Welcome to Cardiff Bay

Cardiff Harbour Authority Bay User Guide has been published since 2004. Distributed nationally, this popular publication has assisted hundreds of thousands of people visiting Cardiff Bay to stay safe on the water and enjoy their trip to the Welsh capital.

This guide provides information about the first class facilities available to you during your visit to Cardiff Bay and the wider city region.

The operation, maintenance and management of Cardiff Bay Barrage and navigation within the bay, including the rivers Taff and Ely are of primary concern. This publication features everything you need to know to use the Locks and navigate the Bay safely. We offer day and overnight moorings, in conjunction with the local yacht clubs and marinas on the edges of the 200 hectare freshwater lake. Why not come, stay and explore?

Cardiff offers an annual calendar of events; from national competitions to international arts and cultural celebrations. Why not plan your trip to coincide with one of these fantastic occasions? Investors and visitors continue to be attracted to this area, building on the positive momentum of the previous decades of development in the Bay.

We welcome you to Cardiff Bay.
Contents

Arrival and Departure  6
Barrage Locking Procedure  8
Communication and VHF  9
Navigation in Cardiff Bay  10
Mooring and berthing  15
Marine Information  17
Safety  18
Contacts us  20

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T: 029 2087 7900
Arrival and Departure

Approaching Cardiff by sea & tidal restrictions

When approaching Cardiff you should use the following publications:

- Admiralty Charts 1182 and 1176 (also contained in the Bristol Channel Admiralty Leisure Folio)
- Admiralty Sailing Directions – West Coasts of England and Wales Pilot

Please note that information may be subject to change and mariners should use all available navigation aids when at sea.

It is important to keep a proper look out for vessels approaching or leaving Cardiff Docks, as they are constrained by their draft.

You should also maintain a listening watch on:

- VHF Channel 68 South Wales Radio (Associated British Ports, Cardiff) in this area.

When on your final approach to Cardiff Bay Outer Harbour, you should call Barrage Control on VHF Channel 18 to request a lock in. They will advise you of the next available lock and provide instructions regarding entry to the Outer Harbour and locks. However, occasionally it may be necessary to restrict access into the Outer Harbour. Please see Barrage locking procedure for further details.

NOTE: Vessels coming from Kings Road (Avonmouth) are advised to enter the Wrach Channel from the South. For information about the traffic lights on the outer arm, please see Lights and signals page

Tidal Access

Under normal circumstances, for vessels with a draught of under 2.0m, full tidal access is possible. However, occasions will arise when siltation within the Outer Harbour will reduce access.

Relevant information can be obtained from Barrage Control if the need arises. Occasionally, there may also be restrictions in locking, due to the lack of water flowing into Cardiff Bay down the rivers Taff and Ely. These restrictions, which can be imposed at short notice, are communicated on VHF, and are most likely at high water.

If long term restrictions are likely, mariners will be advised in Local Notice To Mariners Outbound locks will run on the hour and at half past the hour. Inbound locks will run at quarter past and quarter to the hour.

Cardiff Harbour Authority recommend that you always wear a lifejacket when afloat.
Barrage Locking Procedure

The locking procedure for the Barrage is as follows:

1. Vessels with a draught over 2.0m should contact Barrage Control on VHF Channel 18 well in advance of arrival at the Barrage.

2. Outbound locks will run on the hour and half past the hour. Inbound locks will run quarter past and quarter to the hour.

3. Request an inbound or outbound passage through the locks via VHF Channel 18. Communications through the Barrage Control VHF base station are recorded for operational, training and health and safety reasons.

4. Listen on VHF Channel 18 for instructions on how to enter the lock. Observe and comply with the light signals displayed and any instructions given.

5. Enter the lock and moor as far forward as possible on the end cleat using appropriate fenders and mooring lines. Use at least 2 lines, fore and aft, and turn off your engine. You may be required to raft up to another vessel and for this reason it would be beneficial to rig lines and fenders to both sides of your boat.

6. Once inside the Bay, mariners should maintain a listening watch on VHF Channel 16 and Channel 18.

7. Vessels leaving the Bay should monitor VHF Channel 16 and VHF 68 South Wales Radio, once they exit the Outer Harbour.

Safety while locking

For your own safety and that of others while locking, please abide by the following rules at all times:

1. Listen to and follow instructions given to you by Barrage staff.

2. Keep clear of closing/closed lock gates and moor your vessel securely in the lock. Large volumes of water are discharged or used to fill the locks, causing turbulence.

3. Always read and follow the instructions/advice on the lock signage.

4. In the event of an emergency, contact Barrage Control immediately on VHF Channel 18 or by calling 029 2070 0234.

5. The lock ladders are for emergency and staff use only.

6. Do not refuel or pump bilges whilst in the locks.

7. Turn your engine off when in the lock.

Lights and Signals

A series of lights will be displayed at the Barrage lock entrance. The relevant lock number is shown beneath the light signal.

- Do not enter
- Proceed

Enter on instruction from Barrage Control

Outer Harbour

The light signals above may also be displayed at the entrance to the Outer Harbour and have the same meaning for inbound traffic. In addition, the following signals may be used at the Outer Harbour entrance.

- No lights: Proceed with care

- 3 red lights flashing: Emergency stop and await instruction

Vessels may not anchor in the Outer Harbour without permission from Barrage Control. On occasions parts of the Outer Harbour may be dry at low water, so caution is advised.

VHF Channels

Please take note of the local VHF Channels for Cardiff Bay:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Allocation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Distress, urgency and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cardiff Bay Barrage Control (Duplex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>South Wales Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Digital Selective Calling (DSC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For inter ship traffic, the following Channels are preferred: 8, 72 and 77. Whilst in the Bay all vessels should monitor VHF Channels 16 and 18.
Navigation in Cardiff Bay

Speed Limited areas

A map showing the speed limited areas in Cardiff Harbour can be found opposite. Please note that during water-based events, temporary speed restrictions may be established throughout the Bay. These will be communicated through Local Notices To Mariners, as well as by Harbour Authority staff managing the event.
River Ely

When navigating on the River Ely, you should note that there is a 5 knot speed limit. You should also exercise caution when passing under bridges, and keep a look out for paddle craft and vessels emerging from mooring areas. The next landmark is Pont y Werin Bridge, located about halfway along Cardiff Marina’s moorings. See page 13 for details of the bridge operation.

A road bridge, the Cogan Spur, is a short distance above Pont y Werin. It is possible for small boats to navigate further upstream, but you are advised to be especially aware of your air draught. Cardiff Marine Village lies approximately 1.5 miles upstream of the river entrance, just beyond the Penarth Road Bridge.

River Taff

Mariners should be aware that Harbour Authority licensed, passenger-carrying vessels are permitted to travel at a maximum of 7 knots in the River Taff, whereas the speed limit for all other vessels is 5 knots.

When navigating on the River Taff you should exercise caution when passing under bridges. The river can also be subject to fast flows.

As you travel upstream, the Butetown Link road bridge is clearly marked on either side by port and starboard markers; no other arches are navigable.

Please be aware of canoes and rowers in this area. Your wake can seriously affect light sculling craft, so be vigilant. There is also likely to be other river traffic in this area.

The depth of water beyond Wood Street bridge is less than 1.5m in many places, and navigation for pleasure craft beyond this bridge is NOT ADVISABLE.

Bay level, depth and datums

Water levels in the Bay (the height of the water surface) are referenced to Ordnance Datum, and will generally be given as a height above this datum – AOD. Levels may vary between 4.0m and 7.5m AOD. The level at any given time may be obtained from Barrage Control.

The depth of water within Cardiff Bay is generally 2.5m or greater. Care should be taken when navigating around the Wetlands area adjacent to St David’s Hotel, where port hand lateral marks indicate safe water.

Navigation within the Bay is relatively straightforward. However mariners should note that due to potential strong currents in front of the Barrage sluices, vessels should keep to the correct side of the West Cardinal Mark.

Mariners should also be aware that the area directly downstream of the sluices outside of the Barrage is an exclusion zone, as high flows present a serious health and safety risk. Under no circumstances should mariners enter this area.

Pont Y Werin Bridge

The bridge spans over the River Ely, connecting Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan for pedestrians and cyclists. The centre section lifts for navigation and boat operations. It is managed by Barrage Control, who can be contacted on VHF Channel 18.

Permitted navigation

1. Vessels may pass under the fully lowered bridge if there is sufficient air draft.
2. When the three vertical red lights are extinguished either side of the bridge, you may proceed. The decision to proceed always rests with the Master of the vessel. Air draught boards are placed on both the downstream and upstream sides of the bridge to help mariners in their decision to proceed.
3. Orange lights are illuminated under the lifting span at night to confirm that it is closed.

Restricted navigation

1. When the bridge is being prepared to open or close, the lights on either side of the channel (both upstream and downstream) will show fixed red – meaning no vessels are to proceed.
2. Navigation lights will flash red – if emergency action is required (maintain a listening watch on VHF Channel 18).

Requesting bridge operation

1. A request to lift the bridge can be made on VHF Channel 18 to Barrage Control, who will confirm the next available opening time.
2. During the day from 7am to 7pm, the bridge may be lifted on request with a maximum wait of half an hour, depending on the time of the last lift and other operations at Barrage Control.
3. At night from 7pm to 7am, the bridge may be lifted on request with a maximum wait of an hour, depending on the time of the last lift and other operations at Barrage Control.
Mooring and Berthing

Throughout the year we host a varied programme of events in Cardiff Bay and across the city. Cardiff Bay offers short stay and overnight moorings, so why not plan to visit the Cardiff International Food and Drink Festival in July or the annual Harbour Festival during the August bank holiday weekend?

Short stay visitor moorings

The Harbour Authority provides short stay visitor pontoon moorings within the Inner Harbour, which operate on a first come first served basis. They are located adjacent to Roald Dahl Plass and within the Graving Docks. Vessels must display a valid ticket for the time they are berthed. At present the minimum cost of a pontoon berth is £2 for the first two hours, plus £1 for each additional hour, up to a maximum of 24 hours. Use of the pontoons is subject to the terms and conditions displayed.

Note: Water and electricity are not provided. On occasions, access to the pontoons may be restricted due to activities and events that are taking place in the Bay, but local yacht clubs & marinas also offer long stay visitor moorings.

Yacht Clubs and Marinas

Cardiff Bay Yacht Club
Cardiff Bay Yacht Club is situated on the River Ely peninsula. Its facilities are available to members and visitors. Visitors can call in advance on 029 2066 6667 to arrange their stay or call on Ch37 on arrival during normal office hours. Visitors are welcome to moor on the wavebreak pontoon which is the Eastern most leg of the Club marina.

Cardiff Yacht Club
Cardiff Yacht Club is situated on the Hamadryad Peninsula. Its facilities are for the benefit of members or those affiliated through the RYA and CYC, by prior arrangement only. 029 2046 3697

Penarth Quays Marina
Penarth Quays Marina is situated within the historic basins of Penarth Dock and offers safe, sheltered and secure berthing. Professional, friendly staff are on duty at all times, providing visiting vessels with a warm welcome. 029 2070 5021

Cardiff Marina
Run by The Marine Group, Cardiff Marina is a 350 berth marina offering moorings on the River Ely in the International Sports Village. It also operates a service centre, which provides a complete range of specialist boat servicing, repairs and treatments. 029 2034 3459
Port Marine Safety Code

Statement of Compliance

Cardiff Harbour Authority complies with the standards laid down in the Port Marine Safety Code. We have:

1. Consulted widely with Harbour users and identified the main risks associated with the operation of the Harbour. We ranked and prioritised the risks, and ensured that appropriate risk control measures were recorded and in place.

2. Identified further and evaluated options for reducing risks when the existing risk control measures do not appear to be adequate. This is an ongoing process with a view to introducing any further appropriate measures as soon as is practicable.

3. Introduced a safety management system. This includes policies for emergency plans, conservancy, environment, management of navigation and marine services to ensure that risks continue to be identified, reviewed and reappraised in the light of operating experience.

4. Made plans for audit by an independent designated person to confirm by report that the Authority complies with the requirements of the Code.

5. Introduced byelaws, which are kept under review for relevance and efficacy.

6. Published a Harbour Safety Policy (24KB PDF)

Public slipway access

Slipway access to Cardiff Bay is available to the general public at Cardiff Bay Water Activity Centre (CBWAC) at Channel View Leisure Centre and Cardiff International White Water (CIWW). For access and details, please contact: CBWAC on 029 2035 3912, or the Leisure Centre on 029 2037 8161 or CIWW on 029 2082 9970 for opening hours.

Marine Information

Waste disposal
You can help ensure the cleanliness of the Bay environment by using the waste bins provided or taking your litter away with you. If you use a boat within the Bay, your yacht club or marina should provide facilities for the disposal of all boating waste, including oil and batteries.

Port Waste Management Plan
Cardiff Harbour Authority, in compliance with the requirements set out in the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Port Waste Reception Facilities) Regulations 2003 and amendments, has produced a Port Waste Management Plan.

The aim of the plan is to ensure that sufficient and appropriate facilities are readily available to receive waste materials from vessels using the port, and to dispose of all waste in a correct and timely manner. Cardiff Harbour Authority recognises the need for control and management of waste from all types of vessels in order to ensure a cleaner environment both within Cardiff Bay and at sea. This plan has been completed following consultation with the local boating population, local "host" organisations that operate shore-side facilities, and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

Ship’s waste notification form
Any large visiting vessels, other than fishing vessels, carrying more than 12 passengers must give notification of waste disposal to the Harbour Authority in accordance with the Disposal of Ship’s Waste Form. This form must be completed and submitted to the Harbormaster at least 24 hours before arrival.

Pumping out
Please do not pump bilges or waste holding tanks into the Bay. A bilge water disposal facility and toilet waste pump out facility are provided by the Harbour Authority near the water bus stop, opposite the entrance to Penarth Marina.

Environment

Invasive species
Zebra mussels and killer shrimps are present in Cardiff Bay. These invasive species were probably introduced into the freshwater lake by a visiting vessel. Zebra mussels reproduce rapidly, and can cause problems to vessels and equipment if appropriate care is not taken.

Killer shrimps can cause serious ecological damage to freshwater ecosystems. It is the responsibility of all Bay users to help prevent the further spread of these species. It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) to allow these species to transfer to another body of water, and every measure should be taken to prevent this from happening. Guidance on how to protect vessels and equipment, and prevent the spread of these species can be found at: nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry

Environmental monitoring
The Harbour Authority has installed a number of yellow environmental-monitoring buoys within the Bay. They can be distinguished by the prominent solar panels on top, which power the monitoring equipment. They have no navigational significance, but it is an offence against the byelaws to interfere with them.
Water Quality

Water quality in Cardiff Bay is strictly monitored and graded from excellent to poor. In all open freshwater in the UK there is a risk of catching various infections and diseases, particularly for people who suffer from reduced immunological response.

Types of infections that are common include minor gastro-intestinal complaints; eye, ear and throat infections; typhoid; dysentery; and infectious hepatitis A. The risk is greatly elevated by ingestion of the water. Sports with an increased risk of immersion, such as water skiing, windsurfing and triathlons are permitted only when authorised by the Harbour Authority, strictly managed and water quality dependent.

Whilst immunisation can reduce the risk of contracting certain diseases, there are others for which there is no vaccine protection available, eg Weil’s disease (leptospirosis). Weil’s disease is rare and the risk of contracting it is very low, but it can cause serious, even fatal, illness.

Weather

1. Remember to check the forecast before going afloat.
2. Keep a weather eye - don’t get caught out.

Know your own, your crew’s and your vessel’s limits.

Lifejackets

1. Purchase a lifejacket suitable for your activity, ensuring it has a whistle, light and reflective strip, and conforms to European Conformity (EC) guidelines.
2. Learn how to use your jacket or buoyancy aid, checking regularly in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.
3. Remember buoyancy aids DO NOT have the same capacity as a lifejacket, but can assist in keeping a person afloat. Remember the advice – lifejackets are useless unless worn – at all times.

Cardiff Harbour Authority recommends that you always wear a lifejacket when afloat.

Tenders

1. Distribute weight evenly and do not overload your tender.
2. Remember that tenders and alcohol can be a lethal combination.

Emergency response & marine incidents within the Harbour

In the event of an emergency within the Harbour, when there is grave and imminent danger to a vessel or persons, contact the Coastguard on VHF Channel 16 (or via 999).

In the event of a non life threatening marine incident, please contact Barrage Control immediately on VHF Channel 18 or by calling 029 2070 0234.
## Contact Us

**Cardiff Harbour Authority**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception - Cardiff Harbour Authority</td>
<td>029 2087 7900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harbour Master’s Office</td>
<td>029 2087 7936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrage Control</td>
<td>029 2070 0234</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardiff Bay Water Activity Centre</td>
<td>029 2035 3912</td>
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<tr>
<td>Channel View Leisure Centre</td>
<td>029 2037 8161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff International White Water</td>
<td>029 2082 9970</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment (Water Quality)</td>
<td>029 2087 7900</td>
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**Marine Information**

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coastguard - General Enquiries</td>
<td>01646 690 909</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Resources Wales</td>
<td>0300 065 3000</td>
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<tr>
<td>HM Customs and Excise Action Line</td>
<td>0800 595 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration of Pleasure Craft (MCA)</td>
<td>029 2044 8800</td>
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<tr>
<td>RNLI SEA Check</td>
<td>0800 328 0600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royal Yachting Association</td>
<td>023 8060 4100</td>
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*This document is available in Welsh*

*Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg*