Lyme Regis Harbour

MARINE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM & OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

Dorset Council

Updates & Amendments

Version No.	Update	Reviewed by	Date
	Original Report	CF Spencer & Co Ltd	2002
	Update	West Dorset District Council	2005
	Update	West Dorset District Council	2006
	Update, Audit and Assessment	Maritime Resolve ltd.	September 2012
	Update	R Noakes – West Dorset District Council Grahame Forshaw (Harbour Master)	2015
	Update	R Noakes – West Dorset District Council Grahame Forshaw (Harbour Master)	2017
	Amendment & update	R Noakes – West Dorset District Council Grahame Forshaw (Harbour Master)	December 2018
	Review and update	James Radcliffe (Harbour Master)	August 2019
	Audit, amendment and update	James Radcliffe (Harbour Master) Ken Buchan (Head of Environment and Wellbeing)	November 2022
	Update	James Radcliffe and James Hannon	October 2023
	Update	James Radcliffe	June 2024
Version Numbering begins in 2026. V1.0	Restructured and updated following release of updated PMSC April 2025	James Radcliffe (HM) Ed Carter (Harbours Manager) Sam Harding (AHM)	January 2026
V1.1	Updated following Bridport (West Bay) PMSC Audit March 26	James Radcliffe (HM) Ed Carter (Harbours Manager) Sam Harding (AHM)	April 2026
V1.2	Updated following change of Duty Holder	Ed Carter - Weymouth Harbour Master	September 2026

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Marine Safety Management System

Introduction

Lyme Regis Harbour's Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) provides the overarching framework through which Dorset Council, as the Statutory and Competent Harbour Authority, ensures the safe, efficient and environmentally responsible management of marine operations within the harbour and its approaches. The MSMS sets out how the Harbour Authority meets the requirements of the Port and Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC) and associated Guide to Good Practice, translating national standards and statutory duties into local policy, governance, procedures and operational controls. It brings together the harbour's legal powers, risk-based processes, conservancy responsibilities, stakeholder engagement arrangements and assurance mechanisms so that marine activity is managed in a consistent, transparent and proportionate manner.

The purpose of this document is to describe clearly how marine safety is governed, implemented, monitored and continuously improved at Lyme Regis Harbour. It defines the responsibilities of the Duty Holder, Designated Person and Harbour Master; sets out the risk assessment and incident management processes; and explains the systems, policies and freestanding plans that support safe navigation, environmental protection and emergency preparedness. The MSMS provides a single, coherent reference for staff, stakeholders and regulators, ensuring that all aspects of marine safety, from statutory obligations and conservancy to enforcement, pilotage and competence, are aligned under one structured framework. It is reviewed and updated regularly to reflect evolving operations, legislation, and best practice.

1.0 Duty Holder

Dorset Council is the Statutory Harbour Authority (SHA) and Competent Harbour Authority (CHA) for Lyme Regis Harbour. The Council discharges its harbour functions through its governance arrangements, including the Harbours Advisory Committee.

The Duty Holder is the entity (board, committee, or individual office-holder) that is accountable for compliance with Ports and Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC, the Code). Every organisation must identify who its Duty Holder is, and make this information publicly available, including how to contact them. The Duty Holder's accountability cannot be delegated.

The Duty Holder for Lyme Regis Harbour is the Cabinet Member for Place Services, Councillor Jack Jeanes, who is individually and collectively accountable (along with Dorset Council) for ensuring compliance with the PMSC and for the safe and effective management of marine operations within Lyme Regis Harbour. The Harbours Advisory Committee advises the Duty Holder on operational issues relating to Dorset Council's harbour functions.

Lyme Regis Harbour publishes the identity and contact route for the Duty Holder on the harbour webpages and in its annual reporting against the MSMS. The Duty Holder maintains appropriate understanding of harbour operations and the MSMS through briefings and periodic operational visits.

1.1 Responsibilities

The Duty Holder is responsible for ensuring that Lyme Regis Harbour complies with the relevant parts of the Code. To be effective, the Duty Holder will:

- Maintain awareness of Dorset Council's statutory powers, duties and responsibilities for marine safety (including any local Acts/Orders and national legislation) and keep these under review.
- Ensure a proportionate, risk-based Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) is in place, founded on formal risk assessment and supported by clear policies, procedures and plans approved by the Duty Holder.
- Appoint a suitably qualified Designated Person (DP) with direct access to the Duty Holder to monitor, audit and report on the effectiveness of the MSMS and to provide independent advice on marine safety.
- Appoint and retain competent people (appropriately trained, qualified and experienced) to manage marine safety and execute marine services, and support continuing professional development.
- Make available the resources necessary to discharge marine safety obligations, including training, equipment and systems.
- Approve and publish a Marine Safety Plan showing how Code standards will be met, and report annually on performance against the plan and the MSMS (including incident/near-miss data and KPIs).
- Oversee regular review/audit of the MSMS and associated documents, consider lessons from MAIB reports, MCA Health Checks and sector good practice, and drive continuous improvement.
- Submit the required 3-yearly compliance statement to the MCA.

1.2 Reporting Compliance

The Duty Holder will report Lyme Regis Harbour's compliance with the Code to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency every three years, responding to the MCA's published process and timetable.

The compliance statement will:

- describe Lyme Regis Harbour's compliance with all relevant parts of the Code;

- identify any parts of the Code deemed not applicable, with reasons;
- set out any shortfalls where full compliance is not yet achieved, including an action plan with timescales to achieve compliance; and
- specify any other facilities covered by the statement where Dorset Council is responsible for Code compliance.

The MCA maintains and publishes a list of organisations that have indicated compliance with the Code; Dorset Council (for Lyme Regis Harbour) will ensure its submission enables listing.

Outside the 3-yearly submission, Dorset Council will continue to publish the Marine Safety Plan and annual performance reporting; the Designated Person will provide annual assurance to the Duty Holder on MSMS effectiveness and compliance, informing both local reporting and the next triennial self-statement.

2.0 Designated Person

All organisations subject to the PMSC must appoint a Designated Person (DP) to provide independent assurance to the Duty Holder that the Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) is operating effectively. The DP must have direct access to the Duty Holder and must be able to act independently from operational management.

Dorset Council has appointed James Hannon (ABPmer) as the Designated Person for Dorset Council's harbours. The DP delivers independent audits, attends Harbours Advisory Committee meetings, and liaises directly with the Duty Holder to report on compliance with the Code and the performance of the MSMS.

The Designated Person provides a formal, independent assurance function to demonstrate to the Duty Holder that:

- the MSMS is suitable, sufficient and correctly implemented;
- marine operations are being carried out in compliance with the Code;
- risks are being effectively managed through formal and dynamic risk assessments;
- continuous improvement processes, reviews and audits are being carried out appropriately; and any failures or deficiencies within the MSMS are identified and escalated promptly.

To perform this role effectively, the DP must have a thorough understanding of the Code, the Guide to Good Practice (GTGP), and relevant marine legislation.

The Designated Person must:

- operate independently of the operational harbour management structure;
- have unrestricted access to staff, documentation and facilities as required to assess compliance;
- report directly to the Duty Holder (Councillor Jack Jeanes) without filtering or alteration of findings; and present clear, objective assessments of MSMS performance, including areas for improvement.

Lyme Regis Harbour meets this requirement by using an external DP (ABPmer), ensuring impartiality and sector expertise.

In accordance with the Code, the Designated Person for Lyme Regis Harbour undertakes the following functions:

- Annual audit of the MSMS and harbour operations relevant to marine safety.
- Attendance at Harbours Advisory Committee meetings, providing direct updates and advice to the Duty Holder.
- Review of incident investigations and assurance that corrective actions are appropriate and completed.
- Assessment of compliance against the Port & Marine Facilities Safety Code and GTGP.
- Provision of advice on best practice, necessary improvements, and changes in national guidance or legislation.
- Give support to the 3-yearly PMSC compliance submission made by the Duty Holder to the MCA.

The DP will report:

- at least annually to the Duty Holder and Harbours Advisory Committee;
- formally through a written audit report;
- informally through regular liaison with the Harbour Master and senior officers;
- as required, if significant issues or non-compliance are identified that may require urgent action.

3.0 Legislation

Lyme Regis Harbour operates within a wide statutory framework that governs marine safety, environmental protection, navigation, and the duties and powers of harbour authorities. In accordance with the PMSC the Duty Holder must ensure Dorset Council (as SHA and CHA) remains fully aware of its legal responsibilities, powers and limitations, and keeps these under review to ensure safe and effective management of the harbour.

Lyme Regis Harbour's legal basis includes both national legislation that applies to all UK ports and local legislation specific to Lyme Regis, including Harbour Revision Orders. As the Statutory Harbour Authority, Dorset Council must ensure that all applicable legislation is reflected in the Marine Safety Management System and that the Harbour Master and staff act within the scope of these powers.

The PMSC emphasises that although it provides guidance on statutory responsibilities, it does not replace or supersede legislation. Harbour authorities must seek their own legal advice where required and take steps to obtain any additional powers necessary for effective and safe harbour management.

3.1 National Legislation

Lyme Regis Harbour's statutory functions are shaped by a number of national Acts that define duties, powers, and responsibilities relating to marine safety. The most relevant include:

- *Harbours Act 1964:* provides the principal framework for harbour powers, including powers of general direction (via Harbour Revision Orders) and duties relating to harbour conservancy.

- *Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847:* a foundational Act still incorporated into many harbour authorities' local legislation. It provides key operational powers for Harbour Masters, including:
    - powers of Special Direction (s.52);
    - powers relating to removal of obstructions/wrecks (ss.56–57);
    - powers to regulate activities within the harbour;
    - model byelaw-making provisions (s.83).

  These provisions remain embedded through Lyme Regis Harbour's local legislation and the Lyme Regis, Bridport (West Bay) and Lyme Regis Harbour Revision Order 2026, and underpin day-to-day safety and navigation controls at Lyme Regis.

- *Open Port Duty (s.33, Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847):* requires the harbour to remain open to all persons for the shipping/unshipping of goods and the embarking/landing of passengers, subject to payment of lawful dues and compliance with harbour regulations. Open Port Duty applies to most harbour authorities and is a fundamental obligation incorporated into Lyme Regis Harbour's local legislation.

- *Pilotage Act 1987:* defines the duties of Competent Harbour Authorities (CHAs), including assessing pilotage needs, issuing Pilotage Directions, and authorising pilots and PEC holders. Lyme Regis Harbour is a CHA under this Act.

- *Dangerous Vessels Act 1985:* grants powers to prohibit entry/movements of dangerous vessels that may pose an imminent threat to safety or navigation.

- *Merchant Shipping Act 1995:* covers a wide range of maritime safety provisions, including wreck removal duties (s.252), collision regulations, and emergency powers. These apply directly to Lyme Regis Harbour.

- *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974:* imposes general duties to ensure the safety of employees and others affected by harbour operations, including marine and shore-side activities.

- Environmental legislation, including the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Environment Act 2021, and Habitats Regulations 2017, imposes duties relating to biodiversity and environmental protection when exercising harbour functions.

The application of these laws may vary depending on geography, type of activity, and whether the harbour authority acts as an SHA, CHA or both. Dorset Council, through Lyme Regis Harbour, ensures the MSMS incorporates all relevant national duties.

3.2 Local Acts and Orders

Lyme Regis Harbour also relies on local legislation that sets out its specific statutory powers and duties:

- The Lyme Regis, Bridport (West Bay), and Weymouth Harbour Revision Orders (HRO) 2026, which updates and consolidates the local legal framework. The HRO defines harbour limits, modernises governance, enables lease arrangements, and provide powers for Special Directions and General Directions. The Cobb Act 1821, under which Lyme Regis previously operated, was repealed in its entirety by the 2026 HRO.
- Lyme Regis is an open port, into which any user has a right to navigate on payment of harbour dues. There is a duty to operate it safely for the benefit of all such users. The berths and wharves and seasonal pontoons are under the control of the Harbour Master.

3.3 Review

Dorset Council, as Duty Holder, must keep its statutory powers and duties under continual review to ensure they remain adequate for modern harbour operations. The Code stresses that failure to maintain a correct understanding of one's powers can lead to ineffective or improper discharge of legal responsibilities.

This review process includes:

- Assessing whether powers under local legislation (e.g., HROs, Byelaws, General Directions) remain sufficient for safe and efficient harbour management.
- Monitoring changes in national legislation and ensuring that Lyme Regis Harbour's MSMS, policies and procedures are updated to reflect new or amended statutory requirements.
- Incorporating relevant MAIB findings, MCA guidance, and emerging good practice into the MSMS.
- Ensuring the Harbour Master and operational staff maintain awareness of the extent and limits of their delegated powers.

3.4 Revising Statutory Powers

Where a review or risk assessment shows that existing powers are no longer adequate—or that additional powers would materially improve the management of marine safety—the Duty Holder should consider revising Lyme Regis Harbour's statutory powers. The Code identifies three main mechanisms:

- *Harbour Empowerment Orders (HEOs):* used to create a new harbour authority or confer initial statutory powers.

- *Harbour Revision Orders (HROs):* used to amend, modernise or extend existing statutory powers, including governance restructuring, powers of direction, jurisdictional changes, or improvements to navigational control.
- *Harbour Closure Orders:* used where statutory powers are no longer required due to the cessation of harbour activity.

Applications may require consultation, assessment of environmental and navigational impacts, and may involve a public inquiry. The Department for Transport, Marine Management Organisation (MMO), or devolved administrations provide procedural guidance.

Any future decision to revise powers will be based on formal risk assessment, stakeholder consultation and alignment with the requirements of the Code.

4.0 Duties and Powers

Lyme Regis Harbour's statutory and operational duties are derived from national legislation and local enabling Acts and Orders and are exercised through Dorset Council as the Statutory Harbour Authority and Competent Harbour Authority. The PMSC requires all harbour authorities to understand and effectively discharge their duties and powers to ensure the safe, efficient and environmentally responsible management of the harbour. Lyme Regis Harbour complies with the Code by applying its statutory powers through the Harbour Master, by maintaining a clear legal framework through its Harbour Revision Orders, and by embedding all duties within the Marine Safety Management System.

Lyme Regis Harbour is currently regulated under the Lyme Regis, Bridport (West Bay) and Weymouth Harbour Revision Order 2026, which came into force on 20 February 2026 and replaced historic legislation including the Cobb Acts. In the absence of formally issued General Directions, the Harbour Authority relies on the powers and duties set out in the Order, together with incorporated provisions of the Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847, and general maritime legislation to manage navigation, safety, and harbour operations. While these provide a comprehensive statutory framework, they do not yet offer the same level of detailed, flexible operational control that General Directions would deliver, meaning day-to-day regulation is currently undertaken through harbour master powers and existing statutory provisions, pending the introduction of a modern directions regime.

4.1 Safe and efficient marine operations

Lyme Regis Harbour complies with the PMSC requirement to ensure safe and efficient marine operations by maintaining a well-established operational control system supported by trained harbour staff, formalised risk assessments and practical procedures. Navigation safety is supported by VHF Channel 14 communications and harbour patrol vessels.

Operational practices include the stopping of all other movements when a large vessel is manoeuvring, the use of patrol boats to manage vessel conflicts. The Harbour Master is responsible for monitoring navigational activity, issuing directions when required, and ensuring that all marine operations follow the MSMS.

4.2 Open Port Duty

Lyme Regis is an open port, and Dorset Council fulfils its statutory open port duty by ensuring that the harbour remains accessible to all users, commercial, fishing, leisure and visiting vessels, provided that appropriate dues are paid and harbour regulations are followed. This principle is long-established in Lyme Regis' legal framework and is operationally reflected in its visitor pontoons, quayside facilities, and designated areas for fishing and charter vessels. Harbour operations are structured so that access is available except where safety or emergency control measures require temporary restriction.

4.3 Appointment of a Harbour Master

Dorset Council, as the Statutory Harbour Authority and Competent Harbour Authority for Lyme Regis, appoints a Harbour Master with full statutory authority to exercise the powers granted under national legislation and local Harbour Revision Orders. The current Harbour Master is James Radcliffe, who also serves as the Bridport (West Bay) Harbour master. He is responsible for the safe and efficient management of navigation, marine operations and enforcement within Lyme Regis Harbour.

The Harbour Master exercises all powers granted by statute, including those relating to Special Directions, General Directions, byelaw enforcement, regulation of harbour operations, and safety management. He oversees the implementation of the MSMS and acts on behalf of the Harbours Advisory Committee in meeting the requirements of the PMSC.

4.4 Byelaws

Dorset Council utilises General Directions, enabled through the Lyme Regis and Bridport (West bay) Harbours Revision Order 2026, to regulate navigation, safety and the use of harbour waters.

4.5 Special Directions

The Harbour Master exercises Special Directions under the powers incorporated from the Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847. These directions may be issued to individual vessels to regulate their entry, departure, movement, mooring, or conduct in circumstances requiring immediate control. Special Directions are used regularly during large vessel movements, emergency situations, and when vessels pose a navigational risk. Harbour staff ensure that masters understand and comply with any direction issued. This use of Special Directions provides an important tool for discharging the harbour's duty to maintain safe navigation.

4.6 General Directions

Following the commencement of the 2026 HRO, a set of General Directions are being prepared.

These Directions will set out requirements covering vessel movement, speed limits, safe navigation in the entrance channel, equipment standards and environmental protection measures. These Directions will apply to all harbour users and are routinely enforced by harbour staff during patrols, inspections and liaison with mariners. The Directions will be reviewed periodically, with stakeholder consultation, to ensure they remain current and effective.

4.7 Harbour Directions

Although Dorset Council does not currently hold powers to issue Harbour Directions under the Harbours Act 1964, the 2026 Harbour Revision Order provides modernised powers that achieve the same functional outcomes through General Directions. The Harbour Authority keeps this position under review and will consider applying for Harbour Directions if required to enhance control of vessel movements or improve safety management, in line with PMSC guidance.

4.8 Dangerous Vessel Directions

The Harbour Master may act under the Dangerous Vessels Act 1985 to prohibit entry, require removal, or impose conditions on any vessel presenting a grave and imminent danger to safety, the harbour infrastructure or the environment. These powers are reflected in Lyme Regis' operational procedures and risk assessments, particularly in relation to unseaworthy vessels, vessels carrying dangerous goods, or those posing pollution risks. The Harbour Master assesses dangerous vessels on a case-by-case basis and may collaborate with HM Coastguard, MCA or emergency services as required.

4.9 Pilotage

There is no pilotage service at Lyme Regis except by request. The harbour is not a CHA and has no duty to provide pilots.

No pilots are authorised; should any vessel request the services of a pilot at either port, the harbour master can go ahead of the incoming vessel in his RIB, to be followed.

4.10 Towage

Towage within Lyme Regis Harbour is subject to assessment and approval by the Harbour Master. There are no dedicated tugs stationed at Lyme Regis; external towage or salvage support would normally be sought from suitable regional providers, including Lyme Regis or Portland, subject to availability and the nature of the incident. See the Harbour Emergency Plan.

4.11 Regulation of marine craft

Lyme Regis Harbour exercises powers to regulate marine craft through local byelaws, General Directions, licensing provisions and operational oversight. The harbour licenses a small number of commercial craft (e.g., day tripping vessels) and oversees a small charter boat fleet, including dive boats and angling vessels. PWCs are currently not permitted to launch from the Lyme Regis slipway, recovery and visitation however can occur with prior permission from the Harbour master. The Harbour Authority also maintains oversight of training centres, Sea School activities, and visiting vessels, ensuring that all marine craft operate safely and in accordance with agreed procedures and risk controls.

4.12 Environmental Duty

The Harbour Authority complies with its statutory environmental duties by integrating environmental protection into all harbour operations. This includes maintaining aids to navigation to required standards, monitoring environmental conditions, managing waste responsibly through the Port Waste Management Plan, and operating an MCA-approved Oil Spill Contingency Plan. The harbour also manages environmentally sensitive areas such as Lyme Regis Beach and its swimming zones, with seasonal buoyage, patrols and restrictions to reduce conflict between user groups. Dredging, hydrographic surveying and maintenance practices follow environmentally responsible procedures and are carried out in accordance with the Hydrographic Code of Practice.

4.13 Emergency preparedness and response

Lyme Regis Harbour complies with the PMSC requirement for emergency preparedness through its comprehensive Harbour Emergency Plan, which integrates with Dorset Council and Lyme Regis Town Council emergency response arrangements. The Harbour Master leads all marine incident responses within harbour limits and coordinates with HM Coastguard (Solent) for incidents in the approaches or wider bay. The harbour maintains clear communication protocols for distress, urgency and safety messages, and ensures that access to berths and quays is maintained for emergency services.

4.14 Civil contingencies duties

Lyme Regis Harbour doesn’t currently have any civil contingencies duties.

4.15 Collecting Dues

The Harbour Authority exercises its statutory powers to levy harbour dues and charges in accordance with the Harbours Act 1964. These charges are set to ensure that the harbour can meet its statutory responsibilities, maintain navigation infrastructure, and provide safe harbour operations. Charges are published transparently, reviewed annually and approved through Dorset Council’s governance processes. Income is used to support conservancy, staffing, training, hydrographic surveying, aids to navigation and maintenance of the harbour estate, demonstrating compliance with the PMSC requirement for resourcing safe marine operations.

5.0 Risk Assessment

The Marine Safety Management System is in place to ensure that all risks are controlled, the more severe ones must either be eliminated or kept ‘‘as low as reasonably practicable” (ALARP)”.

Lyme Regis Harbour also uses the safety and risk management system of its owner, Dorset Council. It defines risk management as “the culture, processes and structures that are directed towards effective management of potential opportunities and threats to the organisation achieving its objectives”.

At its highest level the Council’s risk management strategy requires that the wider implications of the port’s operations at a political, financial and social level should be built into the risk management system. Lyme Regis is a particularly open port, with homes, bars and restaurants, and shops along its very attractive waterfront. This means that the effects of its Safety Management System spread beyond the marine consequences of the PMSC’s definition of risk. Where specific hazards would have their own specific responses under the PMSC, with steps identified to eliminate or control them to ALARP levels, the broader vision of the Council’s approach also requires those much wider factors to be considered.

It is the function of the Safety Management System to reconcile these opposites. The Council and port’s staff have a wide range of stakeholders to whom they answer: the Council as the Statutory Harbour Authority and Duty Holder, the people of the area to whom the port is an important aspect of their lives, its many direct stakeholders and users whose livelihoods may depend on it, the many visitors and not least the professional staff whose job it is to run the port.

The Council’s approach to risk also requires that the financial consequences of the port’s operations are not put at risk while the PMSC requires that the port is properly maintained to be a safe port for all users. As an open port, available to all craft able to fit into it against the payment of proper dues, there is a direct legal requirement that it is fit to be used. Such maintenance costs money and the balance between finance and physical safety is constantly under review through the risk management system.

5.1 Formal Safety Assessments

A statutory requirement, and central to the management and control of risks from hazards, is the use of risk assessments. A risk assessment is a paperwork exercise to review any work situation that allows relevant risks to be identified, recorded, communicated and reduced where it is reasonable to do so. A duty exists for Dorset Council to reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level. This duty extends to ensuring that risk assessments are suitable and sufficient and identify measures to be taken that ensure work tasks are safely undertaken.

- ***Hazard***
  Something with a potential to cause harm. A situation that could occur which has the potential for human injury, damage to property, damage to the environment, or economic loss.
- ***Risk***
  An estimation of the likelihood and potential consequences of a defined hazard, risk expresses the likelihood that the harm from a particular hazard is realised. Risk therefore reflects both the likelihood that harm will occur and its severity.
- ***Risk Assessment***
  A paperwork exercise to review any work situation that allows relevant risks to be identified, recorded, communicated and reduced where it is reasonable to do so. Risk assessments should normally be completed using a template which can be sourced from the Council’s forms register. Workplace areas with higher risk, i.e. harbours, may determine that a different and more

comprehensive risk assessment template is more appropriate. The same principles of the risk assessment process will still apply.

Figure 1: Principles of Risk Assessment

Responsibilities

Service managers should ensure that risk assessments are completed for all staff under their control.

Line managers should ensure that members of staff who undertake risk assessments are competent to do so, have a good level of subject knowledge and are aware of the limitations of their expertise. Staff should be advised to seek further advice if needed.

Members of staff charged with undertaking risk assessments (Assessors) should be suitably trained in order that risk assessments undertaken are both suitable and sufficient and have the benefit of reducing risk. The Assessor is normally the immediate Line Manager of the person being assessed. Risk assessment training can be sourced through the Health, Safety and Welfare Officers.

Marine Risk Assessment Methodology

To assess marine risks, Dorset Council Harbours adopts a 5 x 5 risk matrix which assigns numerical values to both the severity and likelihood of identified hazards. The higher the severity and likelihood, the higher the numerical score assigned.

Multiplying the severity and likelihood scores together provides an overall risk rating, enabling hazards to be assessed consistently and prioritised according to risk.

The marine likelihood descriptors have been developed specifically for harbour operations and are intended to provide a practical assessment of how often a hazard may reasonably be expected to occur within the local operating environment.

Likelihood

1	2	3	4	5
Rare	**Unlikely**	**Occasional**	**Likely**	**Almost Certain**
Not known to have occurred locally and not expected.	Credible, but would be unusual.	May occur from time to time during normal operations.	Has occurred locally and may reasonably be expected to recur.	Occurs regularly or should be expected during normal operations.
Typically, less than once every 10 years.	Typically, once every 5 to 10 years.	Typically, once every 1 to 5 years.	Typically, at least annually.	Typically, several times per year.

Figure 2: Likelihood definitions

Severity

1	2	3	4	5
Trivial	**Slight**	**Substantial**	**High**	**Very High**
Minor injury requiring no treatment or first aid only.	Minor injury requiring basic medical treatment.	Injury requiring medical treatment, rehabilitation, or time away from normal duties.	Serious injury causing long-term incapacity or disability.	Fatality or life-changing injury.
Superficial damage requiring little or no repair.	Minor damage requiring repair but no operational impact.	Significant damage requiring repair and causing temporary operational disruption.	Major damage causing significant operational disruption.	Catastrophic damage, loss of vessel, major infrastructure failure, or prolonged loss of operations.

Figure 3: Severity definitions

Once numbers replace judgements, these can be multiplied together to give a risk rating:

Risk Rating Matrix

Likelihood					
5	5	10	15	20	25
4	4	8	12	16	20
3	3	6	9	12	15
2	2	4	6	8	10
1	1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5

Severity

Figure 4: Risk Rating Matrix

Risk Assessment Frameworks

The Council maintains a corporate risk management framework for assessing strategic, financial, operational and organisational risks across all Council services. Harbour-related non-marine risks are assessed using the Dorset Council likelihood and impact matrices.

Marine risks falling within the scope of the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) are assessed using the marine risk assessment methodology described in this document. This methodology has been developed to reflect the operational nature of harbour activities and the practical assessment of navigational and marine safety hazards.

All identified marine hazards and associated control measures are recorded within the Port Risk Register and form part of the Harbour Authority's Marine Safety Management System.

	Likelihood	% Possibility
1	Rare	< 6%
2	Unlikely	6 – 20%
3	Possible	21 – 50%
4	Likely	51 – 80%
5	Almost certain	> 80%

Figure 5: Dorset Council Likelihood Matrix

Impact		Financial	Strategic Priorities & Opportunities	Health & Safety	Reputational	Criticality of Service (following Business Impact Assessment)
5	CATASTROPHIC	Over £300k	Complete failure to deliver on a strategic priority	Fatality, multiple permanent injuries	Receives national/international attention with potential for long term impact on public memory, Total loss of public confidence.	Critical Service Level One (ie: those that present a major risk to public health or safety
4	MAJOR	£100k - £300k	Major impact (positive or negative) on a strategic priority	Major injury or illness leading to long-term incapacity/disability, multiple significant injuries	Receives national/international attention with medium-term impact on public memory	Critical Service Level Two (ie: those that present a medium to major risk to reputation or finances
3	MODERATE	£50k - £100k	Moderate impact (positive or negative) on a strategic priority	Moderate injury or illness requiring professional intervention, RIDDOR reportable, multiple minor injuries	Receives local press attention but with medium-term impact on public memory	Critical Service Level Three (ie: those that present a medium risk to public health or safety)

2	MINOR	£10k - £50k	Minor impact (positive or negative) on a strategic priority	Minor injury or illness requiring minimal intervention or treatment	Receives local press attention but with likely short-term impact on public memory	Critical Service Level Four (ie: those that present a low to medium risk to reputation or finances
1	NEGLIGIBLE	Up to £10k	Negligible impact (positive or negative) on a strategic priority	None, or minimal injury or illness requiring no intervention or treatment	Minor complaints or rumours	Critical Service Level Five (ie: those that present a minor risk to public health or safety)

Figure 6: Dorset Council Impact Matrix

Generic Risk Assessments

A number of generic risk assessments against common hazards were provided by Dorset Council's Partnership as a framework for services to use and adapt. These were be adopted by the harbour to avoid unnecessary effort. The following are available to date:

Management of Health and Safety at Work	Risk Assessment
Accidents, Incidents and Disease	Asbestos
Confined Spaces	Construction (Design and Management) regulations 2008
Contractors	COSHH
Display Screen Equipment	Fire Risk Management
Health and Safety Training	Home Working
Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment	Management of Workplace Stress
Manual Handling	New and Expectant Mothers
Noise at Work	PAT Testing
PPE	Provision and Use of Work Equipment
Road Safety	Safety Signs
Slips and Trips	Travelling Officers and Lone Workers
Working at Heights	Young People

Figure 7: Generic Risk Assessments

5.2 Reviewing Risk Assessments

The harbour risk register and assessments will be reviewed:

- whenever a new activity is started
- at least on a minimum annual basis in accordance with Dorset Council policy
- whenever an accident or incident occurs
- when significant changes occur to work practices that may impact on health, safety and welfare.

The review will normally be led by the Harbour Master and will consult Harbour Staff, Dorset Council expertise and external assistance including the Harbour Consultative Group. The risk assessment methodology is demonstrated under the plan, do, check, and act philosophy:

Figure 8: Plan-Do-Check-Act

5.3 Dynamic Risk Assessments

Harbour staff must use Dynamic Risk Assessment as an essential tool to identify, assess, and control hazards in real-time while carrying out their duties. In accordance with the Port Marine Safety Code, staff should continuously evaluate changing conditions, such as weather, vessel movements, or operational constraints, and adjust their actions accordingly to maintain safety. Where new risks emerge that are not covered by existing procedures, staff must take immediate mitigating action, report the hazard, and escalate concerns as necessary to ensure compliance with the Safety Management System and legal requirements.

6.0 Marine Safety Management System

Lyme Regis Harbour operates a proportionate Marine Safety Management System that is approved by the Duty Holder and implemented by the Harbour Master and harbour team. The MSMS brings together policies, procedures, plans, standard forms and permissions, and is underpinned by formal risk assessment. It sets clear executive and operational responsibilities, defines how marine operations are controlled, and links to freestanding and second-tier plans (e.g., Port Waste Management Plan, Emergency Plan). This approach fulfils the PMSC requirement to operate an effective, risk-based MSMS and to document the practical systems by which marine safety is delivered.

The MSMS is structured so that high-level policy in this document cascades to specific procedures and work instructions in the Harbour's risk register and operational files, with records and evaluation captured through incident logs, audits and KPI reporting. The harbour keeps the MSMS publicly available, aligning with the Code's expectations of transparency and accountability.

6.1 Implementation

Implementation is achieved through the day-to-day application of documented procedures, dynamic tasking, and supervisory control by the Harbour Master and Assistant Harbour Master. Core arrangements include:

- Control of vessel movements via VHF Channel 14, harbour patrols, with traffic stopped during large vessel manoeuvres.
- Stakeholder-agreed controls embedded through General Directions, extant Byelaws and, where needed, Special Directions issued by the Harbour Master.
- Preparedness for emergencies through the Harbour Emergency Plan, exercised routinely and integrated with Dorset Council/Town Council arrangements.

These practical controls reflect the PMSC's implementation guidance and ensure the harbour can regulate arrivals, departures and movements, protect the public from marine activities, give special regard to environmental impact, and prevent acts or omissions that could cause harm.

6.2 Accountability for marine safety

Accountability is clear and documented. Dorset Council is the SHA, the Duty Holder is the Cabinet Member with portfolio responsibility (Cllr Jack Jeanes), and the Harbour Master (James Radcliffe) holds day-to-day responsibility for navigation safety and marine operations. This mirrors the PMSC model of governance in which the Duty Holder retains accountability, supported by a Harbour Master with operational authority and by a Designated Person (James Hannon, ABPmer) who provides independent assurance and direct access to the Duty Holder.

Roles and responsibilities extend to conservancy (hydrography, aids to navigation, Notices to Mariners), emergency planning, environmental duties and incident investigation, all of which are allocated and described in the Harbour's documentation set and Annex on roles.

6.3 Stakeholder engagement and consultation

Lyme Regis maintains regular, structured engagement with harbour users and partners to support safe operations and shared understanding of risks:

- The Harbour Consultative Group meets three times a year and feeds views to the Harbours Advisory Committee on matters affecting safety, charges and operational change.

- Consultation accompanies the introduction or revision of General Directions and significant operational policies; day-to-day engagement is supported by an open-door practice at the Harbour Office.
- Interface management is routine where activities overlap with other facilities (e.g. RNLI lifeboat and beach lifeguard operations, Sea School/Sailing Club). liaison ensures complementary systems and deconflict procedures, as recommended by the PMSC.

This sustained engagement demonstrates compliance with the Code's expectation that harbour authorities consult those who may be affected by their MSMS, while keeping ultimate responsibility with the Duty Holder.

6.4 Incident reporting and investigation

The MSMS provides clear routes for reporting, recording and investigating marine incidents, near misses and unsafe acts. Internally, staff use an incident form and maintain a database for trend analysis; pilots, harbour staff and users report navigational occurrences such as near misses, bottom contacts, difficult pilot transfers and berthing problems. Regular status reports (e.g., on AtoN, lifesaving equipment, harbour craft defects) are provided to the Harbour Master. Serious events trigger structured investigation, contemporaneous note-taking, photographs where possible, and prompt debrief, with findings used to update procedures and risk assessments.

Externally, the Harbour complies with statutory reporting to MAIB for reportable accidents, with HSE informed for applicable shore-side safety matters, and with any additional central government notifications as required. The MSMS also recognises that serious or complex cases may require robust, independent investigations, consistent with the PMSC's guidance on purpose and conduct of incident investigations.

6.5 Enforcement

Dorset Council Harbours apply a graduated, risk-based enforcement approach to secure compliance with local and national maritime legislation. The Marine Compliance & Enforcement Policy sets out the principles, tools and decision-making framework used across Dorset Council's harbours, aligned to the Council's General Statement of Enforcement Policy, the Regulators' Code (2014) and the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006. The policy emphasises consistency, openness, helpfulness, proportionality, targeting, accountability and transparency.

In practice, Lyme Regis Harbour prioritises advice, education and informal resolution for minor contraventions; where necessary it escalates through verbal guidance, official written warnings, Special Directions, General Directions and, for serious or persistent breaches, prosecution in line with the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The Harbour Master's statutory powers include Special Directions, General Directions under the 2026 Harbour Revision Order, byelaw enforcement and Dangerous Vessel Directions where applicable.

Decisions are risk-based and proportionate: factors include the seriousness of the breach, environmental impact, financial gain, intent, obstruction, previous history, remedial action and wider deterrence. Outcomes and rationales are recorded, with reporting to the Harbours Advisory Committee to support transparency and continuous improvement. Harbour users must comply with Directions, Special Directions and applicable Byelaws.

7.0 Review and Audit

Lyme Regis Harbour operates a structured and continuous programme of review and audit to ensure that its MSMS remains fit for purpose, compliant with the PMSC, and aligned with best practice. The PMSC requires harbour authorities to have regular, systematic processes to review and audit all aspects of marine safety, and Lyme Regis Harbour fulfils this requirement through a combination of internal monitoring, independent assurance from the Designated Person, and formal periodic audits.

The review and audit regime encompasses policies, procedures, MSMS documentation, risk assessments, plans, operational practices, and the performance of marine functions. This ensures that information from incidents, user feedback, operational experience, and external recommendations is captured, analysed and used to improve the system.

The system also reflects Dorset Council's wider governance, enforcement, and accountability requirements, reinforcing transparency and demonstrating compliance to the Duty Holder.

Internal Review and Continuous Assessment

The Harbour Master monitors the effectiveness of the MSMS on a continual basis, reviewing risks, operational practices, incident trends and staff feedback. This ensures that day-to-day learning is incorporated into the safe operation of the harbour.

Internal reviews are supported by:

- Daily operational oversight including harbour patrols, vessel movement management, equipment checks, and ongoing user engagement.
- Incident and near-miss analysis, with immediate review of issues that may indicate procedural or systemic change is required.
- Regular staff consultation, including briefings and opportunities for staff to raise safety concerns or propose improvements.

The Harbour Master maintains responsibility for ensuring that any emerging concerns are addressed promptly and that the MSMS is continually updated to reflect operational reality, experience, and risk.

Structured Periodic Review

In addition to continuous assessment, Lyme Regis Harbour conducts structured reviews at defined intervals. These formal internal reviews examine:

- the harbour's legal and regulatory framework, including local byelaws, powers and Directions;
- the MSMS policies, procedures, operational plans and freestanding documents;
- performance against key safety responsibilities and PMSC expectations;
- compliance with statutory requirements, surveys, inspections and applicable regulations;
- changes to harbour operations, user behaviour, vessel traffic patterns and infrastructure;
- lessons from incidents, exercises, user feedback and national reports.

These formal reviews allow for methodical evaluation and improvement of the MSMS and associated systems, in line with PMSC guidance.

Formal Audit by the Designated Person

An essential part of the PMSC framework is independent audit by the Designated Person. For Lyme Regis Harbour, this function is provided by James Hannon of ABPmer, who has direct access to the Duty Holder and conducts:

- annual formal audits of the harbour's compliance with the PMSC and MSMS;
- attendance at Harbours Advisory Committee meetings to provide independent updates;
- liaison with the Harbour Master throughout the year to monitor progress and identify emerging issues.

The Designated Person's audit reviews:

- the structure and content of the MSMS;
- risk assessments and how they are applied in practice;
- implementation of policies and procedures;
- adequacy of controls for navigation safety, pilotage, towage, conservancy and emergency response;
- enforcement processes and records;
- incident investigation quality and closure of corrective actions.

Findings are reported to the Duty Holder and Harbours Advisory Committee, ensuring transparency and accountability in line with the PMSC.

External Audit, Health Checks and Benchmarking

Lyme Regis Harbour also engages with external assurance mechanisms, which provide additional confidence to the Duty Holder and stakeholders. These include:

- MCA Port Marine Safety Code Health Checks, carried out periodically, which benchmark compliance, highlight best practice and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Comparisons with other Dorset Council harbours (Bridport and Lyme Regis) to ensure consistency of approach across the authority.
- Engagement with external agencies, such as the RNLI, HM Coastguard, Trinity House and neighbouring harbour authorities, provides further insight into operational safety practices and inter-agency working.

The harbour also gives full regard to national guidance, MAIB findings and sector best practice when updating the MSMS.

Plan–Do–Check–Act Approach

Lyme Regis Harbour applies the PDCA cycle in its review and audit processes. This method, illustrated in earlier MSMS documents and maintained in current practice, ensures that:

- Plan – policies, procedures and risk controls are developed based on assessment;
- Do – systems are implemented in day-to-day operations;
- Check – monitoring, audits and reviews capture performance and identify gaps;
- Act – improvements, updates and corrective actions are implemented.

This recognised iterative cycle ensures continuous improvement and aligns with both the PMSC and Dorset Council's enforcement and regulatory framework.

Reporting of Review and Audit Outcomes

The outcomes of reviews and audits are recorded and communicated through:

- annual reporting to the Duty Holder and Harbours Advisory Committee;
- updated editions of the MSMS, Safety Plans and operational procedures;
- committee papers and public documentation published by Dorset Council;
- updates to the risk register, including new risk controls;
- internal staff briefings and training sessions.

This ensures transparency, demonstrates accountability and clearly evidences compliance with the PMSC.

3-yearly PMSC Compliance Statement

In accordance with the PMSC, Dorset Council, on behalf of Lyme Regis Harbour, submits a 3-yearly compliance statement to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. This statement describes:

- the harbour's compliance with all relevant parts of the Code;
- any non-applicable sections and why;
- any outstanding compliance gaps and planned timelines for closure;
- other facilities covered by the declaration.

This formal process ensures national visibility of Dorset Council's compliance and reinforces the Duty Holder's accountability.

8.0 Competence

Lyme Regis Harbour ensures that all personnel involved in the management and execution of marine operations are trained, qualified and competent, in full alignment with the Port Marine Safety Code. The PMSC requires harbour authorities to use people with appropriate professional qualifications, relevant experience and defined competence for the roles they undertake, and to regularly review and maintain those competencies. Lyme Regis Harbour achieves this through structured recruitment, training, supervision and ongoing development, supported by Dorset Council's governance and HR frameworks.

The competence of harbour personnel is a fundamental element of the Marine Safety Management System (MSMS). The harbour's organisational structure, shown below, ensures that clear lines of accountability and supervision support safe and effective operations. The Harbour Master (James Radcliffe) has day-to-day responsibility for technical competence within the service, supported by the Assistant Harbour Master, Harbour assistant and seasonal staff, each trained for their specific roles.

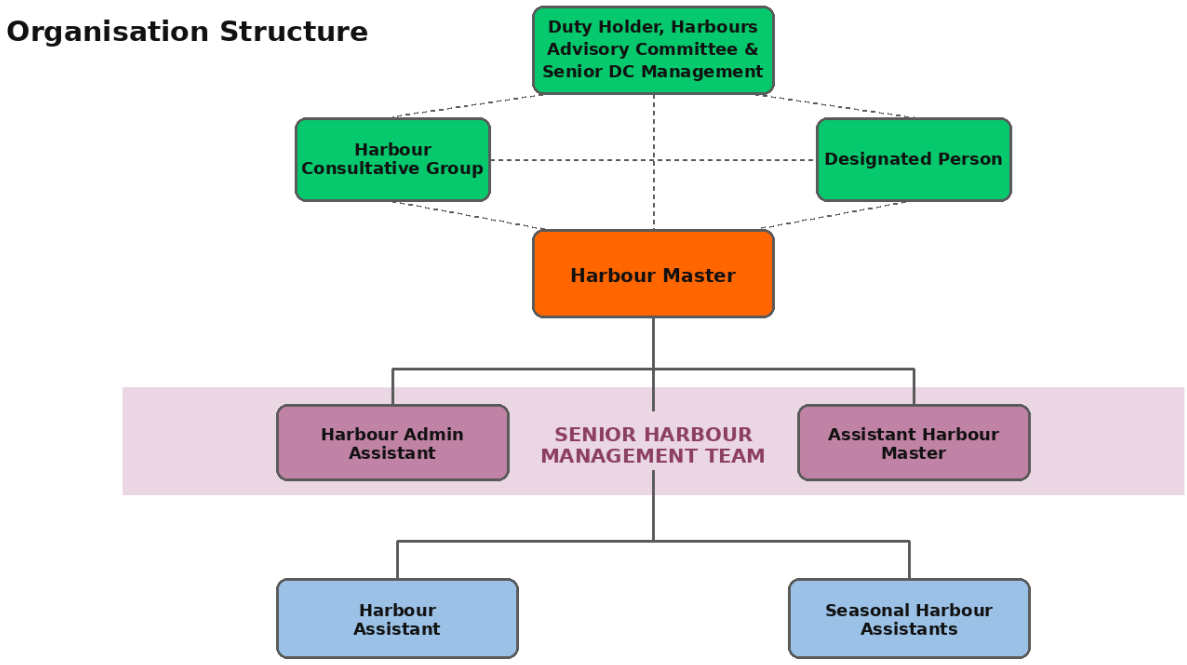


Figure 9: Organisation Structure

Training Standards and Qualifications

The harbour complies with the PMSC requirement to use recognised national occupational standards and professional qualifications as the basis for competence. Dorset Council requires:

- that senior marine officers hold the appropriate maritime qualifications or equivalent experience;
- that all new staff undertake role-appropriate training on appointment;
- that specialist qualifications (e.g., VHF operation, first aid, boat handling, oil spill response, manual handling) are kept current;
- that continuing professional development (CPD) is supported for all roles.

Training for members of the Harbours Advisory Committee is provided to ensure the Duty Holder and Committee members understand their statutory responsibilities, particularly those under the PMSC. Professional staff undertake mandatory maritime training, with records held and maintained by the Harbour

Office. The policy of updating knowledge and renewing qualifications when required is well-established and forms part of the harbour's competence assurance.

Organisation Structure and Role-Based Competence

The organisation structure supports clear role definition and supervisory layers, ensuring competence is inherent in operational decision-making:

- *Harbour Master:* responsible for overall marine safety, navigation control, emergency response and MSMS implementation; holds statutory authority and relevant maritime qualifications.
- *Assistant Harbour Masters:* support operational leadership, enforces General Directions, manages team competence and deputises for the Harbour Master.
- *Harbour Admin Officer:* responsible for harbour administration, finance, reporting and business operations, ensuring that commercial, governance and performance processes support safe and compliant harbour management.
- *Harbour Assistant:* act as the Harbour Master's representatives on shift, controlling day to day harbour operations, mooring and vessel movement oversight.
- *Harbour seasonal staff:* trained in customer service, daily operational tasks, safety procedures and emergency response roles during peak periods.

This staffing model ensures that those exercising statutory or safety-critical functions have the appropriate qualifications, experience and delegated authority, as required by the PMSC. [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk]

Review and Maintenance of Competence

Competence is monitored through:

- supervision and on-the-job assessment by senior officers;
- review of training records and qualifications;
- feedback from incidents, near misses and audits;
- Designated Person oversight of competence-related findings;
- performance monitoring through KPIs (e.g., pilotage, navigation, AtoN reliability, emergency exercises).

The Harbour Master reviews the competence of all staff annually as part of Dorset Council's performance and development processes. Any training needs identified during incident reviews, operational observations or audits are incorporated into future training plans.

Competence of External Operators

The harbour maintains oversight of competence for external operators whose activities impact navigation safety, including:

- charter boat operators and licensed ferries;
- training organisations, charter operators, local clubs, contractors and other harbour users whose activities may affect navigation safety;
- towage providers and contractors.

This oversight is delivered through liaison, permit/licence conditions, risk assessments, contractor checks, and the application of General Directions and byelaws.

Commitment to Continuous Professional Development

Lyme Regis Harbour is committed to maintaining a highly trained professional workforce. This commitment is demonstrated through:

- ongoing CPD opportunities for marine staff;
- regular attendance at professional forums, workshops and industry briefings;
- continuous engagement with the Designated Person, MCA guidance and MAIB recommendations;
- investment in new systems, technology and training resources to enhance harbour operations.

This ensures the harbour continuously improves and adapts its competence framework in line with evolving best practice.

9.0 Plan

Lyme Regis Harbour meets the Port & Marine Facilities Safety Code requirement to publish a Marine Safety Plan by operating under the Dorset Council Harbours Marine Safety Plan 2026–2029 (the Plan), which applies to Bridport (West Bay), Lyme Regis and Weymouth. The Plan sets the safety policy, governance, objectives and improvement actions that the Duty Holder adopts across the three statutory harbours and confirms that Dorset Council operates a risk-based MSMS, reviewed regularly and aligned to the PMSC and Guide to Good Practice.

The Plan confirms governance and accountability arrangements (Duty Holder: Cllr Jack Jeanes; Designated Person: James Hannon, ABPmer; oversight via the Harbours Advisory Committee and Harbour Consultative Groups). For Lyme Regis, this provides a clear line from strategy to operations, linking the Plan's cross-harbour commitments to Lyme Regis' MSMS procedures, local risk assessments, Directions/Byelaws, and freestanding plans, such as the Emergency Plan.

9.1 Publication

The Marine Safety Plan is owned by the Duty Holder, supported by the Designated Person, and advised on by the Harbours Advisory Committee. It is published and accessible, reviewed annually, and republished on a three-year cycle in line with PMSC compliance reporting. For the current cycle, the Plan covers 2026–2029 and expressly states that a full review, republication and Duty Holder notification of compliance accompany the PMSC triennial submission. Lyme Regis aligns its local MSMS publication and updates to this same cycle for consistency and transparency.

9.2 Format

The Plan provides a concise, PMSC-compliant structure covering:

- Introduction & Governance (Duty Holder, DP, HAC, Harbour Consultative Groups; annual review and 3-year republication);
- Policy (safe, effective, environmentally responsible operations; integration with the MSMS and Guide to Good Practice; commitment to consultation and financial resilience);
- Standing Objectives & Improvement Plan, presented through a RACI-based action table with defined outcomes and roles (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed).

This format makes the link between policy and delivery explicit and gives the Duty Holder a practical mechanism to monitor progress across emergency preparedness, conservancy, training/competence, resilience, incident reporting, PMSC audit/review, stakeholder engagement, legislative powers and enforcement. Lyme Regis' MSMS references these objectives and aligns local procedures and KPIs to the Plan's actions.

9.3 Review

Performance against the Plan is reviewed annually and reported to the Harbours Advisory Committee and Duty Holder, drawing on MSMS audits, Designated Person findings, KPIs, incident data, hydrographic/AtoN results, user feedback and lessons learned. The Plan specifies (among other items):

- maintaining incident systems, investigating incidents within 30 days, and reporting major incidents to the Duty Holder within 24 hours;
- monitoring incident trends and updating the MSMS accordingly;
- conducting annual external audits of the MSMS;
- reviewing Emergency Plans annually, risk assessments annually, and the Marine Safety Plan every three years.

Lyme Regis embeds these review commitments in routine internal monitoring and the formal DP audit schedule, ensuring that the Plan remains current and that local changes in harbour use, infrastructure, legislation, Directions, visitor activity or environmental conditions are captured promptly.

9.4 Timing

The Plan confirms the three-year publication cycle (2026–2029), aligned to the PMSC 3-yearly compliance statement, with annual progress reporting to the Harbours Advisory Committee/Duty Holder and interim updates as needed following audits, exercises, legislative changes or significant operational developments. This timing mirrors the PMSC and fits Lyme Regis' practice of continuous assessment supplemented by scheduled formal reviews.

10.0 Conservancy Duty

Lyme Regis Harbour fulfils the PMSC conservancy duty by maintaining a harbour that is fit for safe use, supported by systematic inspection of Aids to Navigation (AtoN), hydrographic awareness, seabed and mooring management, and timely provision of navigational information. As SHA, Dorset Council ensures that local dangers are marked or promulgated, harbour infrastructure is maintained, and users receive accurate current information.

- Annual hydrographic survey by professional contractors, publication of results, and notification to UKHO for charting updates, with interim surveys where operationally necessary.
- AtoN maintenance to at least IALA availability standards (with a working target of 100% reliability and a minimum fallback to IALA) and compliance with Trinity House inspection/return requirements.
- Local Notices to Mariners (LNtM) to promulgate hazards, works and changes.
- Practical seabed management, including routine plough dredging at the harbour entrance to manage sand accretion that spills around/through the Pleasure Pier, plus maintenance dredging where required.
- Traffic control and leading marks at the entrance to ensure safe alignment and movement during periods of high activity or restricted visibility.

These measures reflect the PMSC conservancy duties and are embedded within Lyme Regis Harbour's documented conservancy arrangements and annual work programme.

10.1 Harbour Authorities

As the harbour authority, Dorset Council delivers conservancy through the Harbour Master and team, with clear accountabilities set by the MSMS and Marine Safety Plan. Conservancy tasks include: maintaining local navigation marks, keeping appropriate records, monitoring changes affecting access to the harbour, arranging surveys when required, and supplying information promptly to users, Trinity House and the UKHO where applicable.

The MSMS also integrates conservancy with operational control. During periods of congestion, poor visibility, adverse weather, emergency response or unusual vessel movements, Lyme Regis uses VHF communications, patrol craft where available, Harbour Master's Directions and Local Notices to Mariners to manage movement and reduce conflict within the harbour and approaches.

10.2 Aids to Navigation

Lyme Regis Harbour's AtoN are managed to the standards required of a Local Lighthouse Authority and are subject to the Trinity House inspection and reporting regime. Defects are notified and rectified promptly, with information promulgated to mariners via Local Notices to Mariners where necessary. The harbour aims for full reliability of its AtoN and applies IALA principles proportionately to the scale and risk profile of the harbour.

- Harbour entrance and local navigation marks, lights, beacons and seasonal marks are maintained to assist safe approach, entry and movement within the harbour;
- Seasonal buoyage, local marks and safety information are used where necessary to separate harbour users and support safe activity around the beach, slipway and harbour entrance.

Some systems have been upgraded to LED and are checked routinely, with an annual Trinity House inspection regime and formal returns submitted through the recognised reporting system. This meets PMSC expectations that AtoN be optimally positioned, maintained to required availability, and subject to periodic review.

Operationally, Lyme Regis integrates AtoN with VHF Channel 14 procedures, patrol presence, and the publication of LNtM so that any temporary changes (e.g., defects, works, events, emergent hazards) are communicated quickly. The Marine Safety Plan's Conservancy objectives reinforce this by requiring ongoing AtoN maintenance to IALA standards and annual reporting to the Duty Holder and Harbours Advisory Committee.

10.3 Wrecks and Abandoned Vessels

Lyme Regis applies the statutory wreck and obstruction powers within the MSMS to ensure the harbour remains safe for navigation:

- Under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, s.252, the harbour authority may take possession of, raise, remove or destroy a wreck that is, or is likely to become, a danger or obstruction to navigation (and may light/buoy it until removed).
- Under the Harbours, Docks & Piers Clauses Act 1847, s.56, the Harbour Master may remove obstructions within the harbour/approaches and recover costs from the owner (including detention/sale to secure expenses).
- If a vessel's condition or contents present a grave and imminent danger, the Harbour Master may issue a Dangerous Vessel Direction (Dangerous Vessels Act 1985) to prohibit entry or require removal.

The PMSC anticipates use of these powers to keep waterways safe; Lyme Regis Harbour's MSMS sets out how concerns are assessed, how owners are engaged, and how directions or removals are actioned case-by-case.

Practically, the harbour monitors for wreck hazards via patrols, user reports, staff inspections and surveys where required. There are no known wrecks within Lyme Regis Harbour affecting normal navigation. If a wreck or abandoned vessel threatens navigation within the limits, the Harbour Master will:

- assess risk and promulgate warnings (VHF/LNTM);
- mark/guard as required;
- serve directions on the owner to remove; and if necessary, exercise statutory powers to remove/destroy or issue a Dangerous Vessel Direction.

All actions are coordinated with HM Coastguard/MCA and, where appropriate, Trinity House and the police, ensuring the harbour meets the PMSC standard for decisive, proportionate management of dangers to navigation.

10.4 Role of SOSREP

The Secretary of State's Representative for Maritime Salvage and Intervention (SOSREP) is the UK Government's empowered authority responsible for directing and overseeing the response to significant maritime incidents, including those involving wrecks and abandoned vessels. SOSREP holds delegated powers of the Secretary of State to make urgent, time-critical decisions in the overriding public interest where there is a risk to life, the environment, property or navigation. SOSREP provides strategic oversight of salvage, pollution prevention and wreck removal operations, and may intervene directly to ensure that shipowners, salvors and other commercial parties discharge their responsibilities effectively. Where a wreck presents a risk of pollution or navigational danger, SOSREP is authorised to take control of the operation, issue directions, and coordinate the actions of harbour authorities, emergency services, contractors and government agencies until the danger is removed.

Operational Information

Introduction

The Operational Information section provides the practical detail that supports the day-to-day management of Lyme Regis Harbour, complementing the policy, governance and safety framework established in the Marine Safety Management System. It translates the MSMS principles into operational practice by describing the harbour's physical characteristics, navigational environment, local controls, user activities, facilities, and routine procedures that together enable safe and efficient marine operations. While the MSMS sets out what must be achieved to comply with the Port Marine Safety Code, this part of the document focuses on how those requirements are delivered on the water, at the quayside and across the wider harbour estate.

This section consolidates the operational knowledge necessary for staff, stakeholders, and harbour users to understand how the port functions in real terms. It outlines local navigational arrangements, vessel movement controls, beach-area management, port services, leisure and commercial activity, conservancy responsibilities, and the interface with emergency and specialist plans. By drawing together these operational practices in a structured, accessible format, the document ensures that all harbour activities are coordinated, clearly understood, and consistent with the risk-based systems set out in the MSMS. It is updated routinely to reflect changes in infrastructure, activity patterns, legislation and best practice, ensuring that operational delivery remains safe, coherent, and responsive to a dynamic marine environment.

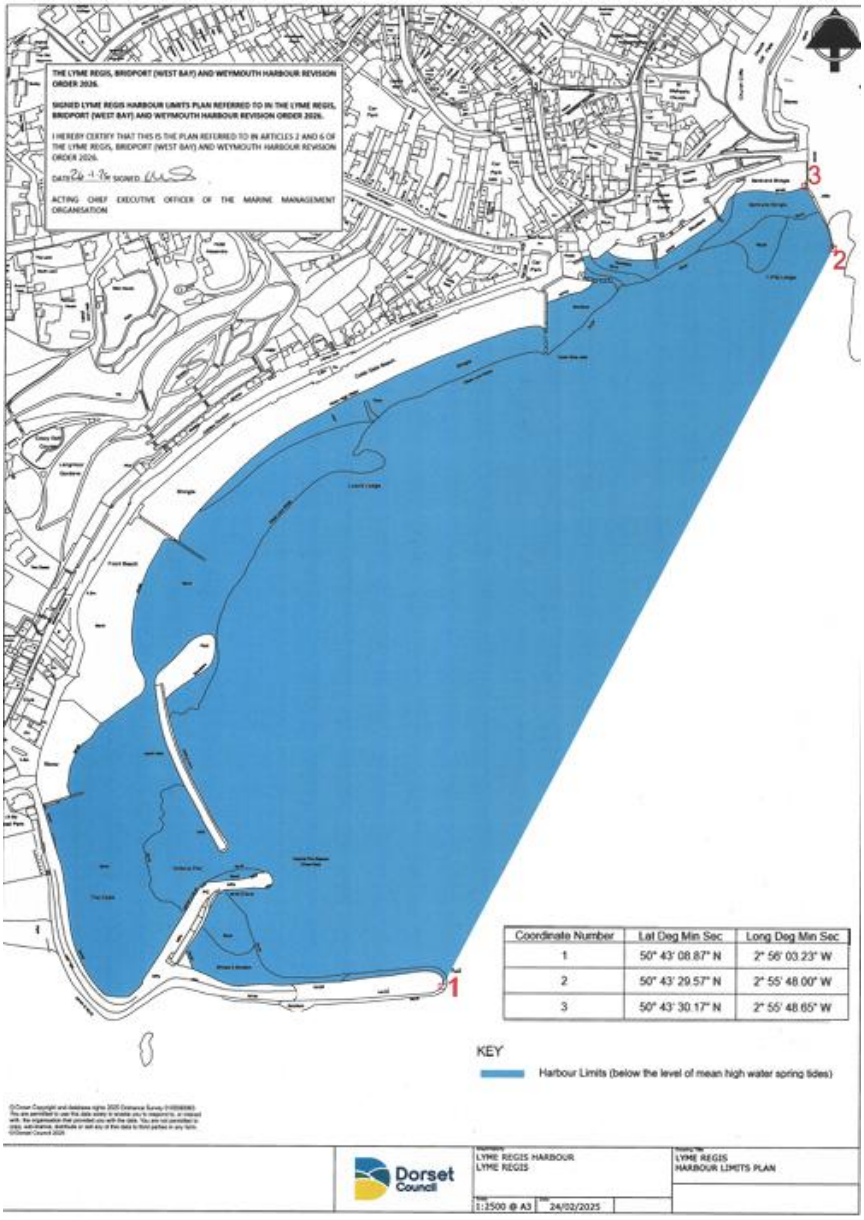
1.0 The Port of Lyme Regis

1.1 General Description

Lyme Regis Harbour is situated on the west side of Lyme Regis, Dorset, on the Jurassic Coast. The harbour includes the historic Cobb, which forms the principal breakwater and provides shelter for a small working harbour used by fishing vessels, passenger trip boats, visiting craft and local leisure users. The harbour is also a major public visitor destination, so marine operations take place close to busy pedestrian areas, beaches, the slipway and the Cobb.

The harbour is a small, predominantly drying harbour. Most moorings are drying moorings and the harbour is used mainly by small commercial and leisure craft. The approach and entrance are straightforward in settled conditions but can become challenging in onshore winds, swell or poor visibility. Masters remain responsible for safe navigation and should consult current charts, tide tables, Local Notices to Mariners and harbour staff before entry or departure.

The harbour estate includes the Cobb, Victoria Pier, quays, slipway, harbour office, boat storage areas and associated public access areas. The statutory harbour limits are defined by the Lyme Regis, Bridport (West Bay) and Lyme Regis Harbour Revision Order 2026. The Harbour Authority manages 241 drying moorings, the majority for private use, and 34 commercial moorings for fishing vessels and passenger vessels carrying fewer than 12 passengers.



Coordinate Number	Lat Deg Min Sec	Long Deg Min Sec
1	50° 43' 08.87" N	2° 56' 03.23" W
2	50° 43' 29.57" N	2° 55' 48.00" W
3	50° 43' 30.17" N	2° 55' 48.65" W

Figure 10: Harbour Limits

1.2 Tidal range

Lyme Regis is a drying harbour and tidal height is a primary operational constraint. Access to berths, the slipway and parts of the harbour is dependent on tide, vessel draft and prevailing sea conditions. Harbour users should refer to published tide tables and harbour advice before launching, recovering, entering or leaving. Non-commercial boats are normally removed from moorings for safe storage ashore during the winter season.

1.3 Anchorages

There are no designated deep-water anchorages within the small harbour. Any anchoring in Lyme Bay or close to the approaches must be undertaken only where safe, clear of navigation routes, moorings, beach areas and environmentally sensitive features, and remains the responsibility of the vessel's master.

1.4 Ship parameters

Lyme Regis Harbour is suited to small fishing vessels, local commercial craft, passenger trip boats carrying fewer than 12 passengers and leisure craft compatible with the drying nature of the harbour. Large commercial ships, ferries and freight vessels are not part of normal Lyme Regis operations. Vessel size, draft and timing of movements are assessed against tide, weather, available berth space, manoeuvring room and Harbour Master approval.

1.5 Meteorology

Lyme Regis Harbour is exposed to conditions in Lyme Bay, with the wider coastline open to the south and south-west and therefore susceptible to rapidly developing seas. While the Cobb provides significant shelter within the harbour, onshore winds, particularly south easterlies, as well as swell and surge can make the harbour entrance, slipway, Cobb and adjacent beach areas hazardous. In severe weather, strong winds, low pressure systems and storm events can elevate water levels and lead to waves overtopping exposed structures, with green seas occasionally breaking across the Cobb.

Weather has a direct influence on harbour operations. Prevailing southerly winds can quickly generate short, steep seas that are uncomfortable and potentially unsafe for small vessels, while prolonged gales from the south-west can produce very large sea states across Lyme Bay. Harbour staff continuously monitor conditions and may restrict vessel movements, launching activities or access to harbour infrastructure where necessary. The Harbour Master may also signal operational restrictions, including the use of visual signals to prohibit launching or require reduced vessel speed within the harbour.

In practice, activity at Lyme Regis is largely self-regulating. Vessel operations are predominantly daytime only, and in deteriorating or forecast adverse conditions, boats will typically choose not to put to sea. As a result, the need for intervention to assist vessels attempting to enter the harbour in marginal conditions is reduced. Compared to Bridport (West Bay), Lyme Regis is generally less exposed to south-westerly conditions, and it can often provide a viable refuge when conditions prevent safe entry to Bridport.

Figure 11: General view of Lyme Regis Harbour and The Cobb

2.0 Port Activities

2.1 Activities of, and affecting, the general public

Lyme Regis is a very popular destination for visitors, holidaymakers and day trippers. The Cobb, harbour walls, slipway, beaches and quays frequently bring the general public into close proximity with marine activities. The Harbour Authority therefore manages the interface between vessels, vehicles, pedestrians, anglers, swimmers, paddle craft, commercial operators and harbour staff through signage, patrols, advice, Directions, event controls and risk assessment.

2.2 The Beach Area

Lyme Regis beach and the water adjacent to the harbour are heavily used during the summer season by swimmers, paddle boarders, kayaks, sailing dinghies, small craft and beach users. Where harbour jurisdiction applies, safety on the water is managed by the Harbour Authority in cooperation with Dorset Council, Lyme Regis Town Council, RNLI lifeguards where operating, HM Coastguard and event organisers.

The main control objective is to separate incompatible activities as far as practicable and to reduce conflict between swimmers, launching craft, paddle craft, power-driven vessels and commercial harbour users. Seasonal controls, buoyage, signage, Local Notices to Mariners and harbour staff advice are used where appropriate. Harbour users must maintain a safe speed, keep a proper lookout and comply with any instruction or Direction issued by the Harbour Master.

Particular risks arise around the slipway, harbour entrance, Cobb walls, beach access points and areas used for swimming or informal water activity. These risks increase during peak visitor periods, events, poor weather or reduced visibility. The Harbour Authority monitors these areas and may temporarily restrict launching, landing, navigation or public access where required.

The principal concern is the safe coexistence of swimmers, paddle craft, kayaks, sailing dinghies, visiting boats, fishing vessels, passenger trip boats and other small craft. Local controls are kept under review and promulgated through harbour information, signage and Local Notices to Mariners.

Commercial beach or water-based operations within harbour jurisdiction require appropriate permissions, risk assessments, insurance and compliance with Harbour Master requirements.

2.3 The Cobb, Slipway and Harbour Entrance

Vessel movement control is focused on the harbour entrance, the Cobb, the slipway and confined manoeuvring areas. Craft launching or recovering from the slipway must give due regard to pedestrians, other vessels, tide, swell and instructions from harbour staff. The Harbour Master may control or suspend movements where required for safety.

Figure 12: The Cobb and harbour entrance

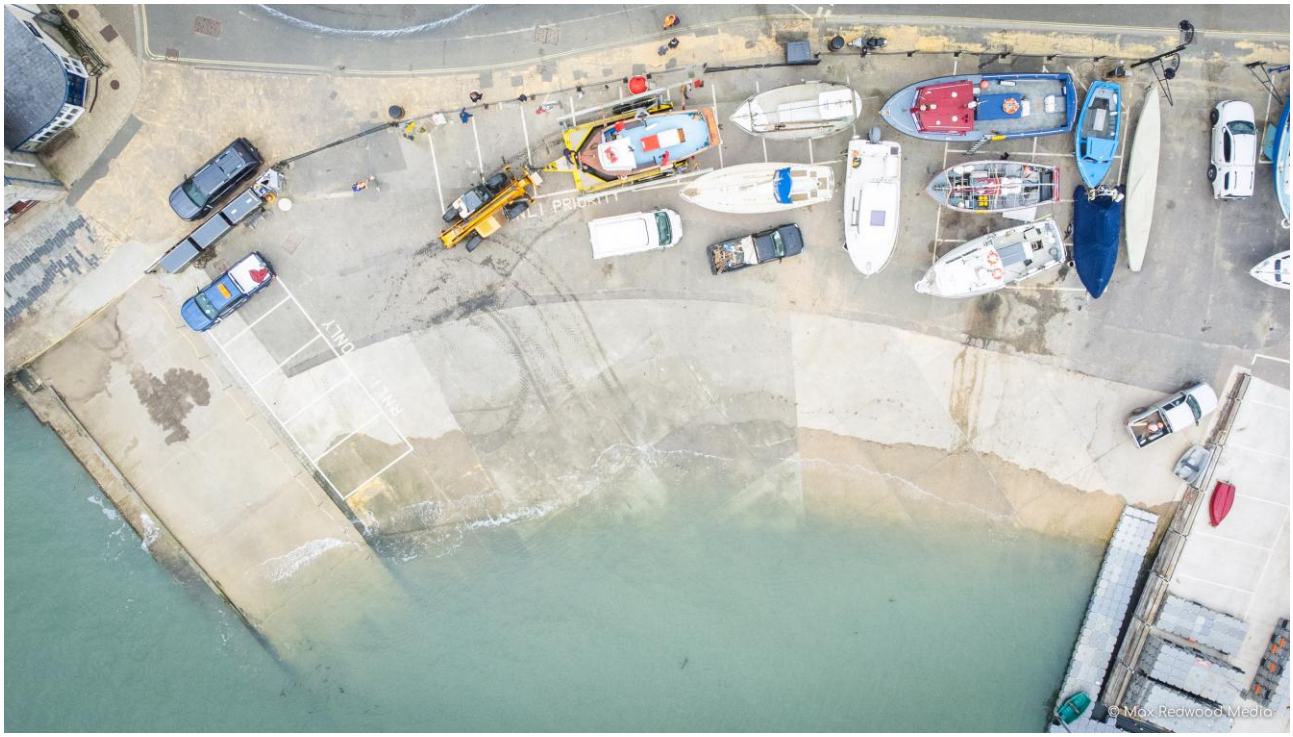


Figure 13: Slipway and harbour operational area

2.4 Marine type operations on the shore

As with any busy small harbour, Lyme Regis quays and slipway see regular activity between vessels and shore. These operations include landing catch, embarking passengers, launching and recovery, fuelling by approved arrangements, maintenance, deliveries and public access. Controls include safe systems of work, keeping access clear, segregation where practicable, staff supervision and operator risk assessments.

2.5 Freight activities

Lyme Regis Harbour does not routinely handle freight traffic and has no dedicated commercial cargo berth comparable to a larger port. Any unusual cargo, stores or plant movement affecting the harbour estate would require prior approval from the Harbour Master and a suitable risk assessment.

Where plant, lifting operations or deliveries are required, the work area must be controlled to protect the public and harbour users. Method statements, insurance, permits and traffic/pedestrian controls may be required.

2.6 Hazardous goods

No hazardous goods are routinely handled at Lyme Regis Harbour. Any proposed movement or storage of hazardous substances must be declared in advance to the Harbour Master and will be assessed in accordance with relevant legislation, harbour procedures, emergency planning and environmental controls.

2.7 Fishing boats

The fishing fleet is the largest commercial user of Lyme Regis Harbour.

Lyme Regis has an active small fishing fleet and commercial fishing remains an important harbour activity. Commercial moorings are provided for fishing vessels and passenger vessels carrying fewer than 12 passengers. Activity varies seasonally and includes potting, netting, angling support and other small-vessel operations typical of Lyme Bay.

Fishing vessels land catch and handle gear within designated harbour areas. Operators are expected to keep quays, pontoons, access routes and working areas clear so far as practicable, and to follow any harbour requirements relating to gear storage, waste, fuel, vehicle access and safe movement around the quay.

Poor housekeeping of fishing gear, ropes, pots or equipment can obstruct access and create trip, manual handling and emergency access hazards. Harbour staff monitor working areas and may require gear to be moved or stored appropriately.

2.8 Charter Boats

There are 14 trip charter boats licensed to operate from Lyme Regis. These variously provide fishing/educational trips round the bay, sea angling, and diving activities. The majority remain close to the shore. All are MCA licensed under the latest Codes of Practice. There is some overlap between operating as commercial fishing boats and as day charter fishing boats, 2 boats have dual licenses.

These craft are generally operated by experienced local skippers with strong knowledge of Lyme Bay. The main navigational risks arise from congestion in the harbour entrance, interaction with swimmers or paddle craft, weather changes, limited water at low tide and over-familiarity during routine operations.

The Harbour Authority manages these risks through licensing, liaison, incident reporting, Local Notices to Mariners, VHF communication, operational conditions and enforcement where required.

Application of the Council's risk system to these commercial, marine-based, activities rests with ensuring that the narrow individual risk assessments each is subject to, is fitted into the wider considerations of the risk matrices of the Council.

2.9 RNLI Lifeboats

There has been a lifeboat station on the historic Cobb since 1826. This station is now home to the RNLI and an Atlantic 85 class lifeboat. Lifeboat emergency operations have priority and all harbour users must keep clear when the lifeboat is launching, recovering or responding to an incident. Harbour staff will assist with traffic control and public safety where practicable.

The lifeboat may need to launch or return rapidly through an area used by commercial vessels, leisure craft, swimmers, paddle craft or pedestrians. Prompt cooperation by all harbour users is essential. Vessels should monitor VHF, maintain a lookout and comply immediately with instructions from the lifeboat crew, HM Coastguard or harbour staff.

Where a lifeboat launch is imminent, harbour users should avoid launching, recovering or manoeuvring in a way that could impede emergency response. Harbour staff may close or control the slipway, entrance or nearby public areas during the operation.

During daylight hours harbourmasters' boats may be operating in the entrance and can control any other traffic likely to impede the lifeboat's movements. In addition, it is suggested that if other large craft see the lifeboat getting under way, they should refrain from moving until the lifeboat has cleared the harbour. An audio warning system is activated to warn shore and boat users of the lifeboat activation, replacing the traditional maroons. It normally takes about ten minutes to scramble the boat from the emergency call going out.

2.10 Leisure activities

Lyme Regis is a busy seasonal leisure harbour. The harbour provides drying moorings, launch facilities and visiting opportunities for local and visiting craft. Leisure activity is concentrated in the summer season and includes sailing, rowing, kayaking, paddle boarding, angling, diving, swimming and short coastal passages within Lyme Bay.

The Harbour Authority's policy is to allow leisure use to continue as freely as safety permits, while applying proportionate controls where user groups interact. Controls include harbour information, Local Notices to Mariners, speed and conduct requirements, launch management, winter mooring arrangements and directions from harbour staff.

Standards of experience vary significantly between regular local users and occasional visitors. Harbour staff therefore provide advice, maintain visible supervision where practicable and use education and enforcement to manage unsafe conduct.

2.11 Events

Events at Lyme Regis may include sailing, rowing, swimming, charity, community, lifeboat, fireworks and other shore-and-water activities. Events within or affecting harbour jurisdiction require early liaison with the Harbour Master and the relevant Council events teams.

Event organisers are responsible for preparing suitable risk assessments, method statements, emergency arrangements, insurance and communication plans. The Harbour Authority reviews marine aspects and may issue Local Notices to Mariners, conditions, temporary controls or Directions to protect navigation and public safety.

The arrangements for recurring events are reviewed in light of incident reports, weather, participant numbers, public attendance, stakeholder feedback and lessons identified after each event.

There is a constant review of the arrangements for holding events. It is up to the organisers of each event to carry out the risk assessment of their event. The Harbour Authority 'notes' each risk assessment presented by the organisers of events and as necessary, approves events to proceed. It is normal for events to be insured by the organiser and, if the insurers are willing to accept and underwrite the event, it instils more confidence for the Harbour Authority.

2.12 Activities on the water

Water traffic in Lyme Regis Harbour is seasonal and consists mainly of small commercial craft, fishing vessels, passenger trip boats, leisure vessels, paddle craft and sailing craft. The confined harbour, drying moorings, slipway and busy public areas require careful control, particularly at peak times and during adverse weather.

When commercial movements, emergency operations, organised events or unusual vessel movements create conflict, the Harbour Master may direct other craft to wait, keep clear, use a specified route or cease movement until safe. Harbour users must navigate with caution, maintain a safe speed and comply with harbour instructions.

On the water, the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code also come to bear, and this gives an extra layer of control requirements. Mostly, the equipment, operations plan, and general provisions keep the port functioning safely. But the mix of commercial and leisure use and widely varying standards of skill, always carry the potential for problems and harbour staff are vigilant in attending to this mix.

2.13 Overview of port movement control

Lyme Regis has a compact harbour entrance protected by the Cobb. The Operations Plan is therefore focused on: safe use of the entrance and slipway; managing the interaction between vessels and the public; seasonal beach and water-user management; and maintaining safe mooring, landing and working arrangements within a drying harbour.

Vessels should contact Lyme Regis Harbour on VHF Channel 14 when within range and monitor VHF Channel 16 for distress and safety traffic. There is no Vessel Traffic Service. Movement control is provided by the Harbour Master and harbour staff through VHF, visual signals where used, patrol craft where available, Local Notices to Mariners, harbour information and direct instructions.

Small craft may normally enter and leave at their own responsibility when safe to do so, subject to tide, weather, mooring availability and compliance with harbour requirements. Visiting vessels are encouraged to contact the Harbour Office before arrival for berthing, mooring and local navigation advice.

2.14 Pilotage

There is no routine pilotage service at Lyme Regis Harbour and no compulsory pilotage for normal harbour users. The harbour is not operated as a large commercial pilotage port. Any request for navigational assistance by an unusual vessel would be considered by the Harbour Master on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the vessel, tide, weather, available local knowledge and safe limits of the harbour.

Where the Harbour Master considers a movement unsuitable for Lyme Regis because of vessel size, draft, sea state, lack of manoeuvring room or other safety factors, the vessel may be refused entry or directed to wait or proceed elsewhere.

Because Lyme Regis does not operate a compulsory pilotage regime, pilotage currency requirements are not normally applicable. Any unusual vessel movement requiring local navigational assistance would be managed through a specific risk assessment and method statement approved by the Harbour Master.

Tugs

There are no dedicated harbour tugs stationed at Lyme Regis. Towage or salvage support may be requested from suitable regional providers, including Portland or other contractors, but availability cannot be guaranteed and response time will depend on location, weather, vessel suitability and the nature of the incident.

Pilotage Exemption Certificates

Pilotage Exemption Certificates are not routinely applicable to Lyme Regis Harbour because there is no compulsory pilotage regime for normal harbour operations.

Collision Regulations

Vessel movements in and around Lyme Regis Harbour are carried out in conformity with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972, as amended. Within the confined harbour, all craft should navigate defensively, keep a proper lookout, proceed at safe speed and be prepared to give way where necessary to avoid close-quarters situations, especially near the entrance, slipway, moorings and swimming areas.

Particular care is required around commercial fishing vessels, passenger trip boats, lifeboat operations, paddle craft, swimmers, sailing dinghies and vessels constrained by tide or manoeuvring room.

Passage plan

For non-routine vessel movements, the Harbour Master may require a simple passage or movement plan covering timing, tide, weather, communications, berth/mooring arrangements, emergency contingencies and any temporary controls needed to manage other harbour users.

2.15 Communications

Communications within the harbour are by VHF radio: Channel 16 for distress, urgency and safety calling, and working Channel 14 for Lyme Regis Harbour.

HM Coastguard can be contacted on VHF Channel 16 or by dialling 999 in an emergency.

Neighbouring harbour authorities and regional marine operators may be contacted by telephone or VHF as required during incidents or unusual movements.

- There is no Vessel Traffic Service. Harbour movements are coordinated locally by the Harbour Master and harbour staff.
- Communication with Lyme Regis Harbour is on Channel 14.
- Lyme Regis does not operate scheduled ferries, cruise calls or large passenger ships. Passenger activity is limited to small local vessels, such as fishing trips, sightseeing trips and other craft carrying fewer than 12 passengers, subject to coding, licensing and harbour requirements.
- Local National Coastwatch Institute based at Charmouth are Channel 65.
- Vessel Traffic Service: There is no VTS service. When necessary, Lyme Regis and neighbouring co-ordinate movements on an ad-hoc basis.

2.16 Leisure uses

Lyme Regis has a strong leisure boating community based around drying moorings, slipway launching, visiting small craft and seasonal activity in Lyme Bay. Leisure use includes sailing, rowing, paddle sports, angling, diving and short coastal passages. The harbour's small scale and drying nature mean that tide, weather and congestion are key planning considerations.

The Harbour Authority manages leisure use through mooring administration, launch arrangements, harbour information, Local Notices to Mariners, patrols where available, stakeholder liaison and enforcement of byelaws and Directions. Public access to the Cobb and quays is also considered in operational planning.

2.17 Visiting leisure vessels

Visiting vessels should contact the Harbour Office before arrival, check tide and weather, and follow any instructions on berthing, mooring or anchoring. Visitor access is subject to space, vessel suitability and safe conditions.

Visiting leisure vessels are welcomed where conditions and available space permit. Lyme Regis is a drying harbour, so visiting vessels must be suitable for the available mooring or berth and should plan arrival and departure around tide, weather and daylight where appropriate.

Visitors should be aware of fishing vessels, passenger trip boats, slipway operations, swimmers, paddle craft and pedestrians around the Cobb. Harbour staff will provide local advice, but the master remains responsible for safe navigation and mooring.

During busy periods or poor weather, visitor access may be restricted to protect safety or to maintain access for local commercial vessels and emergency services.

2.18 Jet skis, personal watercraft and towed aquaplaning water sports craft

Personal watercraft, jet skis and towed recreational activities are not permitted to launch from the Lyme Regis slipway unless prior permission has been granted by the Harbour Master. Recovery or visitation may be permitted only with prior approval and subject to any conditions imposed for safety, public protection and environmental management.

2.19 Moorings

Lyme Regis Harbour provides 241 drying moorings, the majority for private use, and 34 commercial moorings for fishing vessels and small passenger vessels. Moorings are managed by the Harbour Authority and are subject to allocation, inspection, maintenance requirements, seasonal arrangements and harbour dues.

Because the harbour dries, mooring suitability depends on vessel type, ground conditions, tackle, tidal access and exposure to weather. Non-commercial vessels are normally removed from moorings for safe storage ashore during the winter season.

Mooring holders must maintain their vessels and mooring equipment in a safe condition, keep contact details current, comply with harbour requirements and notify the Harbour Office of defects, incidents or changes in use.

The general policy is that this yachting traffic should be allowed to move as freely as safety permits. Lyme Regis offers simple navigation with only a few minor hazards, so it is possible to allow a high degree of freedom from regulation without undue risk. Such controls as are necessary, for traffic regulation in the entrance, and through the Cobb and Slipway, are well established and examined in detail in the formal risk assessments.

2.20 Harbour Works and Contractor Controls

Works in the harbour, including repairs, maintenance, dredging, diving, mooring work and temporary operations, are controlled through harbour consent, risk assessment, method statements and any required statutory permissions.

2.21 Harbour Security and Public Access Arrangements

Security and public access controls are managed proportionately through staff presence, signage, incident reporting, event controls, emergency planning and liaison with Dorset Police where necessary.

2.23 Slipway and Launching Arrangements

The slipway has operating arrangements covering launching, recovery, fees, safe conduct, vehicle movements, peak period management and any restrictions are imposed by the Harbour Master.

2.24 Works licensing

All Major works in both ports are either carried out by direct labour of Dorset Council, or by contractors directly controlled by the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk management Team so the need for licensing is minimised. Works carried out are agreed with the Harbour Master and controlled by the Principal Engineer in consultation with Dorset Council officers. It is rare, other than dredging, for such works to affect navigation. Minor works may be carried out directly by the harbour master or his assistants.

2.25 Diving

All diving for favour or reward is subject to the Diving at Work Regulations 1997 and associated Approved Codes of Practice. Diving at work may only be carried out by a competent diving contractor who has made the necessary notifications and prepared a suitable diving project plan. Lyme Regis Harbour requires divers at work to obtain prior consent from the Harbour Authority before undertaking a dive.

2.26 Towing

Towing in and around Lyme Regis Harbour is subject to approval from the Harbour Master unless undertaken in immediate response to danger to life or property. Planned tows should be requested in advance and supported by a suitable risk assessment.

- The towing of vessels by RNLI lifeboats or emergency services.
- The towing of dinghies, sailing boats or training craft by local clubs or training organisations, subject to their risk assessments and safety arrangements.
- The towing of craft by approved contractors or harbour users where authorised by the Harbour Master.

Towing in the outer and inner harbours is subject to approval from the Harbour Master. Permission for planned tows should be requested in advance. The following are standard given approvals:

- The towing of vessels by the RNLI lifeboats.
- The towing of dinghies and sailing boats by the Sea School Charity and Lyme Regis Sailing Club subject to each organisations' risk assessments and safety cases.
- The towing of craft by approved contractors or harbour users where authorised by the Harbour Master.
- The conservancy scheme for Lyme Regis is focused on maintaining safe access to the harbour, the Cobb, the slipway, drying moorings and adjacent navigable water used by harbour craft.

2.27 Local Notices to Mariners

Lyme Regis Harbour maintains a system of Local Notices to Mariners (LNtM) in accordance with industry expectations and the PMSC GGP. LNtM are used to promulgate relevant information for the safety of navigation to harbour users and maritime stakeholders. Distribution is via email (subscriber list), with current and recent LNtM being displayed on the website and in the Harbour Office reception.

3.0 Conservancy

Lyme Regis Harbour maintains local Aids to Navigation, harbour marks, seasonal marks and safety information proportionate to the scale and risk of the harbour. The Harbour Authority monitors the entrance, moorings, slipway and harbour infrastructure and promulgates relevant hazards or changes by Local Notices to Mariners.

The Cobb provides the main shelter and physical definition of the harbour. Harbour staff monitor the condition and effectiveness of harbour infrastructure, including after storms or unusual weather events, and arrange inspections, repairs or restrictions where necessary.

Seasonal and temporary controls may be used to manage water users, beach activity, works or events. These are reviewed in light of operational experience, user feedback and risk assessment.

3.1 General description

At Lyme Regis, a set of leading lights bearing 284° (T) leads clear of the outer breakwater end and into the harbour. It is provided by two lights, the rear being a fixed green light visible 9 miles, the front an occulting sectored light showing red from the leading line to the South and West, white to the North and East. All permanent navigation lights at both ports are powered by mains electricity without emergency back-up, but as both ports are very largely daylight only operations, this is not considered to be a major problem.

A buoy has been installed outside Lyme Regis harbour entrance, to mark the end of a new sewer outfall. This is a south cardinal buoy, showing a standard flashing white light, in position 50° 43.17'N, 002° 55.66'W. Although not intended as such, it can be a useful fairway buoy for incoming small craft.

3.2 Standards and Inspection of Aids to Navigation

The Port of Lyme Regis aims for 100% reliability from its Aids to Navigation, with a minimum fallback to IALA standards. reports are made to Trinity House (through LARS) in the event of defects, ensuring the obligations as a Local lighthouse Authority are maintained.

3.3 Inspection of Aids to Navigation

Lyme Regis is a Local Lighthouse Authority for its harbour Aids to Navigation. Aids are inspected and maintained through the harbour's routine regime and are subject to Trinity House oversight. Defects are recorded, prioritised, rectified and, where necessary, promulgated to mariners.

3.4 Dredging, hydrographic survey and Admiralty charts

Lyme Regis Harbour is a drying harbour and seabed conditions, beach levels and access around the harbour may change following storms, surge events or sediment movement. Hydrographic surveys, inspections and other checks are arranged where required to support safe navigation, mooring management, dredging decisions or infrastructure works.

Where dredging or seabed works are required, they are planned and authorised in accordance with relevant consents, environmental duties, risk assessments and the Hydrographic Code of Practice where applicable. Relevant information is shared with harbour users and the UKHO where appropriate.

Survey outputs, local knowledge, incident reports and user feedback are reviewed by the Harbour Master and used to update Local Notices to Mariners, risk assessments and operational controls.

A detailed hydrographic survey is carried out every year by a contract hydrographic firm and depths are carefully monitored. The results of each hydrographic survey are notified to the Admiralty Hydrographic Office in full. The Hydrographic Code of Practice is followed.

3.5 Wrecks

There are no known wrecks locally within Lyme Regis Harbour that obstruct normal navigation. If any wreck, sunken craft, abandoned vessel or obstruction presents a danger to navigation, the Harbour Master will assess the risk, mark or guard the hazard where practicable, issue warnings and use statutory powers to require removal or arrange removal where necessary.

4.0 Freestanding and Second Tier Plans

4.1 The Port Waste Management Plan

This plan is fully developed and approved by the MCA. It is adopted into the Operations Plan and Safety Management System and implemented through harbour waste reception arrangements, user information and contractor controls.

4.2 Dorset Council – Emergency Response Plan

These plans lay out the systems to be used for any emergency in the region. Should any incident in the harbour area have consequences reaching beyond its confines, it is the Emergency Response Plan which will be brought to bear. There are both Weymouth Town Council and Dorset Council plans.

4.3 MSN 1832 (M) Amendment 1

This Merchant Shipping Notice updates the UK's guidance on how Port State Control is carried out under the Merchant Shipping (Port State Control) Regulations 2011. It explains how foreign-flagged ships visiting UK ports are inspected based on their risk profile, with older or higher-risk vessels receiving more thorough checks. Ships that qualify for these expanded inspections must give 72 hours' notice before arrival, allow enough time in their schedule for the inspection, and remain in port until it has been completed.

The amendment also reinforces reporting duties for pilots and port authorities, requiring them to alert the MCA to any safety or environmental concerns and to provide accurate arrival and departure times for all visiting ships. It introduces tougher consequences for vessels that repeatedly fail inspections, including the possibility of being banned from UK and other member state ports. In essence, the amendment strengthens the UK's alignment with the Paris MoU inspection regime and ensures consistent, risk-based oversight of visiting ships.

5.0 Emergency Response Plan

5.1 Assigned Areas of Responsibility

The Port Marine Safety Code states that the Safety Management System should include preparations for emergencies and that these should be identified as far as practical from the formal risk assessment.

If an incident should occur, we will require robust, reliable and resilient plans and resources to manage the incident and to achieve the best possible outcome in a potentially hostile and hazardous environment.

The Lyme Regis Harbour Emergency Plan details responses to emergency situations within harbour limits and approaches. This plan will work alongside the Regional Emergency Plan to enable an appropriate response to incidents in or affecting the Harbour.

Training, exercises and drills will be programmed and completed to test emergency procedures. Records will be maintained by the HPCHA and the contractor, procedures will be updated as required following lessons learnt.

All incidents, emergencies and near misses within the Harbour or Approaches should be reported to the Harbour Master at the earliest possible opportunity. This should not detract for the Master's responsibility to react and respond to emergencies etc. on board their vessel.

HM Coastguard is responsible on behalf of the Department for Transport for the co-ordination of Civil Maritime Search and Rescue within the United Kingdom Search and Rescue Region. When alerted or notified by a Harbour Authority or in the event of being the first recipient of an alert or notification HM Coastguard will, after consulting with the Harbour Authority, assist the Harbour Authority by co-ordinating the "Search and Rescue" phase of any Distress incident within the harbour limits. A Distress incident is defined in IAMSAR Manual (Vol. 1) as being a situation wherein there is a reasonable certainty that a vessel or other craft, including an aircraft or a person, is threatened by grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance. The Harbour Authority will remain responsible for managing the overall response to any incident within the port limits.

Objectives

The objectives of this plan include:

- Use our best endeavours to reduce the vulnerability to and resultant effect of a major emergency.
- Comply with relevant international conventions, legislation, regulation, guidance and industry best practise.
- The plan will define the Harbour Authority's overall emergency management structure and departmental responsibilities, and to define the role of support organisations.
- Ensure that there are adequate resources available to respond to reasonably foreseeable emergencies.
- To reduce Risk to As Low As Reasonably Practicable as required by the Port Marine Safety Code.

Scope

The Plan applies within the statutory jurisdiction of the Lyme Regis Harbour Authority limits and approaches.

The Harbour Master is responsible for the implementation of this Plan, and for ensuring stakeholders meets the obligations described in the Plan.

5.2 Coordination of incidents inside the harbour

All Vessels in the Harbour Approaches

HM Coastguard is the co-ordinating authority for any incident in these areas and will call in other services as necessary.

Craft in the Harbour

The Harbour Master has a primary authority for dealing with incidents to vessels on the move farther into the harbour, calling in other services as necessary.

All Craft Alongside in the Harbour

Craft alongside a berth come under general shore emergency provisions, which means that the police have the controlling responsibility, in co-operation with the Harbour Master as appropriate.

On board ship

For incidents arising on board ships, the vessel's Master is in charge of on-board action, in close co-ordination with the Harbour Master and emergency services.

6.0 The Plan

6.1 General

The emergency responses of Lyme Regis are under the overall command of their Harbour Master, reporting to the SHA duty holder. The port only has the capacity to deal with minor incidents from its own

resources. An incident at port level would require additional expertise and resources. Whilst a major incident is not envisaged, this would call for significant resources and expertise from external services.

Should an incident occur requiring further resources the Harbour Master will receive support and approval from the Head of Environment and Wellbeing and the Cabinet member for place commissioned services as Duty Holder.

A full-scale emergency would be initiated by the emergency services and would activate Dorset Council's Emergency Plan.

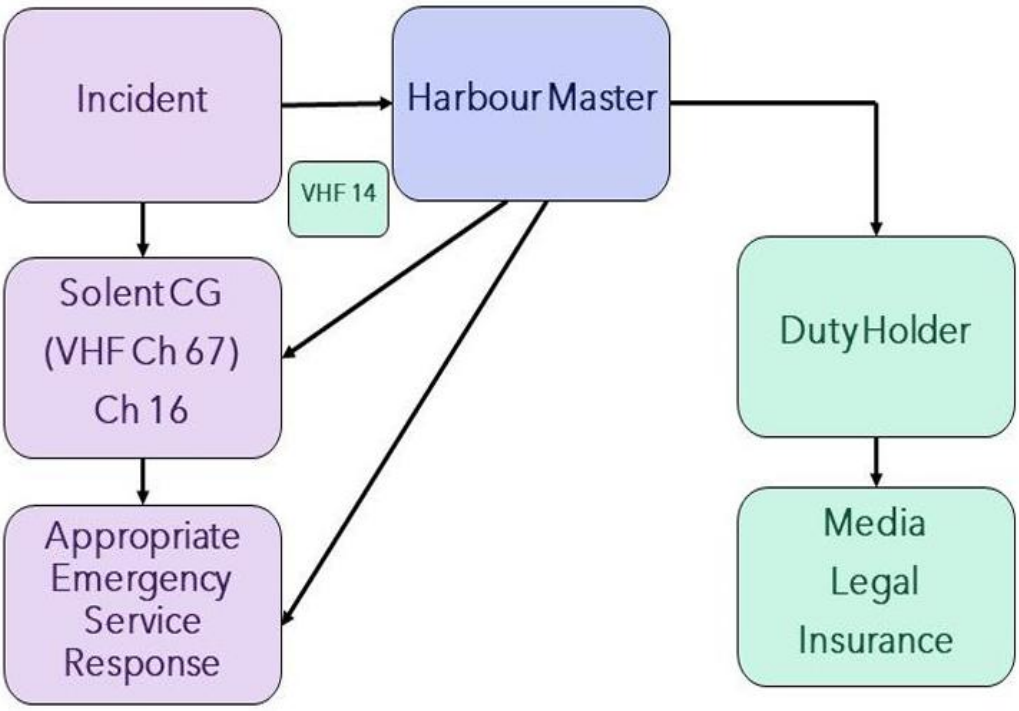


Figure 14: General Emergency Response Flowchart

6.2 Pollution

Lyme Regis is exempt from the need to have a full Oil Spill Response Plan, but carries small stocks of pollution control equipment. This is located in the stores building and harbour staff are fully familiar with its use.

6.3 Tug and Salvage Equipment Availability

There are no tugs at Lyme Regis. The Harbour Master's RIB is a powerful craft capable of being used for basic tug duties such as moving vessels around in the harbour. For incidents outside the harbour, it is probable that the larger fishing boats could give first aid assistance to smaller boats and these should be looked to in the first instance. The nearest large tugs are at Portland, 25 miles away and available to move on about half an hour's notice in the daytime, 4 hours' notice at night. Their draft limitations would preclude their use in the harbour or its approaches. There is some limited salvage capacity at Portland, which could be mobilised reasonably rapidly. At Lyme Regis the usual way of dealing with the small craft which use it is

by the boat lifter which operates across the harbour bed at low water. Any craft which sank would be lifted ashore at the next low water and dealt with from there.

6.4 HM Coastguard

The area National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) is at Fareham. The Senior Coastal Operations Officer (SCOO) is based at Winfrith, Wool; Lyme Regis has an auxiliary Coastguard Station which holds access equipment and shore support gear.

Solent Coastguard can be contacted by:

- VHF channel 16 or 70 (DSC) or tel. 999

6.5 RNLI

There is an RNLI station at Lyme Regis with an Atlantic 85 lifeboat. To obtain lifeboat assistance, contact Solent Coastguard in the first instance.

6.6 Vessels Aground

As only small craft use the harbour, which is tidal, vessels aground do not constitute a significant problem. Any vessel capable of using the port, if it could not be towed off, would be removed at low water by crane or boatlift.

There can be a problem in the entrance to Lyme Regis Harbour if a larger boat moors by the steps. It can become grounded at low water preventing smaller boats still afloat from operating at or using the steps.

6.7 Fire on board vessel

The Harbour Master should be informed of incidents and emergencies within Lyme Regis Harbour limits or approaches by calling Lyme Regis Harbour on VHF Channel 14 or 01297 442137. In an emergency, HM Coastguard should be contacted on VHF Channel 16 or by dialling 999.

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue will attend any vessel fire within the ports.

Action:

a) If alongside within the harbour, call Fire Brigade Tel. 999.

b) If on the move, Call Solent Coastguard VHF Channel 16 or 70(DSC).

Notify:

- Position
- Whether able to reach an access point and if so which one.
- ETA at access point
- Scale of problem
- Number of persons on board
- Type of fire
- Type of vessel
- Type and nature of assistance required

6.8 Persons in Difficulties

a) Outside the harbour mouth:

Action:

- Call Solent Coastguard VHF Channel 16 or 70 (DSC)

Notify:

- Vessel name
- Inbound/outbound
- State of tide
- Speed of current
- Location
- Number of persons in the water
- Whether local assistance available
- Solent Coastguard will decide appropriate response and if necessary, will call the RNLI or other appropriate service.

b) Inside the harbour mouth:

When an incident is observed or the Harbour staff are informed, the Harbour Master or his assistant will ensure that the Coastguard is informed, take charge and co-ordinate the rescue until such time as the emergency services are established on site.

If time is of the essence and it is safe to do so, harbour staff may attempt to assist the person in the water and rescue them or move them to a safe location.

6.10 Initial Communications

For persons in the water within the harbour, harbour staff or other suitable craft should take immediate action where safe to do so, while notifying HM Coastguard of the situation and actions being taken.

For persons in the water outside the immediate harbour area, or if harbour craft are not available, action should be taken as follows:

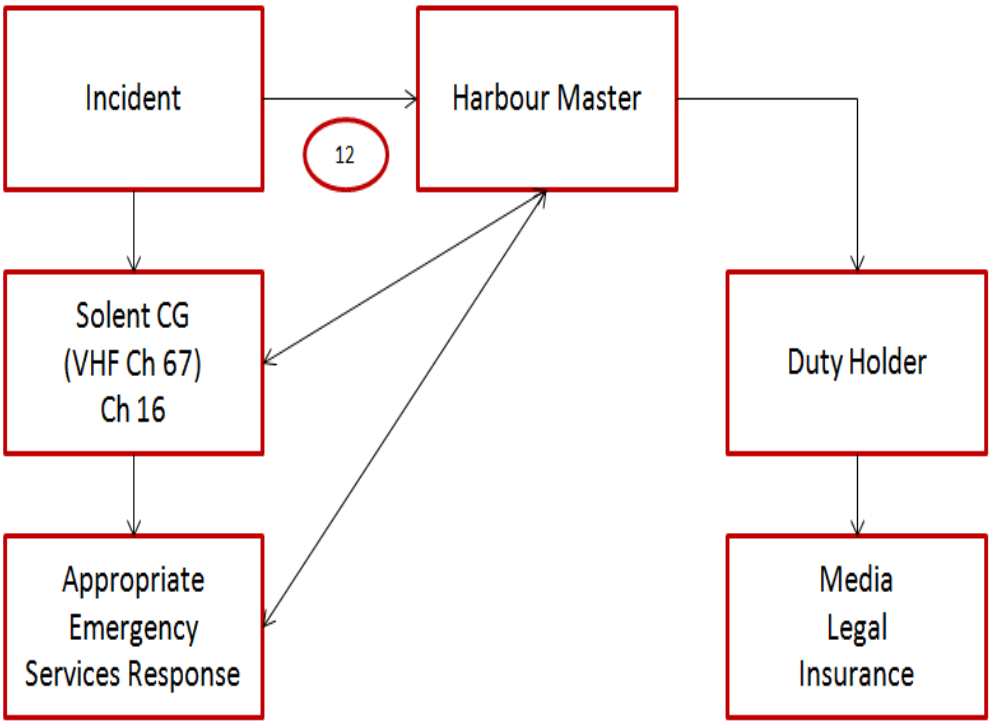
The Harbour Master should be informed of incidents and emergencies within the Lyme Regis Harbour limits or approaches via calling the Harbour Office on 01297 442137.

6.11 Press and Media

Information to the Public and Press will be channelled through Dorset Communication Team. Staff must be instructed not to make “on the spot” statements to the media unless authorised by the Communication Team. Contact: 01305 838073.

7.0 Incident Management Flowcharts

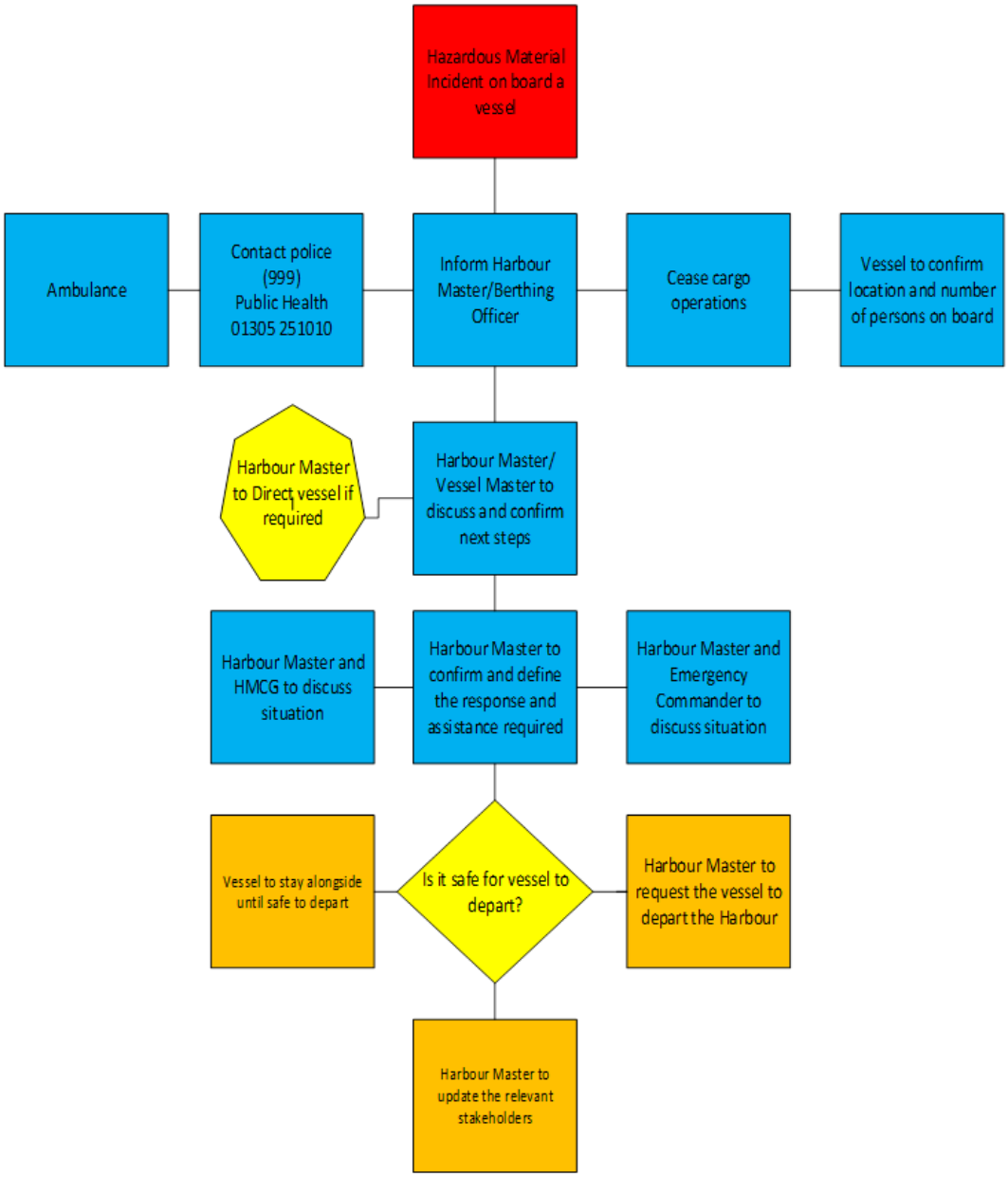
7.1 High Level Process



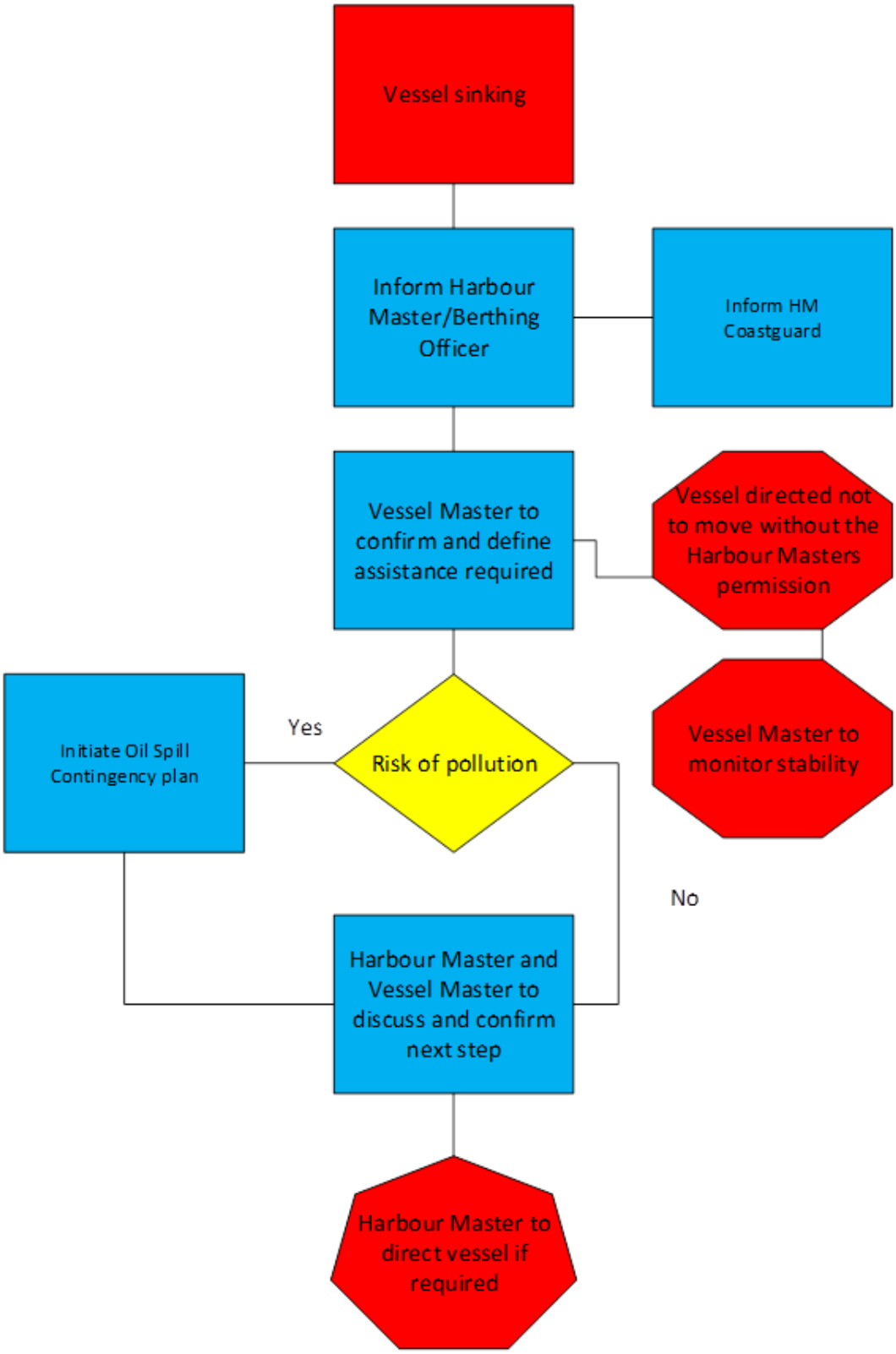
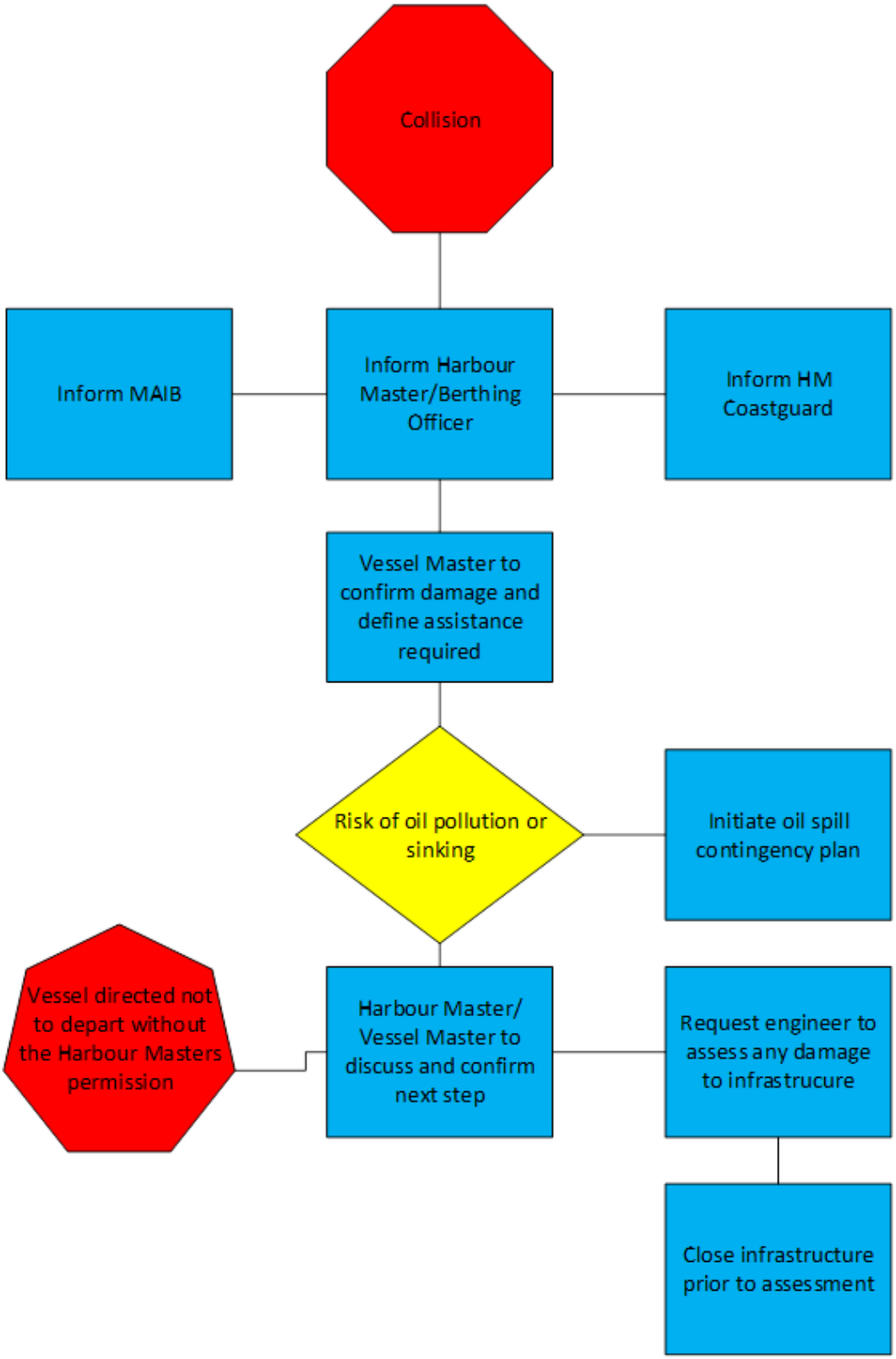
7.2 Man Overboard

7.4 Medical Emergency

7.5 Hazardous material incident



7.6 Sinking vessel



7.7 Vessel collision