



FALMOUTH HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS

PROTOCOL FOR RECREATIONAL DIVING IN THE FALMOUTH HARBOUR AND BAY AREA

Recreational Divers are welcome to share Falmouth Bay with other water sports activities. However this is a busy port with constant commercial shipping movements which take place at short notice anywhere in Falmouth Bay, Carrick Roads or in the approaches to Falmouth Docks. This protocol provides that diving activities must be planned, and carried out, in such a way that divers keep well clear of these shipping movements, and so as not to obstruct or impede any commercial activity in the Harbour Area.

NB No recreational diving is permitted in the vicinity of Falmouth Docks Wharves or Jetties or within the Docks Basin.

Dive Planning

When planning diving activities, and preparing a Risk assessment, this protocol requires that divers should have -

- Ø a copy of the “Falmouth Harbour Recreational Activities Guide” because by-laws, and speed limits, will apply to diving activities.
- Ø Checked the Falmouth Harbour Commissioner’s website for known commercial shipping movements (in particular Cruise Ships) at www.falmouthport.co.uk.
- Ø evidence of current insurance against third party risks for not less than £2 million (sterling) in liability covering the dive boat and each diver taking part in the planned activity.
- Ø been trained in the use of delayed surface marker buoys, which are essential
- Ø noted that when diving in the East Narrow (Carrick Roads) divers must surface on the east bank, and not in the main shipping channel
- Ø planned their dive in such a way that no Decompression diving takes inside Black Rock Beacon, under any circumstances.

Equipment

This protocol requires divers to have a minimum level of equipment:-

- Ø Each dive boat must carry a large “A” flag capable of being seen by surface traffic in all wind conditions during diving activities
- Ø Each diver must carry a delayed surface marker buoy (and be trained in its use)
- Ø Each dive boat must have diver recall signals (which the divers must recognise)
- Ø Each dive boat shall carry a first aid kit and Diver Oxygen equipment

Diving Risk Assessment

Before finalising the Risk Assessment for a planned diving activity divers should carry out the following steps under this protocol:-

- Ø Make a call on VHF channel M2 to find out whether any local Yacht Clubs have planned a yacht race for the area in which they intend to dive, as well as making them aware of your plans,
- Ø Contact Falmouth Harbour Pilots (Channel 9) to check for any known shipping movements in Falmouth Bay requiring a pilot (be alert because not all shipping movement requires the use of a pilot)
- Ø Contact the Dock Master on Channel 11 (for the inner harbour) to check for any known shipping movements that will be taking place in the inner harbour area (once again not all shipping movements are reported to the Dock Master)
- Ø Notify Falmouth Coastguard (Channel 16) before and after the dive

During the Dive

The Dive Marshal must be aware of all commercial shipping movements and therefore this protocol requires that during the dive:-

- Ø a listening watch is maintained on Channels 16; 9; 11 and M2 as not all vessels entering Falmouth Bay require a pilot. Dive Marshals must be alert and prepared to recall all the divers in good time,
- Ø a large “A” flag is displayed on the dive boat in a prominent position and in such a way as to ensure all round visibility in all wind conditions during diving activities.
- Ø Each diver (or buddy pair) shall deploy a DSMB before surfacing – to warn yachts and other surface traffic of the presence of the divers
- Ø If night diving: use a surface marker buoy with a strobe light, towed by the use of a reel.

Pendennis Point

- Ø If diving from the steps on the Western side of Pendennis Point this protocol; requires the use of a surface marker buoy. This area is adjacent to a water sports area, and therefore there is a risk of collision

Emergencies and First Aid

- Ø Any diving related incident shall be reported immediately to Falmouth Coastguard on channel 16.
- Ø Dive Boats shall have at least on person on board qualified in Diver First Aid and Oxygen administration

Diver Signals

- Ø Diver signals understood by surface traffic in the Falmouth Bay and Harbour area, are as follows:-

Okay



Diver in Distress



This Protocol has been developed after consultation with local harbour users through the Marine Safety Committee. It is considered to reflect best practice and whilst, not in itself mandatory (although some requirements such as exhibiting an A flag are covered by legislation), it is strongly recommended to all those undertaking recreational diving within the Harbour Area.