

NOTICE TO MARINERS No.14 of 2020

SPORT & RECREATION ON THE THAMES

COVID-19 UPDATE - 6TH NOVEMBER 2020

This notice replaces Portwide Notice No.9 of 2020

On Thursday 5th November 2020 England entered a second period of national lockdown which is due to end on 2nd December 2020. The government has instructed that you must not leave or be outside of your home except for specific purposes. These purposes include exercise outdoors or visits to an outdoor public place. **You should refer to the latest government guidelines prior to undertaking any sporting or recreational activity on the river and follow guidance from your NGB.** It is for the individual to determine whether recreation or sporting on the river is essential or justifiable under the current government guidelines.

Anyone considering recreational activity on the Thames must consider carefully the risks before going afloat. The Thames remains a challenging environment for recreational activity. Those taking to the water should be experienced, understand the Tideway Code and take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety, including using the appropriate safety equipment.

During this second period of national lockdown the Emergency Services remain available to assist in the case of an incident, but the significant reduction in other river traffic means that should someone come into difficulty, it is unlikely they will be seen and/or rescued by a passing vessel.

Whilst the PLA's river patrol operations in the upper tidal Thames (Putney to Teddington Lock) are maintained, these services may be stopped or scaled back at short notice should resources be required to focus on essential port operations.

Those considering recreational river use are reminded that drowning accounts for more accidental fatalities in the UK annually than fire deaths in the home or cycling deaths on the road. In particular please be aware of the risk of:

- Cold water shock – low water temperature can numb limbs and render the strongest swimmer helpless in minutes. 2/3 of accidental drowning involve strong swimmers.
- Sub surface hazards. There may be debris and rubbish beneath the surface.
- Currents or water conditions – water does not need to be moving very fast to sweep you off your feet and there may be strong currents even at 'slack' water.
- Alcohol consumption – alcohol severely affects your hazard perception, co-ordination and resistance to the cold.

Recreational river users with any specific queries on current government guidance and how this affects their recreational or sporting activities should contact the respective National Governing Body for their particular sport for further advice.

**6 November
2020**

Port of London Authority
London River House, Royal Pier Road,
Gravesend, Kent DA12 2BG

**Sarah Macleod
Harbour Master**



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PLEASE REGISTER VIA OUR WEBSITE www.pla.co.uk
**Telephone calls, VHF radio traffic, CCTV and radar traffic images may
be recorded in the VTS Centres at Gravesend and Woolwich**
All Current Notices to Mariners can be found here -
[http://www.pla.co.uk/Safety/Regulations-and-Guidance/Notices-to-](http://www.pla.co.uk/Safety/Regulations-and-Guidance/Notices-to-Mariners/Notices-to-Mariners)
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