

Safe boating this summer with the Harbourmaster

Summer is here and that means more boats out and about in the Marlborough Sounds. It is important everyone is safe, considerate and enjoys their time off so here are some of the key things to consider when heading out on the water this summer.

Prep Check Know

Whether you're on a boat, jet ski or kayak, it's important to prep gear, check your vessel, check the weather and know the rules. It pays to be prepared because when you're on the water things can go wrong very quickly.

Lifejackets

Take them - wear them. Did you know it is a requirement to carry enough lifejackets of the right size for everyone on board? There were vessels stopped last summer that did not have enough or any lifejackets on board. Like seat belts in cars, lifejackets are there to help keep you safe when something goes wrong. The Harbourmaster strongly encourages you to always wear a lifejacket when on the water.

Dive flags

Last summer the Nautical and Coastal team noticed an increase in the number of divers not using a dive flag (pictured) to warn other boats. Having the dive flag visible is required under the Navigation Bylaw 2023 and maritime rules, but most importantly it is there to warn other boats and help keep you safe.



Underage in charge of a power boat

Did you know if you are under the age of 15 you are not allowed to operate a power-driven vessel that is capable of exceeding 10 knots? The only exception is if you are with someone older than 15 years who can reach the controls and is not the lookout person if waterskiing or towing. The team saw several vessels last summer being operated by someone underage, including one in Tory Channel that had no way of communicating for help should they have needed it.

Communication

The Harbourmaster strongly encourages all boaties to take two forms of communication when heading out on the water - and make sure you know how to use them. An emergency is not the time to be figuring out how to use the VHF radio or flare to call for help.

Safe speed

Consider the safety of other water users and always operate at a safe speed. It's not just good sense, it's also the law. A safe speed means being able to take

action to avoid collision and stop at a safe distance. Encouraging safe speed is a particular focus for our team this summer, particularly in high-risk areas. Some of these have been marked with yellow 5 knot buoy markers - you must always stay under 5 knots in these areas. Vessels operating at higher speeds in high-risk areas or within 200m of the shore are putting others at risk and should expect a \$200 fine.

Navigation lights

If you're navigating at night or in restricted visibility, make sure you have working navigation lights. The purpose of navigation lights is to ensure other vessels can see you and take appropriate action to avoid collision or prevent a close quarters situation from developing.

Waikawa Bay 5-knot area

The 5-knot area extending into Waikawa Bay from the Waikawa Marina Extension is in place to slow down vessels, reduce wake and improve visibility for boats approaching the marina. The area is marked with a line of yellow buoys from the new marina's northern corner towards the opposing shoreline.

Harbour patrols

Patrol vessels will be out on the water almost every day over summer to ensure safe boating. If you're stopped for breaching maritime rules or bylaws, you will be asked for your name and address and may be liable for a fine. We are also operating radar speed cameras in several locations including Picton, Waikawa, Havelock Channel and the Wairau River for enforcement purposes.

For those who enjoy time off and using jet skis, please remember the same rules about speed apply. This means no more than 5 knots within 200m of the shore or within 50m of another boat, person, or other vessel in the water.


From time to time the Harbourmaster may impose a Temporary Exclusion Zone for specific events in accordance with navigational bylaws. To keep up to date with public notices and for more information on navigation rules and bylaws go to www.marlborough.govt.nz/environment/harbours or visit the Marlborough Cruise Guide app.



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The 5-knot area in Waikawa Bay



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