

## Risk Assessment: Sailing Cruisers from St Denys to Hythe at (High Tide)

Vessel: Drascombe Lugger & Coaster or other small cruisers

Location: St Denys to Hythe, Southampton Water

Timing: Passage planned for High Tide

Crew: Mixed experience levels

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Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Level	Controls / Mitigation Measures
Inexperienced crew	All crew	Poor boat handling, navigation errors, slow reactions to hazards	Medium	High	High	Full safety briefing; assign clear roles; skipper to helm; mandatory lifejackets; avoid challenging conditions
Commercial shipping traffic	All on board	Collision risk with large vessels in shipping channel	Medium	Very High	High	Avoid shipping lanes; cross at 90° angle quickly; monitor VHF (Channel 12 & 16); use AIS if available;
Strong tidal flow (despite high tide)	All on board	Difficulty in steering and boat control	Medium	Medium	Medium	Plan route with tide charts; maintain steerageway; use oars or Motor if needed
Low bridge clearance (St Denys rail bridge)	All on board	Risk of mast or rigging impact	Low	High	Medium	Check mast height vs bridge clearance at high tide; lower mast before bridge

Weather changes	All on board	Sudden wind/rain reducing visibility or comfort	Medium	Medium	Medium	Check forecast (Met Office/Inshore); carry waterproofs; reef sail early; have alternative landing options
Navigation errors	All on board	Grounding, entering restricted areas	Medium	Medium	Medium	Use charts and GPS/Navionics; visual references; plan route in advance and follow with regular checks
Grounding (in shallows near jetties or mudbanks)	All on board	Possible hull damage, stranding	Medium	Medium	Medium	Stay in known deep channels; avoid tight inshore shortcuts; carry paddle/oars to assist if grounded
Man overboard (MOB)	Individual overboard	Drowning, hypothermia	Low	Very High	High	All crew to wear lifejackets or Bouyancy aids; brief on MOB procedure; keep lookout;
Engine failure	All on board	Drifting in tidal flow or busy water	Medium	High	High	Check engine before departure; carry spare fuel if petrol; oars ready for backup propulsion; anchor prepared
Obstructions / debris in water	All on board	Damage to rudder/centerboard or injury	Medium	Medium	Medium	Lookouts fore and aft; navigate slowly in high debris areas; avoid floating hazards
Communication failure	All on board	Inability to call for help	Low	High	Medium	Charged VHF on board (Ch. 16); mobile in waterproof case; inform shore contact of passage plan and ETA
Fatigue / dehydration	Crew	Reduced concentration and coordination	Low	Medium	Low	Short passage (under 2 hours); water and snacks onboard; swap tasks periodically

Additional Notes:

- St Denys to Hythe navigating under a low bridge, through the Itchen River mouth into Southampton Water, and across active shipping lanes.
- A Drascombe Lugger is well-suited for this passage due to its shallow draft and flexible rig but requires active management in traffic zones.
- Always file a float plan with a trusted shore contact and check port notices to mariners for temporary hazards.