



Canal &  
River Trust

# Safety Guidance For Small Boat Passage of The Severn Estuary

Change 5 – July 2012

These Guidance Notes have been produced in consultation with the following organisations:

Maritime and Coastguard Agency  
Inland Waterways Association  
Royal Yachting Association

*Every care has been taken in the compilation of this safety guidance but it must be emphasized that the notes only give general advice, and that the skipper is responsible for the safety of his craft and all aboard.*

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# **Guidance for Small Boat Passage of the Severn Estuary**

These notes are for the benefit of skippers of Inland Waterway Craft who wish to make the passage between Sharpness and Bristol, and for seagoing craft visiting the inland waterways.

The general content should also be of interest to local boat owners, particularly those venturing onto the Severn Estuary for the first time.

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## 1. The Passage - General

The passage between Sharpness and Bristol is often "not recommended" for inland waterway craft, particularly canal narrow boats. A safe passage is, however, perfectly feasible for boats which are suitably prepared and equipped for a short sea voyage and with skippers or crew members with appropriate experience and local knowledge, or with a licensed Pilot for the appropriate harbour area.

The Severn Estuary has the largest tidal range in Europe, over 10.5m at Sharpness, and up to 14.8m at Avonmouth, with stream velocities of up to 8 knots. The flows are complex and sea conditions can be dangerous to small craft, especially in the Shoots Channel when the wind is against the tide. Canal and river craft are strongly advised to avoid spring tides when the tidal stream velocities are greatest.

**There should always be at least two persons onboard able to control the vessel.**

The essential requirement for a safe passage is good weather, therefore, study the weather forecasts and regard wind Force 3 as a maximum. Wait and seek advice before locking out if doubtful. Look at the direction of the wind in relation to the tide, wind and tide in the same direction can help make for a smooth sea, whereas in opposite directions conditions can become unpleasant or even unsafe, especially for narrow boats.

**The movements of all vessels in the River Severn / Severn Estuary are governed by the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions At Sea** (the "collision regulations") a copy of which is an essential part of your equipment. They are available from HMSO, the RYA, or Chart Agents. You must be aware of your statutory duties under the "collision regulations", and navigate accordingly.

You will be navigating in areas where there may be many movements of ships and other craft of all sizes and limitations. Of particular note are: the harbour entrances at Sharpness, Avonmouth, and Royal Portbury, the River Avon and Bristol City Docks.

To ensure the safety of navigation of all vessels and craft in the Severn Estuary/River Severn, the fairway between Avonmouth approaches and Sharpness old Dock entrance must be recognized as a narrow channel in the context of the "collision regulations". The attention of all users is therefore drawn to the provisions of rule 9 of the regulations. Commercial ships are often constrained by their draft due to the narrow confines of the navigable channel combined with their relatively deep draft, and are severely restricted in their ability to deviate from the course they are following. All small craft mariners on this passage should take full account of the "collision regulations" as they apply to narrow channels and vessels constrained by their draft.

**Remember:** "A vessel of less than 20m in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway." In effect the whole passage between Avonmouth and Sharpness is conducted within a "narrow channel or fairway."

## 2. Preparation and Equipment

### **Plan your passage fully and with care.**

Although the regulations requiring the formulation of a passage plan apply to small craft proceeding to sea, small craft skippers should adhere to the voyage planning principles when navigating in categorised waters such as the Severn Estuary / River Severn.

Planning your passage is an essential part of preparation for the voyage. The following should particularly be taken into account when planning any boating trip:

**Weather:** Before you start your trip, check the weather forecast and get regular updates if you are planning to be out for any length of time.

**Tides:** Check the tidal predictions for your trip and ensure that they fit with what you are planning to do. It may be vital to know when the tide turns, or what the depth of water will be at a specific place and time. Carry a copy of the local Tide Tables.

**Day or Night?** Establish the times of Sunset and Sunrise and remember you are required by law to display appropriate lights (as defined in the “collision regulations”) when on the water during the hours of darkness.

**Limitations of your vessel:** Consider carefully if your boat is up to the trip and ensure that you have sufficient safety equipment and stores with you.

**Navigational Dangers:** Make sure that you are familiar with any navigational dangers you may encounter during your boating trip. This generally means checking an up to date chart and a current pilot book or almanac. Have charts for the area corrected up to date and study them.

**Contingency Plan:** Always have a contingency plan. Before you go consider areas of safety, where you can take refuge should conditions deteriorate, or if you suffer an accident or injury. Bear in mind that any electronic equipment including GPS can be vulnerable and could fail. It is sensible and good practice to use all available aids to navigation, modern and traditional, and not be over reliant on any one, particularly GPS.

**Personal Safety:** Always wear lifejackets of an approved type taking full account of any associated hazards. Cold water shock and rough water severely reduce a person’s ability to stay afloat, so always wear lifejackets of an approved type to extend survival time and improve the chances of being rescued.

**Radar Reflectors:** All pleasure vessels are required to carry a radar reflector if practicable. These should be mounted as high as possible for maximum detection range.

**Information ashore:** Before you commence the passage talk to the Port Authorities at both ends. Make sure someone knows your plans and knows what to do should they become concerned for your well being. The Coastguard Voluntary Safety Identification Scheme (CG66) is free and easy to join.

**Steering Equipment:** Make sure that your steering system is in good order. If hydraulic, confirm that oil levels are correct, there is no leakage and the system is purged of air.

**Engine performance:** Ensure your engine is in good working order. Boats are immobilized by engine failure more often than by any other cause. (Remember on this passage the water you are upon is not stationary as in a canal, it will be moving over the ground at anything up to 8 knots on spring tides. If your engine fails you will be carried along by the tidal stream with little or no control of your boat.) It is recommended that **fuel tanks are purged** to remove sludge or water, and then refilled whilst preparing your boat for passage.

**Engines should be checked for reliability and fuel filters cleaned.** Water and sludge that lurks harmlessly at the bottom of your fuel tanks when you are on calm canals will be remixed with fuel when your boat starts to move in a seaway, which frequently leads to fuel system blockages and/or failures.

**Engine room ventilators or air intakes near the waterline should be made watertight and suitable alternative ventilation arranged.** Since passage can be choppy, inland waterway craft with forward cockpits should **use spray sheets or covers to prevent entry of water, forward cockpit scuppers may need to be blocked.**

You may encounter a significant swell during your passage particularly to seaward of the Severn Road Bridge. (Aust to Chepstow) If you do not make any provision to stop the ingress of water when the craft is pitching there is a danger that the forward cabin could become swamped thus making the vessel unstable leading to probable capsize and sinking. Drainage ports on most narrow boats would not be able to clear the forward cockpit with the vessel pitching in a moderate swell and water entering each time the bow is immersed.

### **3. Safety Equipment needed:**

**Lifejackets fitted with lights for all onboard** goes without saying. Those wholly dependent on oral inflation should be worn partially inflated.

**Radar reflector fitted as high as practicable**

**A Lifebuoy with smoke/light signal attached is needed somewhere aft** within easy reach of the helmsman. In addition a **30 metre buoyant line or approved rescue quoit** or similar device should be kept handy.

**Distress Flares.** Small craft, within three miles of shore, should carry **two red handflares and two orange smoke signals.**

**Sound Signals and Lights.** All craft are required by law to have a means of giving sound signals and to display adequate navigation lights when on this passage between sunset and sunrise, or in conditions of restricted visibility.

**Bilge Pump and a hand bailer.**

**Engine Tool Kit**

**Fuel and Water Filters**

**Water Resistant Torch**

**FIRST AID KIT**

**Fire Fighting Equipment appropriate to your vessel.** Guidance is published in the British Waterways Boat Safety Specification or in **Safety on the Sea** obtainable from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. (MCA)

## 4. Mooring equipment required

**Anchor.** Big is best! Have an anchor that is too large rather than too small. One heavy anchor should hold better than two small ones. Remember, though, when testing its weight in a dry clean chandlery that it will feel very different when in use in wet and breezy conditions. All anchors work best if the pull on them is close to horizontal. A nylon rope (the warp) absorbs shock, but a length of chain next to the anchor is required to resist chafe and to keep the pull on the anchor close to horizontal. A suitable minimum length of chain and warp would be 6 x the maximum depth expected at your anchorage, comprising of a boats length of chain and the remainder a suitable rope (12mm or 14mm diameter nylon rope, or other of equivalent breaking load should suffice).

**If in doubt about the amount of warp and chain consult the RYA or MCA for further advice.**

In any event err on the side of caution and have too much rather than too little chain and warp. During the passage you might spend some time at anchor or aground over low water.

**Long mooring lines are required** (25m) with a large eye that can be passed over a bollard.

## 5. Sources of Weather information

BBC Radio 4 shipping forecast for sea area Lundy (Inshore – Lands End to St Davids Head)

The internet – suggested sites: [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) or [www.met.gov.uk](http://www.met.gov.uk)

Marinecall (Premium Rate) service – tel: 09068 500549 or fax: 09065 300259

Swansea Coastguard broadcasts local weather forecasts from 0005hrs UTC (GMT) at four hourly intervals on the following aerals/channels (after a preliminary announcement on Ch. 16)

Severn Bridge, Hartland Point, Mumbles – Channel 84

Combe Martin, St Hilary (Cardiff) – Channel 86

## 6. Canal & River Trust Boat Safety Scheme & Licensing

All craft should be aware that British Waterways (now Canal & River Trust) Boat Safety Scheme came into force on the 1st January 1997. For all users on longer than 28 day licenses FULL boat safety certification is required. For short term users, i.e. those on passage or a brief visit with a maximum license term of 28 days, craft will be subject to checks under the Dangerous Boat Check List.

£1 million third party insurance cover is mandatory for craft using the waterways. CRT staff or authorized agents will wish to see a copy of the original insurance certificate before issuing a short term license.

If you have any questions regarding the Boat Safety Scheme or Insurance, please contact the Waterway Office at Gloucester. Tel: 01452 318000

## 7. Insurance

Most insurance companies of inland waterway craft make provision for those making tideway passages between one waterway and another.

Salvage cover should be included on your policy. (Harbour Authorities have Statutory Powers to remove wrecks and obstructions, the bills for which may be expensive - up to £1 million)

**Check with your insurance company and ensure that you are fully covered.**

**Prior notice of passage outside Inland Waters may be required.**

**Is it a condition of your insurance that a licensed Pilot be engaged ?**

## 8. Making contact with the Coastguard

**HM COASTGUARD operate a free Yacht and Boat Safety Scheme** with the aim of providing the Maritime Rescue Centre with up to date vessel information. These forms, called CG66, can be obtained by post from Swansea Coastguard. Telephone 01792 366534.

**Swansea Coastguard** should be contacted before you sail.

They are always pleased to talk to small craft sailors, and can offer sound advice on local hazards, safety equipment, weather and sea conditions, and many more important aspects of going afloat.

The Coastguard maintain a 24 hour distress and calling watch on marine band VHF Channel 16 and on the DSC channel 70.

When passing a TR (Transit Report) to the Coastguard, or requesting routine information, call "**Swansea Coastguard**" on VHF Channel 16, you will then be asked to change to VHF Channel 67. Be prepared to pass the following information:

**Port of departure, port of destination, expected time of arrival and the number of persons onboard.**

You may be asked to spell the name of your boat so that it can be matched to a CG66, and **don't forget to inform them should you change your plans or your destination.**

Mobile phones may be used, but these **should not** be a substitute for a VHF marine band radio. If you do use a mobile phone, **inform both Sharpness Radio and Avonmouth signal station of your number, and put it on your CG66**, call to inform them that you have safely reached your destination.

**Some means of external communication is essential, both for operational and safety reasons.**

Swansea Coastguard can be contacted on **01792 366534 for all routine enquiries or dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard in an EMERGENCY.**

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency now offer information by telephone on **0870 600 6505**, by e-mail at [infoline@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:infoline@mcga.gov.uk) and on their website at <http://www.mcga.gov.uk>

## **9. The Passage - Sharpness to Bristol.**

Small craft locking out of Sharpness will normally enter the Dock 2 to 2½ hours before High Water at Sharpness. **Sharpness bridges and lock must be booked 24 hours in advance.**

Contact **Sharpness Pierhead (tel: 01453 511968)** for lock and bridge bookings. Be prepared to leave a message and a member of staff will return your call.

The bridges will be swung as required, at the beginning and end of the tidal window to allow passage to and from the dock for leisure traffic on that tide. If you miss the allotted opening at the beginning of the tidal window it may not be possible to open again before High Water (what is or is not possible on any tide will be determined by the movements on that tide).

All movements within the dock are controlled by the Duty Supervisor or his staff.

On entering the dock, follow the instructions given by the Duty Supervisor or lockgatemanager regarding your movements within the Dock. **If you have VHF, monitor channel 13.**

You will normally be passed straight into the lock and lowered to river level. You may then proceed into the river or move into the tidal basin to remain in still water until High Water.

Low powered craft are advised to remain in the tidal basin until HW and proceed downriver on the ebbing tide. Outbound craft are moved into the basin to free the lock for any incoming traffic.

On leaving Sharpness follow the charted channel to Avonmouth. Under normal circumstances it is unlikely that you will reach Bristol City Docks on a single tide. It will therefore be necessary to wait over the low water period for the next flood tide. Although it is possible to anchor in Portishead Pool (1.4nm downriver from Avonmouth North Pier) it is safer and more comfortable to take advantage of the facilities at Portishead Marina before proceeding up the River Avon on a flood tide.

Contact **"Bristol VTS" on Channel 12 VHF**, or Avonmouth Signal station by phone on 0117 9822257 on clearing the Lower Shoots beacon, or when leaving Portishead. Information will be passed regarding commercial vessels and advice will be given on your movements prior to entering the River Avon.

**(See "NOTES" on Page 10 regarding Portishead Pool and contacts for Portishead Marina)**

**Please note that the entrance to the River Avon is flanked by two busy docks. The vessels using these docks are large and deep drafted. They are extremely restricted in their ability to manoeuvre and small craft must keep clear.**

**See the attached chartlet for information on approach routes.**

Vessels bound for Bristol entering the River Avon should make their destination known to **Bristol VTS** (Ch 12 VHF) or Avonmouth Signal Station (by telephone).

**Vessels are required to report to Bristol VTS/Avonmouth Signal Station on passing Shirehampton and Sea Mills.** The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that the Dock Master on duty in the City Docks can be informed that the vessel entering the River is definitely bound for Bristol and not for Pill or Sea Mills.

The last inward locking at City Docks is scheduled for 15 minutes before High Water. However, it is sometimes possible for special arrangements to be made with the Dock Master for him to keep the outer lock gates open until 15 minutes after High Water.

For movements through locks at City Docks, the Dock Master may be called on **LOW POWER ONLY** after passing Black Rock inward. Vessels should call on **VHF Channel 14** using call sign **“City Docks Radio”** or telephone **01179 273633**. Watch is from 3 hours before High Water (Avonmouth) until 48 minutes after.

## **10. The Passage - Bristol to Sharpness**

Persons intending to travel to or from Bristol Harbour (Bristol City Docks) should obtain a copy of “Bristol Harbour – Information for Boaters” from the Harbour Masters Office. This publication is updated regularly and provides all the information needed in respect of communications, licensing, berthing and navigation on the River Avon and within the harbour area.

Vessels leaving Bristol City Docks should obtain details of traffic in the River Avon from the Dockmaster City Docks, or by VHF radio from Bristol VTS (Ch 12) or by telephone from Avonmouth Signal Station before proceeding from the Cumberland Basin Locks. Thereafter they are required to report their position to Bristol VTS / Avonmouth Signal Station on passing Sea Mills and Shirehampton.

Speed limits in the Avon are 9 knots for drafts less than 1.9m and 6 knots for deeper craft. (All craft must slow down when passing any Pill, Creek or Jetty where craft are moored.)

It is advisable to check with Bristol VTS on the traffic in King Road when rounding Nelson Point.

The majority of shipping entering Avonmouth or Royal Portbury Docks on the flood tide will proceed north of the entrance before swinging to enter against the flood.

**They are restricted in their ability to manoeuvre. Craft should only cross the traffic stream when advised by Bristol VTS / Avonmouth Signal Station that it is safe to do so.**

The distance between the City of Bristol and Sharpness is 24 nautical miles. All but the fastest craft will need to wait over the low water period. The recommended waiting position is in Portishead Marina, or alternatively at anchor in Portishead Pool (NB: Portishead Pool can be dangerous with winds from North West, through North, to East.)

If you choose to remain in the River Avon seek advice from Bristol VTS / Avonmouth Signal Station as to the best position (allowing for weather and the craft's construction) to anchor.

Plan your passage to arrive off Sharpness **No earlier** than 1 hour before High Water and **No later** than High Water Sharpness.

**No earlier** for two reasons:

i) Outbound traffic passes through the locks at Sharpness before inbound.

ii) If you make the passage up the River Severn too early there will be very little water above the Severn Road Bridge, and there is the danger that you will touch the bottom at times. In severe cases craft can be literally rolled over and over on the sand banks between the Road Bridge and Sharpness. More often you will be "bumped" further and further onto the bank and you could well lose your propeller and/or rudder, endangering your craft and all aboard.

**No later** than High Water because there are times when for the safety of shipping in the system Sharpness gates must be closed at High Water.

Call "**Sharpness Radio**" on **VHF Channel 13** or by Mobile Phone as soon as possible after leaving Avonmouth. Keep Sharpness pierhead advised of your position and ETA.

**Movement of commercial shipping into and out of Sharpness dictates what can and cannot be achieved on any specific tide.**

**You should familiarize yourself with the meanings of the port entry signal lights which are installed at Sharpness Pierhead.**

**At times it may be necessary to stem the tide in the estuary close to Sharpness prior to entering the basin and lock system. You must ensure that your vessel has suitable reserves of fuel and adequate power to do so.**

**At times small craft may be required to pass through the lock chamber with commercial shipping.**

## 11. Useful Telephone Numbers and VHF Stations

### Canal & River Trust - Sharpness

Marine Band Radio: **VHF CHANNEL 13 - "SHARPNESS RADIO"**

Telephone: Pierhead: **01453 511968**  
(Answerphone service if offices are unmanned)

Gloucester Harbour Trustees – Sharpness **01453 811913**

Canal & River Trust - Gloucester **01452 318000**

### Bristol Port Company - Avonmouth

Marine Band Radio : **VHF CHANNEL 12 "BRISTOL VTS"**

Telephones : Signal Station **0117 9822257** (24 Hours)

### Bristol City Docks

Marine Band Radio : Dockmaster **VHF CHANNEL 14 "CITY DOCKS RADIO"**

Harbourmaster **VHF CHANNEL 73**  
**"BRISTOL FLOATING HARBOUR"**

Telephones : Dockmaster **0117 9273633** (-3 Hrs HW +1 Hr)  
(Answerphone outside these hours)

Harbourmaster **0117 903 1484**  
(0800 - 1700 Winter)  
(0800 - Dusk British Summer Time)

Portishead Marina Telephone: 01275 841941 **VHF Channel 80**

### Pilotage Services – Telephones:

Gloucester Harbour (Avonmouth ~ Sharpness) **07774 226143**

Bristol Harbour (Avonmouth ~ Bristol City Docks) **01179 823081**

( ~ denotes passage between the listed ports in either direction. )

Swansea Coastguard **01792 366534**

**NB:** HW Times refer to HW Avonmouth for Avonmouth and City Docks hours.

## 12. Notes

### i) Local Notices to Mariners (NTMs)

Port Authorities publish NTMs giving up to date information on changes to Navigation Aids, Dangers to Navigation etc.

Check with the Port Authorities who have control of the areas covered by your proposed passage to obtain such information.

### ii) Waiting over Low Water

Where to wait over Low Water in the vicinity of Avonmouth has been the subject of a great deal of discussion involving the relevant Port Authorities, the IWA, and the RYA.

The issues have been minuted at meetings of the appropriate Marine Safety Sub Committee. After much deliberation and investigation on the part of the relevant Port Authorities the advice remains in essence the same as issued in earlier versions of these notes.

Small Craft waiting over the Low Water period prior to passage up the Avon to Bristol, or up the estuary to Sharpness, should use the facilities offered by Portishead Marina.

Portishead Marina keeps a 24 hour listening watch on VHF Channel 80 call sign "Portishead Quays Marina". Under normal conditions, for a moderate drafted vessel (1.5m) the lock will give access of HW +/- 4.5 hrs on mean neaps and HW +/- 3.75 hours on mean springs.

For more detailed information contact Portishead Marina direct. Tel: 01275 841941

Alternatively you could anchor in Portishead Pool but be aware that the anchorage can be dangerous with winds from North West, through North, to East. Check the Weather Forecast before anchoring. Craft are advised to remain afloat at anchor rather than to take the ground.

If through a combination of circumstances you need to remain in the River Avon seek advice from Bristol VTS / Avonmouth Signal Station as to the best position (allowing for weather and the craft's construction) to anchor.

(Note: It is **not** recommended that vessels remain in the River Avon.)

## Appendices:

### 1) Bristol Port Company – Pilotage Advice to small craft

Provided to give guidance to Small Craft when navigating in the vicinity of Avonmouth and Portbury Dock entrances.

**Important Note:** The callsign "**BRISTOL VTS**" should be used when calling Avonmouth Signal Station on VHF Channel 12 (not "Avonmouth Radio" as stated in the Bristol Port Company guide attached as appendix 1)

**2) Safety Guidance checklist** - Provided as a quick means of checking that all relevant points discussed in this document have been considered.



THE BRISTOL PORT COMPANY

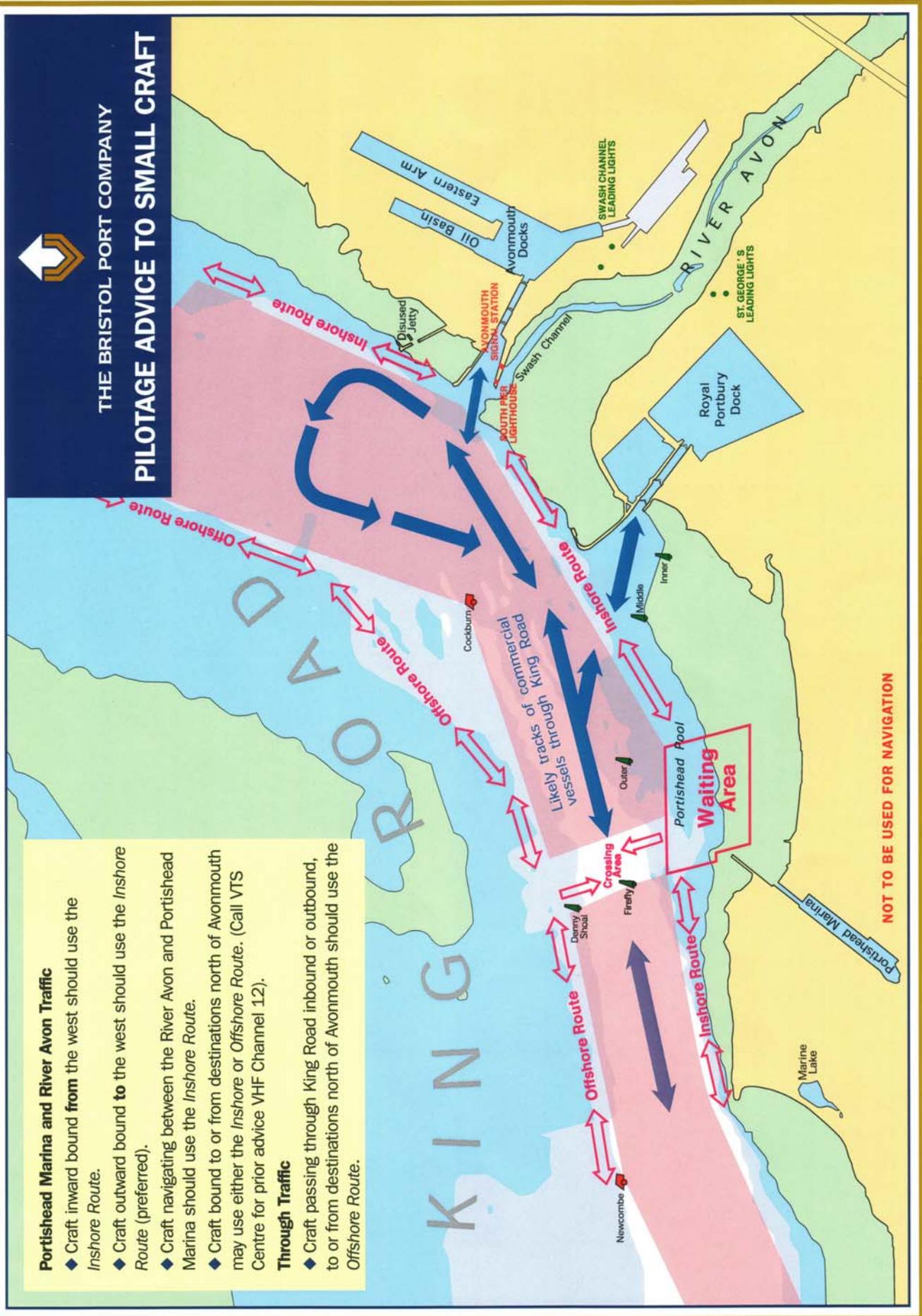
## PILOTAGE ADVICE TO SMALL CRAFT

### Portishead Marina and River Avon Traffic

- ◆ Craft inward bound from the west should use the *Inshore Route*.
- ◆ Craft outward bound to the west should use the *Inshore Route* (preferred).
- ◆ Craft navigating between the River Avon and Portishead Marina should use the *Inshore Route*.
- ◆ Craft bound to or from destinations north of Avonmouth may use either the *Inshore* or *Offshore Route*. (Call VTS Centre for prior advice VHF Channel 12).

### Through Traffic

- ◆ Craft passing through King Road inbound or outbound, to or from destinations north of Avonmouth should use the *Offshore Route*.



## Advice to Small Craft

- ◆ Keep a listening watch on VHF Channel 12 for VTS information and advice. Avoid unnecessary transmission on this channel.
- ◆ Keep clear of the main shipping channel unless it is necessary to cross. If it is necessary to cross, do so in the crossing area, at right angles and as quickly as possible.
- ◆ **Use the waiting area** until the channel is clear to cross.
- ◆ Inward bound craft intending to use the Inshore Route should join it at the Avon buoy.
- ◆ Avoid a close quarters situation. Do not approach closer than 500 metres ahead and 200 metres astern or to the side of commercial vessels.
- ◆ Be aware that larger vessels require considerable room for themselves and for their attendant tugs to manoeuvre.
- ◆ Avoid using VHF Channels 8 and 72. These are used for ship/tug communications.

## Communication Procedures

- Traffic control for the area is provided by the Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) Centre located at Avonmouth, call sign Avonmouth Radio.**
- ◆ **Inward** bound commercial vessels report their ETA Portishead Point to Avonmouth Radio on VHF channel 12 when passing English & Welsh (EW Grounds) buoy and Welsh Hook buoy.
  - ◆ **Outward** bound commercial vessels report to Avonmouth Radio on VHF Channel 12 at the following positions.
    1. Prior to leaving Avonmouth or Portbury Locks.
    2. When passing Shirehampton (for vessels leaving River Avon).
    3. When passing Lower Shoots Beacon (for vessels leaving Sharpness).
  - ◆ Small craft in the estuary should maintain a listening watch on VHF Channel 12 for the above information.
  - ◆ Small craft awaiting an outward lock at Portishead Marina should obtain this information by monitoring VHF Channel 80 and the lock-side public announcement system.

## Commercial Vessels

- Be aware of vessels entering and leaving Avonmouth and Portbury Docks.**
- ◆ Large deep draught vessels will generally make a direct approach to Portbury from the west on the flood tide.
  - ◆ Other vessels, including car carriers and all those vessels entering Avonmouth will generally swing to port off the entrance to the River Avon when entering on the flood tide.
  - ◆ Normally a direct approach from the west will be made on the ebb tide.
  - ◆ Commercial vessels will often pass within 200 metres of Portishead Point. Craft using the Inshore Route should therefore remain well inshore to allow these vessels sufficient sea room.

## River Avon

- Navigation**
- ◆ When approaching the entrance inward bound, leave South Pier Lighthouse close to port.
  - ◆ Make allowance for flood tide, running northeast across entrance at up to 4.5 knots at 3 hours to high water on spring tides.
  - ◆ On entering the river and on departure, keep to the north bank.
- Do not attempt to cross the Swash bank.**
- ◆ On departure keep the St. George's transit astern then north of the line of the Swash leading lights until abeam of the South Pier Lighthouse.
- Speed Limit**
- ◆ The speed limit in the River Avon for small craft is 9 knots between Shirehampton and Cumberland Basin.
  - ◆ Slow down when passing Pills and Creeks where other craft are moored.
- Horseshoe Bend**
- ◆ Vessels going down the river against the flood tide are to stop above the Horseshoe Bend when vessels coming up river are rounding the bend.



# Safety Guidance Checklist

## Planning - Do you hold the following (Y or N)

River Avon Chart (Admiralty No.1859)	
Severn Estuary Chart (Admiralty No.1166)	
Tide Tables	

"Collision Regulations"	
£1 Million Third Party Insurance	
Suitable Passage Insurance (Inc. Salvage)	

## Preparation - General (Y or N)

Is your engine reliable	
Have your fuel tanks been purged	
Have you cleaned or replaced filters	
Do you carry appropriate tools	
Do you carry essential spares	
Do you have sufficient fuel	
Have you an operational Bilge Pump	

## Additional for Narrowboats (Y or N)

Have you covered the for'rd cockpit	
Are the for'rd cockpit scuppers blocked	
Are Eng Room vents near waterline watertight	
Have you made alternative venting arrangements	
Have you secured loose objects	
Do you have appropriate Navigation Lights	

## Do you carry --- (Y or N)

Lifejackets for all onboard	
A Lifebuoy Aft - Fitted with smoke/light signal	
30m Buoyant Line or Approved Rescue Quoit	
Two Red handflares	
Two Orange Smoke signals	
Water resistant Torch	
Radar Reflector	

An Anchor with chain and warp	
Long mooring lines (25m)	
A hand bailer	
First Aid Kit	
Appropriate Fire Fighting Equipment	
Suitable sound signalling equipment	

## Communications --- (Y or N)

Do you carry a marine band VHF	
Do you carry a mobile phone	

Do you have Channels 10,12,13,14, 67 & 73	
Do Avonmouth & S'ness have your Tel. No.	

## Passage - General

Have you notified MRCC Swansea of your planned passage & number of persons onboard	
Have you obtained a suitable weather forecast to cover the whole passage period	
Are you a member of the MCA's Yacht and Boat Safety Scheme	