

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT IN THE THAMES ESTUARY CODE OF CONDUCT

The Thames Estuary offers excellent opportunities for you to use your Personal Watercraft (PWC). This document describes established good practice to ensure that you do not endanger yourself, others, or cause harm to the environment. Please follow this Code of Conduct and share this information and guidance with other riders. Have fun whilst being safe!

DO!

- Only launch, moor and land from authorised launch sites
- Read and observe the byelaws and rules posted at launch sites
- Maintain a distance from sensitive wildlife and habitats, particularly during wintering periods (September to March) and at high tides
- Maintain a steady direction and a slow 'no wake' speed if wildlife is encountered
- Ensure you have (and carry proof of) adequate public liability insurance and ID
- Register with Datatag and display your 'Datatag Visible ID' clearly
- Carry correct safety equipment when out on the water
- Show consideration to other water users
- Consider joining a local PWC club
- Give ships a wide berth and give way if need be

DO NOT!

- Use your PWC upstream of Margaretness Point (near Barking Creek)
- Enter PWC restricted areas
- Exceed 8 knots within 200m of a wharf, jetty, public beach, bathing place or residential property
- Harass or chase wildlife
- Launch from or approach roosting or nesting sites for birds
- Ride at the low water mark where birds may be feeding or where you may erode the bed/submerged vegetation
- Decant petrol or use chemical treatments in the water
- Ride the bow waves of ships or cross close ahead of them
- Generate wake when passing through moorings
- Underestimate the speed or inability of manoeuvre of large ships



How to Report an Incident

In an emergency contact the Coastguard on 999 or VHF channel 16. If you see any PWC rider acting irresponsibly, endangering other water users or breaking the law, please contact the
Essex Police Marine Unit on: 01621 782121,
Kent Police on: 01622 798565, or
the PLA Harbour Master on: 01474 562212.



This advice is produced by the Port of London Authority (PLA), with the assistance of the estuary community and river users, through workshops and wide consultation. To obtain further copies please see:
www.boatingonthames.co.uk/



PLA Byelaws require Personal Watercraft (PWCs) to remain clear of the fairway and to keep a minimum distance of 200 metres from berths, beaches and foreshore. PWCs are also not permitted in the area from Lower Hope Point to the Margaretness Limit when operating on the plane, without having first advised the Harbour Master.

To comply with the Byelaw a PWC transiting inwards should follow the approved recreational vessel track and should be to the south of the channel in Sea Reach before passing the tanker berths at the Havens and the London Gateway Port development, crossing back to the correct side of the river when approaching Alpha Jetty in the Lower Hope. Similarly PWCs proceeding outwards should transit south of the channel passing London Gateway Port & tanker berths at the Havens before crossing the channel if heading for Southend area.

There are a number of areas on the river, which are clear of the channel and berths where operating on the plane is permitted; such as St Clements Anchorage, Greenhithe and a small area in Erith Rands provided they are clear of the channel.

Safeguarding the Natural Environment

The Thames Estuary supports some of the most valuable habitats in the country. In recognition of this, many areas have been legally designated for their wildlife value (see map below). These range from statutory sites of national or international significance to smaller non-statutory sites of local importance. Using your PWC could cause lasting damage to these sites and the wider environment, through: physical impact to important habitats (e.g. saltmarsh and mudflats); disturbance of wildlife (e.g. birds and marine mammals); and pollution (e.g. watercraft repairs, waste, noise).



In order to minimise your impact, please follow these simple rules:

- Only launch, moor and land your PWC from authorised launch sites and do not use saltmarsh or mudflats for these purposes. Launch sites are listed below.
 - Watt Tyler country Park
 - West Shoebury Beach
 - Ramsgate
 - Hoo Peninsula
 - Herne Bay
 - Margate
 - Whitstable
- Maintain distance from sensitive wildlife and habitats such as saltmarsh and exposed mudflats, particularly during wintering periods (September - March) when birds may be feeding or roosting.
- Avoid shallow waters where your PWC may erode or disturb the riverbed and submerged vegetation.
- Do not harass marine mammals such as dolphins, or large flocks of birds. As a general rule, never go closer than 100m (200m if another boat is in the vicinity).
- If wildlife is encountered, maintain a steady direction and a slow 'no wake' speed away from the wildlife.
- Do not exceed 8 knots (10 mph) when within designated conservation areas and do not enter restricted areas (see map opposite).
- Do not decant petrol or use chemical treatments in the water.

Riding Responsibly

PWC users have a responsibility to other water users, and to themselves, to ride in a safe and responsible manner. It is important to know how to stay safe and how to behave with respect to other users when out on the water. By observing the following guidelines, you can stay safe and not endanger others. The Port of London Authority (PLA) regulates the use of PWCs through its local River Byelaws. To obtain a copy please visit the PLA's website: www.pla.co.uk.



Awareness

When out on the water, you should always be on the lookout for other vessels and people in the water. It is important to know where other vessels are and where they are heading before you make a turn or cross a wake.

Operating Speed

As a general rule, you should not exceed the speed of 8 knots (10 mph) when your craft is within 200m of the shoreline or a port facility. In congested areas, lower your speed accordingly.

Upstream Limit

You must not use your PWC upstream of Margaretness Limit (near Barking Creek).

Note that there are currently no authorised launching areas off these sites or launching sites upstream of Canvey Island.

To operate a PWC between Margaretness and Lower Hope Point you must provide your details to the Harbour Master before or on date of intended use.

Safety Lanyard

Never operate your PWC without the safety lanyard attached to you. The lanyard will cut the engine if you fall from the craft.

Competency Training

Attend an approved training course. The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) holds a one-day competence course which teaches you how to use your PWC safely, responsibly and with confidence, ensuring that you get the best out of your craft. RYA contact details are provided overleaf.

PWC Clubs

Where possible, join a local PWC club which can offer benefits like the use of private slipways. The map overleaf shows the locations of PWC clubs in the Thames Estuary.

Insurance and Safety Equipment

Ensure that you have (and carry proof of) adequate public liability insurance and ID before using your PWC. Ensure that you hold a copy of the registration certificate.

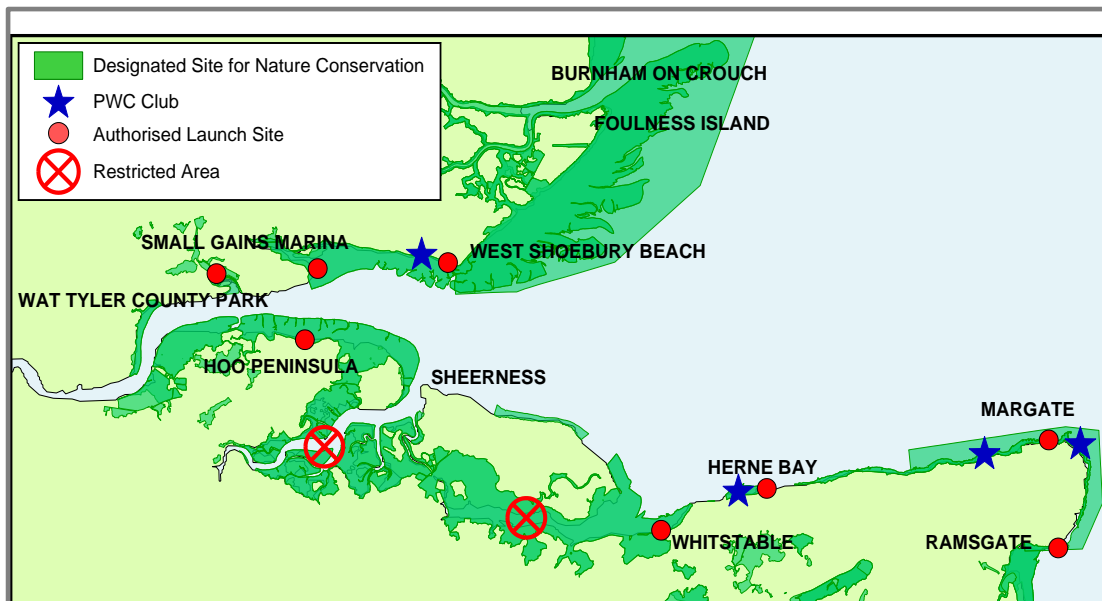
Always carry the correct safety equipment:

Personal Equipment

Suitable clothing,
Buoyancy aid,
Goggles,
Safety lanyard,
Sun-block,
Foot protection,
Gloves,
Whistle

PWC Equipment

First aid kit,
Full tank of petrol and oil,
Radio,
Fire extinguisher,
Flare pack,
Rope,
Anchor,
Torch,
Tool kit



Further Advice and Guidance

Ports and marine safety advice:

Port of London Authority: ☎ 01474 562200 🌐 www.pla.co.uk
 Maritime & Coastguard Agency: ☎ 0870 6006505 🌐 www.mcga.gov.uk
 RNLI: ☎ 01843 296604 ✉ gaddington@rnli.org.uk 🌐 www.rnli.org.uk
 Essex Police Marine Unit: ☎ 0300 333 4444 🌐 www.essex.police.uk
 Kent Police Rural and Environmental Crime: ☎ 01622 690 690 ✉ 6374@kent.pnn.police.uk 🌐 www.kent.police.uk
 Datatag: ☎ 0845 0700 440 🌐 www.datatag.co.uk

Wildlife advice and local information:

Natural England: ☎ 01206 796666 (Essex) 01233 811228 (Kent) ✉ enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk 🌐 www.naturalengland.gov.uk
 Environment Agency: ☎ 08708 506 506 🌐 www.environment-agency.gov.uk
 Essex Wildlife Trust: ☎ 01621 862960 ✉ admin@essexwt.org.uk 🌐 www.essexwt.org.uk
 Kent Wildlife Trust: ☎ 01622 662012 ✉ info@kentwildlife.org.uk 🌐 www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk
 RSPB: ☎ 01273 775333 ✉ southeast.conservation@rspb.org.uk 🌐 www.rspb.org.uk
 British Divers Marine Life Rescue: ☎ 01825765546 🌐 www.bdmlr.org.uk

PWC and water sport bodies:

RYA training: ☎ 0845 3450326 🌐 www.rya.org.uk
 Personal Watercraft Partnership: ☎ 01725 513775 ✉ info@pwpuke.org 🌐 www.pwpuke.org

PWC Clubs:

Wat Tyler Country Park: ☎ 01268 550 088 (authorised launch site)
 West Shoebury Beach: ☎ 01702 215000 (authorised launch site)
 Small Gains Marina: ☎ 01268 511611 (authorised launch site)
 PWC Allhallows Yacht Club (Hoo Peninsula): ☎ 01634 270273 ✉ zyggyamlot@aol.com
 Long Reach Ski Club (Swale): ☎ 01795 511116 ✉ longreachskiclub@aol.com
 Herne Bay & Whitstable Jet Ski Club (JAWS): ☎ 07932 970699 ✉ chairman@jaws.org.uk
 Thanet Water Users Group: ☎ 01843 577274 ✉ jean.reynolds@thanet.gov.uk
 Birchington Water Ski and Wakeboarding Club (Thanet): ☎ 07974 509807
 Jet Ski World (Thanet): ☎ 01843 231703 ✉ info@jetski-world.co.uk
 The Varne Boat Club (Shepway): ☎ 01797 364640 ✉ hbagshaw@aol.com
 Southend Jet Ski Club: ✉ southendjetskiclub@hotmail.co.uk 🌐 www.southendjetskiclub.com

JANUARY 2012