



## Media Release

**Date:** 1 May 2020

### **Advice to boatowners after following changes to COVID-19 restrictions**

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Guernsey Coastguard is urging all boatowners to think very carefully before taking a private vessel out of any Guernsey harbour, marina and berths following the announcement of a relaxation of the rules on the private pleasure boat use during the COVID-19 lockdown measures due to the come into force on 00:01am local time on 2 May 2020.

Prior to 2 May 2020, private boatowners and operators could not put to open sea. Now some restricted use of private vessels under set criteria is permitted.

Guernsey's Harbourmaster Captain David Barker said:

"All mariners must observe and acknowledge the latest weather and shipping forecasts, and ensure their vessel has been checked and inspected thoroughly before putting to sea. This also includes ensuring that all boat systems and engines are operating correctly and all equipment is in date and operating normally. If there is any doubt about the seaworthiness of a vessel and the reliability of lifesaving equipment and systems (lifejackets, radio, radar navigation, liferafts etc.) please do not go to sea. This could involve local Search and Rescue assets, such as the lifeboat, being launched unnecessarily. For those who do want to head out to sea, please consider allowing a few days to help us manage marine traffic and tidal flows."

Guernsey Coastguard strongly recommends that no attempt should be made to leave any harbours, marinas, berths or pool moorings until such vessels are repaired and or serviced by a marine trader after the long winter.

The conditions under which vessels are permitted to be used are as follows:

- The latest weather forecast has been obtained and the vessel has been checked and inspected thoroughly before putting to sea. This should include ensuring that all boat systems and engines are operating correctly and all equipment is in date and operating as it should.

**This is particularly important in order to minimise the need for our emergency services to be mobilised potentially placing them and you at risk.**

- It is anticipated that a significant number of boaters will want to take advantage of this relaxation on the first few suitable tides. Boat skippers are urged to exercise good seamanship, courtesy, patience and common sense as they move in and out of marinas. Guernsey Harbours' dories will be operating in the marinas for the first few tides to monitor activity.
- Boat skippers may only be accompanied by persons permanently residing at the same address or, where the vessel is sufficiently large to maintain social distancing, with one other person from a different household.
- Boat owners and operators must continue to adhere to the strict social distancing rules currently in place.
- Boat owners are limited to a two-hour period of water-based activities in every 24-hour period.
- At the request of the authorities of Alderney, Sark and Herm, landing in those Islands is not permitted.
- Refuelling is permitted but only adhering to the strict social distancing rules currently in place and ensuring continued good hygiene practices including the use of gloves whilst handling refuelling equipment.
- Surfaces and objects that are touched regularly should be frequently cleaned and disinfected thoroughly using appropriate products and equipment on board the vessel.
- Attention is also drawn to the Skipper and crew of any vessel, which makes landfall outside of the Bailiwick's territorial waters, that they must observe Customs regulations as well as following the requirement to self-isolate for 14 days immediately upon return as set out in separate guidance for travel.

- These requirements have also been published by the Guernsey Harbourmaster via Local Notices to Mariners. Vessel owners are required to check the latest local notices regularly for updated instructions and changes, before putting to sea, using Guernsey Harbours' website <http://www.harbours.gg/Guernsey-Navigation-Warnings-Notices>.

As matter of course, all boatowners and operators should follow the '3 P's when preparing for the summer season and before heading out to the water.

**PREPARE yourself and your boat properly.** Have you made a plan and told someone who is not coming with you? Does your boat have enough fuel on-board? Do the engines, rigging, hull, electronics and bilge pump all do their job? Are your navigation lights and equipment working? Do you know the latest weather and shipping forecasts, tides and currents? Do you know how to make a distress call and who should receive it? Have you read and understood the latest Guernsey Coastguard Navigation warnings and the Local Notices to Mariners, available on the Guernsey Harbours website, social media accounts and broadcast on VHF Channel 16.

**PROVIDE the right equipment.** Does your vessel have enough life jackets/life rafts for all the occupants? Do you have a reliable method of communication, besides a mobile phone? Do you have enough emergency flares? Are they in date and stored correctly? Do you have fire extinguishers, EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon), navigational charts electronic and paper backup, and does the kill cord work?

**PERFORM responsibly on the water.** Remember your duty to look after your passengers and crew. Observe the 'rule of the road' and speed limits in and around harbours and bays Always be considerate to other mariners (think wake!). Practice your actions in the event of an emergency (distress call, man overboard drill). Do not mix seawater with alcohol or drugs, legal or otherwise!

**Ends**

## Notes to Media

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