

Risk Assessment – Sailing Passage to Eling Sailing Club (River Test)

Activity: Supervised small craft passage (sailing cruiser / dayboat)

Location: St Denys Boat Club (River Itchen) to Eling Sailing club (Southampton water)

Activity Type: Supervised club passage – skipper-led dynamic risk management

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Date last reviewed: January 2026

Version: v1.0

Scope and Context

This risk assessment covers a supervised sailing passage from St Denys Boat Club to Eling Sailing Club via Southampton Water and into the River Test. The route includes busy commercial shipping lanes, high-speed ferry traffic, and a transition into a narrow, shallow, and tidally constrained river environment with limited manoeuvring space at Eling. Accurate tidal planning, clear pilotage, and disciplined vessel control are required.

Participant Responsibilities

All crew are responsible for acting in a manner that supports their own safety and the safety of the vessel. Crew must follow the skipper’s instructions, wear lifejackets at all times on deck, assist with lookout duties, and be prepared to respond promptly to sail handling, anchoring, and emergency situations. Crew must report fatigue, seasickness, or uncertainty early and avoid distracting the helm during high-workload phases such as tidal gates, traffic-dense areas, and harbour approaches.

Risk Assessment Table

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Risk	Control Measures (Port / Solent guidance aligned)	Risk Level	Further Actions
Large commercial shipping in Southampton Water	All on board	Collision; severe injury; vessel damage	Avoid main channel where practicable; maintain continuous lookout; monitor	High	Skipper briefing on crossing

			Southampton VTS; cross at 90°; engine ready		
High-speed ferries (Red Funnel / Red Jet)	All on board	Collision; heavy wash	Avoid ferry tracks; maintain predictable course; enhanced lookout	High	Identify ferry routes
Strong tidal stream at River Test entrance	All on board	Loss of control; grounding	Plan entry near slack water; maintain steerage	High	Define tidal window
Narrow river channel with moorings	All on board	Collision; grounding	Slow speed; stay central; dedicated lookout	Medium	Assign lookout
Eling tide mill depth restriction	All on board	Grounding; entrapment	Confirm tide height; no entry below minimum depth	High	Pre-calc depth

General Notes

- Passage planning must include tidal gates, weather margins, and clearly defined abort points.
- A float plan must be filed with a shore contact including route, crew list, and ETAs.
- VHF: monitor appropriate port and harbour working channels; Channel 16 for distress only.
- Review annually or following any incident, near miss, or significant route change.