

Risk Assessment – Sailing Passage to Portsmouth Harbour & Gosport

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

Location: St Denys Boat Club (River Itchen) to Portsmouth and Gosport (West Solent)

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

Assessor: James Wardle

Reviewed by: Andrew Ktenas

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 Portsmouth Harbour and Gosport. The route includes one of the busiest and most tightly controlled harbour environments in the UK, with naval vessels, ferries, hovercraft, and dense recreational traffic requiring strict compliance with harbour control.

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
Royal Navy vessel movements	All on board	Collision; enforcement risk	Comply with harbour control; keep clear	High	Monitor VHF Ch

High-speed ferries and hovercraft	All on board	Collision; extreme wash	Avoid routes; maintain separation	High	Identify zones
Dense harbour traffic	All on board	Collision	Defensive navigation; clear commands	High	Crew briefing
Strong tidal streams at entrance	All on board	Loss of control	Time entry carefully	High	Plan timing
Narrow harbour entrance	All on board	Close quarters risk	Stay in lane; no stopping	High	Pre-brief

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.