

CHICHESTER HARBOUR TOWAGE GUIDELINES

All vessels towing a vessel or structure, over 12m in length, or the total length of the tow exceeds 20m are to provide a towage plan to the Harbour Master before committing to enter the harbour or departing moorings.

If these tows are unusual objects or non-routine towage events the movements should be approved in advance by the Harbour Master.

Notwithstanding anything contained in these guidelines, towage requirements for individual vessels remains the responsibility of the vessels Master after due consultation with the Harbour Master. RNLI lifeboats are exempt from these guidelines.

Further Guidelines:

1.0 Emergency tows

If it is necessary to provide towage assistance in an emergency, the towage provider should inform the Harbour Master of their intentions as soon as it is safe to do so. Emergency situations must be reported to HM Coastguard via CH16 or 999 and then the Harbour Master via CH14 or 01243 512301

In cases of emergency, where there is danger to life, property, safety of vessels in the Harbour, or the environment, harbour teams will assist with tows as necessary and will not charge for any assistance rendered.

2.0 Non-emergency tows

CHC policy is to only tow vessels to the nearest place of safety. This will normally be the nearest visitors' moorings suitable for the vessel or a marina. If the boat owner wishes to proceed to another destination in the harbour they should contact SeaStart or other operators that provide a towing service. If CHC resourcing is available, towage services may be available at the applicable rates.

3.0 Safety

Towing is a regular harbour authority activity and if carried out within the guidelines detailed below is a safe operation. It should always be borne in mind that badly planned or executed tows can be very hazardous.

Towing is not to be undertaken in restricted visibility (< 1nm) or if the visibility is likely to become restricted during the course of the tow.

While dangerous swell and sea conditions are rare within the harbour, consideration should be given to the prevailing conditions at all times, especially where picking up a tow in, around or just outside the harbour entrance where large swells and confused seas can build.

Picking up or transferring a tow should never be conducted while underway. It may be necessary for a vessel under tow to be 'held to tide' if transferring a tow line to another tug vessel, or if transferring casualties. In this case, sheltered water should be sought before attempting such maneuvers.

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If the RIB's are requested to tow a larger vessel, a supplementary risk assessment must be undertaken to ensure that the task is safe to complete. If there is any doubt that a tow cannot be completed in total safety, it should not be undertaken.

4.0 Dead Tows, Unusual Objects and Non-routine Towage Events

Arrivals or departures from or to sea should be approved in advance by the Conservancy, which will be contingent on a satisfactory risk assessment and method statement covering the areas identified in the Guide to Good Practice.

In the harbour, non-routine tows should be risk assessed by the person organising the tow. Key decisions should be recorded and the person (acting as towing master) who is responsible for the safety of the manoeuvre and the passage plan should be clearly identified.

The Conservancy should give written approval for the tow to go ahead once the plan has been reviewed and agreed.