

Safety Advice for Recreational Sailors



The Crouch Harbour Authority regularly reviews guidance from incidents reviewed internally but also from outside sources such as safety digests from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB).

The Harbour Authority would like to pass on the following practical advice to recreational users:

Training and Experience

The experience and training acquired will differ with every recreational sailor from the novice to the most experienced. There are a number of RYA approved courses on offer from various marina's in the river Crouch and those who are new to sailing or wish to gain more education should consider taking these courses before putting onto the water. There are also numerous sailing clubs in the river where novice sailors and those wishing to pursue leisure activities on the water can join and learn from the experience of others. The Crouch Area Yachting Federation (CYAF) has a number of member clubs and their website can be consulted.

Equipment and Safety

All equipment including boats and sailing tackle should be inspected and fit for purpose before use. All leisure sailors should ensure that they can swim, have a buoyancy aid (life jacket), warm clothing, means of communication such as a VHF radio and fully charged mobile phone and be able to report their position. Those in charge of boats should ensure everyone knows what to do in an emergency and if people are sailing solo they should let someone know when they are leaving and when they are expected back. Ensure you have sensible levels of reserves onboard such as fuel, water, food and a first aid kit.

Passage Planning

Passage planning is not just for larger vessels but for all vessels. This includes having the correct charts which are up to date, knowledge of the tides, knowledge of the buoys and the rule of the road. Before you put onto the water ensure you have obtained an accurate weather forecast.

Fatigue and Complacency

Being at sea or on the water for a while, fatigue can set in with the body losing heat and using up body fuel. This leads to tasks becoming harder and also the ability to take decisions. This can then lead to complacency and the increase in risk taking. Ensure you are properly equipped to go out onto the water and plan for activity to take longer than expected.

Maritime & Coastguard Agency Marine Guidance Note MGN 489 (M) provides an overview of the Merchant Shipping Legislation that applies to pleasure vessels:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/pleasure-vessels-uk-regulations-marine-guidance-note-489-amendment>