

THE DOCKYARD PORT OF PORTSMOUTH ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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KINGS HARBOUR MASTER PORTSMOUTH

Foreword by Naval Base Commander Portsmouth



Cdre Marcel M G Rosenberg ADC RN – Duty Holder for the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth

Since September 2024 I have held the roles of Naval Base Commander Portsmouth and Duty Holder for Marine Safety for the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth. The scale of the Dockyard Port, and the variety of activity it hosts is remarkable. With movements through the Dockyard Port in excess of 200,000 per year, Portsmouth is one of busiest ports in the country. Port users include warships, ferries, commercial vessels, fishing vessels and a large number of recreational craft which must all safely co-exist.

Portsmouth is home to a large proportion of the Royal Navy's surface vessels, including the aircraft carriers *HMS Queen Elizabeth* and *HMS Prince Of Wales*, together with the Type 45 Destroyers, Type 23 Frigates and 15 smaller warships. As Naval Base Commander, the support of the Royal Navy is a key focus but as the Duty Holder for the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth I have a wider responsibility for maritime safety and the King's Harbour Master (KHM) team are charged with delivering this on my behalf.

To deliver my remit, and meet Defence Maritime Regulations, I have a strong commitment to the Department for Transport's (Dft) Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) as a template for safe operations within the Dockyard Port.

To deliver compliance against the PMSC, KHM operates a Marine Safety and Environmental Management System, built on detailed risk assessments and control measures, competent personnel and a comprehensive marine safety plan.

Assurance of compliance is provided independently by a system of audits conducted by our Designated Person.

This report covers activity in the port during 2024, including details of traffic volumes, key events and headlines also a summary of the marine incidents recorded throughout the port.

Having received the results of the port's compliance audit, which provided a 'full compliance' status, I am assured that the port is meeting its PMSC requirements and as such am confident that the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth is a safe environment for mariners.

Introduction and Aim

1. The 2024 Dockyard Port of Portsmouth (DPP) annual report aims to demonstrate the DPP's performance in conforming to the Defence Maritime Regulations for Health, Safety and Environmental Protection¹ (DMR Regs). A key requirement of these regulations (Regulation 701) is for MOD owned or operated ports and marine facilities to comply with the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC)² while meeting Defence needs by maintaining core operational outputs.

2. Formal assessment of compliance to DMR Regs and the PMSC is demonstrated by internal 1st Line of Defence Assurance Audits (1LOD) and external 2nd Line of Defence Assurance Audits (2LOD) by the port's Designated Person (DP), Captain Port Operations. This is complemented by other audit activity, including by Trinity House as the General Lighthouse Authority and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) regarding the compliance of the Oil Spill Response Plan and annual reports of Maritime Pollution (MARPOL) incidents. Finally, the King's Harbour Master (KHM) briefs the Duty Holder, the Naval Base Commander, monthly on activity in the port with a focus on marine safety.

3. For the KHM department, the year was one of steady operational activity, with a few particularly busy periods. A number of KHM staff members have left the MOD this year and work on filling gaps is ongoing.

4. Despite carrying vacant positions, the department maintained operational outputs throughout the year, facilitating a safe and effective port, available for the Royal Navy and the large number of non-military port users, both commercial and recreational. Key operational highlights were ongoing support to both Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers and support to the D / Day 80 commemorations.

Marine Safety Plan

5. The KHM Portsmouth Marine Safety Plan was reviewed in September 2024 and sets out how the port aims to develop its Safety and Environmental Management System (SEMS) over the next two years.

6. Risk management processes are well-developed in the port, with a mature and well-understood SEMS. Use of the MARNIS risk management and incident record system underpins this, and KHM staff regularly review reported incidents, re-visiting risk assessments and improving risk control measures where appropriate.

7. There is a well-established process of third-party event organisers contacting KHM to discuss their events. Event plans and risk assessments covering around 617 individual marine events were shared in 2024.

¹ Defence Safety Agency (DSA) 02-DMR - Defence Maritime Regulations for Health, Safety and Environmental Protection ("DMR Regs").

² The Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) is a Department for Transport publication, with the latest version published on 3 November 2016. Its accompanying Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations (GtGP) was updated on 4 April 2018.

Dockyard Port Headlines

8. **Port Emergency and Contingency Plan.** KHM's Port Emergency and Contingency Plan was reviewed, updated and re-published in October 2024.

9. **Leavers and joiners.** A number of staff members departed the team this year, with recruitment campaigns being run and new staff joining the team. These include a new KHM, a new DKHM and a new VTS Supervisor. The KHM, DKHM and VTS Supervisor were promoted from within the team. Further VTS and SFC team members along with a new Port Safety Health and Environment officer will be recruited in 2025.

10. **Legislation.** General Direction 6/23 was replaced by General Direction 2/24 in 2024, this governs the management of vessel traffic within the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth, and KHM staff continued with a major review of the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth Order (DPPO) 2005, the main legal instrument that empowers KHM and establishes the Dockyard Port and its regulations and rules.

The review seeks to incorporate a number of long-standing General Directions, and update regulations to reflect changes in the marine tapestry, including the increase in the numbers of autonomous and remotely controlled vessels operating in the port. This is a long-term project, with incorporation into law likely to take several years.

11. **Naval Base and wider MOD infrastructure.** Planning for a number of projects to maintain and improve Naval Base infrastructure are underway, together with planning for the Defence Munitions Gosport's Bedenham Pier Explosives Handling Jetty and the Oil and Pipeline Agency's Oil Fuel Jetty at Gosport. KHM is engaged in the planning process for all of these projects, which are all following government guidelines to ensure the environmental and operational impacts are understood and where necessary, mitigated.

Compliance and assurance

12. In line with the port's Marine Safety Management System, the following assurance activity took place in 2023:

- a. Trinity House Navigation Aids inspection. Our Trinity House inspection of Aids to Navigation was carried out in November 2024 (all areas). This was successfully passed with no defects.
- b. Internal PMSC audit. An internal Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) Audit took place in August 2024, identifying areas needing minor attention ahead of the external 2PAA in November 2025.
- c. External PMSC audit (2PAA). Our external Designated Person (DP) audit to the requirements of the PMSC and Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations 2018 (GtGP, the Guide) was undertaken in November of 2023 by Captain Port Operations, who is the Ministry of Defence (MOD) DP. During this audit, the port was assessed to be Fully Compliant with the PMSC. The next audit is planned for November 2025.

Processes and Risk Management

16. Procedure (PRO) and policy documents have been reviewed continuously throughout the year with each being reviewed at least once in 12 months by the document owner (prior to re-publication by KHM).

- a. Risk Assessment Reviews. The department currently holds 50 risk assessments on its risk register. The risk assessments are reviewed either annually or bi-annually. Relevant risk assessments are also reviewed after an incident. A total of 35 were reviewed during 2024. Reviews are generally carried out online using Microsoft Teams with participants including relevant KHM team members along with suitable internal and external stakeholders to ensure as broad a view as possible is taken.
- b. Commercial Pilotage Exemption Certificate (PEC) Board involvement. Under the Pilotage act 1987 Portsmouth International Port (PIP) are designated as a Competent Harbour Authority (CHA) over an area which shares the same water space as part of the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth (DyPP).

To ensure the knowledge required to safely operate a vessel, within the PIP CHA and DyPP, is gained and maintained the navigating officers, of commercial vessels, are required to demonstrate that knowledge at PIP PEC examination board. KHM staff sit on those examination boards and during 2024 KHM staff examined 8 candidates.

The board follows a standard agreed approach to PEC examinations and continues to drive high standards of local knowledge from PEC holders operating in the DyPP.

Part of the process of gaining and maintaining a PEC involves annual visits to Semaphore Tower which also builds good relations between KHM's Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) staff and PEC holders. The process that governs this activity was reviewed and updated this year to ensure a standardised approach to the visit and knowledge sharing with PEC holders.

- c. Personal Watercraft (PWC) Licences In 2024, 54 PWC licenses were issued.

Enforcement

17. Patrol duties were undertaken, during the summer months, by the KHM Patrol Officer and other members of the department during 2024 using KHM's Rigid-hulled Inflatable Boat (RHIB). Most interventions involved education and warning for minor breaches of the DPPO 2005.

18. KHM issued an official warning letter during 2024 to a vessels' master and owners highlighting dangerous activities within the DyPP. All were warned that further breaches of the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth Order 2005 or any of KHM's General Directions would result in consideration of prosecution. The warning was received and KHM worked with the vessel master and owners to put in place additional control measures to ensure that activity remains ALARP.

Berthing, Movements and Events

19. In 2024 there were 200,095 vessel movements within Portsmouth Harbour: a small increase from 196,057 in 2023. This figure is a combination of commercial, military, and ferry movements and includes an estimate of 60,000 leisure moves.

20. Movements of Royal Navy vessels continued at similar levels to recent years, with an increase in Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carrier movements throughout the year.

21. During 2024, KHM's team recorded 617 leisure events, ranging from cross-Solent swims to powerboat races and major regattas. High-profile events included the D /Day 80

commemorations, the return of the Sea Angling Classic competition, and a Red Arrows air display to mark Armed Forces Day.

22. Portsmouth hosted the start for the 2023/2024 Clipper Round the World Race, with the fleet starting off Southsea Castle in September. The Race is planned to return to its home in Portsmouth in August 2024.

Autonomous Vessel Operations

23. Autonomous vessels are developing quickly, with missions from surveying, surveillance and security at one end of the scale, through to fully automated large vessels under development at the other end of the scale.

To date, such vessels operating in the DyPP have been relatively small and have been mainly undergoing trials and experimentation. Some of these craft are operated by the Royal Navy, and others by commercial organisations.

KHM has issued a Local Notice to Mariners setting out the port's requirements for the operation of such craft. We require operators to detail their plans in advance and share full risk assessments of their operations. We then discuss these plans, modifying them as necessary to ensure that the operations are safe for all mariners.

This is a growth area that will see an increase in numbers and sizes of such vessels. KHM will remain closely engaged with all autonomous vessel operators wishing to use the DyPP and is firmly focussed on ensuring safe operation of these craft, particularly with regard to other water users.



Autonomous vessels

Emergency Seawall Repair Works at Fort Blockhouse

24. A notable impact from Storm Ciaran in early November 2023 was damage to the sea wall at Fort Blockhouse. This undermined the foundations of the KHM Vessel Traffic Management System (VTMS) equipment site. The radar tower was dismantled as a precaution, resulting in the temporary unavailability of the equipment sited there. The redundancy that is built into the wider VTMS system means that there has been limited impact on harbour operations. Works to repair and strengthen the sea defences are now complete, and the radar and associated equipment reinstalment is nearing completion. This is expected by End of April 2025.

Incidents and Near Misses

25. In 2024, 101 incidents and near misses were reported to KHM and recorded in the department's safety management software MARNIS, and these are summarised in the table

below. The vast majority of incidents and near misses were relatively minor, with the majority being from commercial and recreational vessels.

Close Quarters Situations (CQS)	13
Contact with Floating Object	6
Collisions	12
Equipment failures	14
Contact with structure	8
Fire/Explosion	3
Pollution	16
Flooding/Foundering	4
Grounding	2
Diving	4
Port Efficiency	3
Other	16

26. Of the 16 Oil Pollution incidents in 2024, the majority were relatively minor, with the small quantities of accidentally released oil being recovered by absorbent materials or naturally dispersing. For all incidents, the source was detected, and action was taken to prevent reoccurrence.

Conservancy and Environmental Compliance

27. Provision of Aids to Navigation. During 2024 there were 23 failures of Aids to Navigation, with two failures of Category 1 equipment. Additionally, in March a Risk Assessment workshop was hosted by KHM where relevant stakeholders were invited to attend and evaluate every MOD supported Aid to Navigation within the DPP, be they floating or fixed, for their respective suitability and practicality. All Aids to Navigation were verified as appropriate to the needs of the Port.

28. Hydrographic Survey Activity. There were three MOD-driven hydrographic surveys undertaken during 2024. These focussed on the depth-maintained channels within Portsmouth Harbour, berths in the Naval Base and the main Portsmouth approach channel from Saddle Buoy inwards.

29. Environmental Monitoring. During 2024, KHM staff contributed to the Solent European Marine Site annual monitoring of activities, including their impact on the environment. This included attending the associated working group.

30. UKHO Consultation and Chart Publication. No new editions of UKHO charts covering DPP waters were published during 2024.

31. Information Publication. Throughout 2024, KHM's team made full use of the KHM website to keep mariners updated with events and to inform mariners of new hazards to navigation. 72 Navigation Warnings and 135 Local Notices to Mariners were issued.

Capital and Maintenance Dredge Operations

32. As a result of observations made during the harbour survey works, four maintenance dredge campaigns were carried out in 2024, covering the approach channel, the main harbour, Naval Base berths, the Bedenham Pier area and elements of its approach channel. Works were also conducted to prepare for a Capital Dredge in the vicinity of Fountain Lake Jetty berths 1 and 2, which included the removal of three disused cables that ran from the jetty

across the dredge areas to the north and west. The Fountain Lake Capital Dredge is scheduled for early 2024.

Top 10 Risks held by KHM

32. In terms of Risk assessment, and ensuring an activity is as safe as it can be to complete, the generated risk scores should be in the ALARP (As Low As Reasonably Practicable) score range or below.

At the end of 2024, the top 10 risks held by KHM Portsmouth on its safety management software MARNIS, were as shown below.

Risk Ref	Hazard Theme	Hazard Category	Title	Current Risk
POR-65-9	Nautical Safety	Grounding/Stranding	Large Vessel	6.25
POR-99-5	Environmental Protection	Illegal waste discharge	Bunkering at anchor	5.94
POR-36-6	Nautical Safety	Collision	Large Vessel vs Large Vessel - Wider Solent	5.88
POR-41-9	Nautical Safety	Collision	Vessels Collide in Fog	5.81
POR-91-9	Nautical Safety	Other	Wash Causes Injury and/or Damage	5.75
POR-45-8	Nautical Safety	Contact with structure	Vessel over 20m Contact with Port Infrastructure.	5.75
POR-69-7	Nautical Safety	Flooding/Foundering	Large Vessel	5.75
POR-39-11	Nautical Safety	Collision	PWC vs Other Vessel or Craft	5.69
POR-52-10	Nautical Safety	Other	Loss of Tug Control, During Hot Move	5.50
POR-42-10	Nautical Safety	Collision	Gosport Ferry vs Transiting Large Vessel	5.50

Stakeholder Meetings

33. KHM's team chaired or attended a number of stakeholder engagement meetings throughout the year:

Dockyard Port Forum	May
Solent Operational Group	October
Port Authority Working Group	Monthly
Nab Vessel Traffic Service User Group	April and September
Southampton Port Marine User Group	May
Solent Area Safety Advisory Committee	November
Solent Forum	February, September
Southern Area Harbour Masters Association	January, June
Southern District Marine Safety Committee	June, November

Harbour Safety Plan – Key Performance indicators (KPI's) – 2024

Performance indicator	Requirements	Achieved (or not) during 2024	Comments
1. Incident Reporting	All reported incidents and near misses to be noted on the MARNIS database. 80% of incidents to be investigated and closed out within 2 months of report.	YES	95% of all incidents closed out within 2 months of report. Some major incidents may remain open longer owing to major investigations being undertaken by Marine Accident Investigation Branch, the Health and Safety Executive or the MOD's equivalent bodies.
2. Port Risk Assessments	All Port Risk Assessments to be reviewed annually	YES	All required Port Risk Assessments reviewed 2023.
3. Tier two Oil spill response exercise	Plan and deliver tier two response exercise to test Oil Spill Response Plan	YES	Completed November 2024.
4. Review DyPP Emergency plans	Review existing plans and make necessary changes.	50% completed	Plans reviewed in October 2024 (Oil Spill Response review delayed whilst assessment of PIP pollution response is undertaken).