls precisely on the boundary between two divisions (eg 10km/h) will be included in the lower range (eg 1-10 km/h). Only quality controlled data have been used.



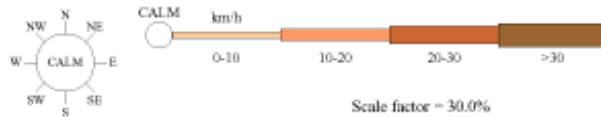
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WIND FREQUENCY ANALYSIS (in km/h)

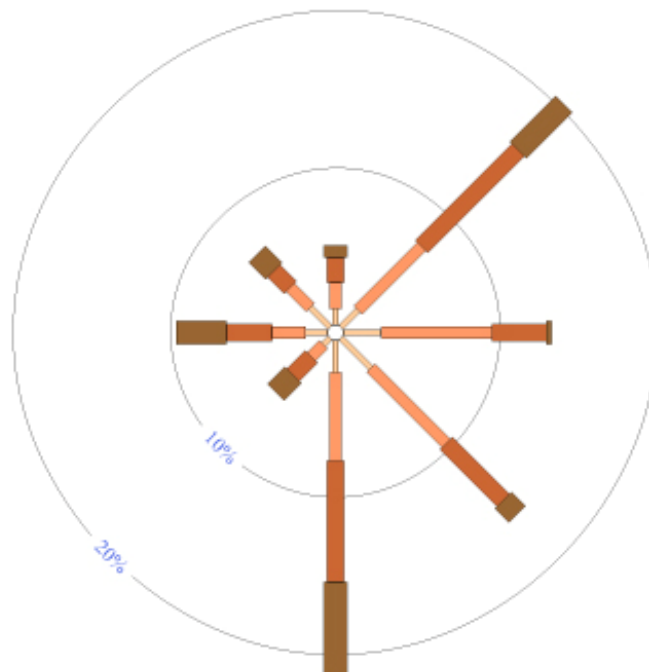
SYDNEY AIRPORT AMO STATION NUMBER 066037

Latitude: -33.94 ° Longitude: 151.17 °

3 pm
23407 Total Observations (1939 to 2004)



Calm 2%



Wind directions are divided into eight compass directions. Calm has no direction.
 An asterisk (*) indicates that calm is less than 1% .
 An observed wind speed which falls precisely on the boundary between two divisions (eg 10km/h) will be included in the lower range (eg 1-10 km/h). Only quality controlled data have been used.



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