

STORNOWAY HARBOUR - GUIDANCE FOR SMALL CRAFT
'BE SAFE AND BE SEEN'

BE SAFE

Around the coasts of UK over recent years there have been several documented accidents resulting in fatalities, often to children that have would have been avoided:

1. **Keeping a proper Lookout:** In almost all cases keeping a proper lookout and responding in time to developing situations will prevent mishap. ColRegs Rule 5 requires '*... a proper lookout by sight and hearing as well as by all available means ...*', which includes VHF. Many small vessels will not have VHF, but those leading groups of people on the water should consider the use of VHF so that they will hear the safety broadcasts made by large vessels.
2. **Lifejackets:** Although very sheltered, the waters around Stornoway are very cold, even in summer and an unplanned and sudden immersion can swiftly incapacitate even strong swimmers through the onset of cold water shock leading to swim failure. A lifejacket (in date for inspection and in good repair) will enhance significantly your chances of survival. The RNLI will happily provide advice on maintaining and servicing your lifejacket.
3. **Kill cords:** Nationally, there have been too many instances of people falling out of boats with outboard engines, without using kill cords. In the event of such a mishap, the boat will continue to run out of control, often in close proximity to its former occupants resulting in fatalities, including children. It takes seconds to use and fit the kill cord correctly – for more details see the latest RYA advice at <http://www.rya.org.uk/infoadvice/safetyinfo/Personalsafetyequipment/Pages/KillCord.aspx>. NB: It is a good idea to check that kill cord works correctly before you set out and also to carry a spare kill cord.
4. **Speed:** Do not exceed 5 knots north of Goat Island.
5. **Ferries:** Know the ferry timetable and remain clear of ferries moving on or off the berth.

BE SEEN

Small craft, particularly small unpowered craft such as kayaks, canoes, paddleboards and sailing and rowing dinghies are often difficult to see from the bridge of a large vessel, even when visibility is excellent. To ensure that your tiny vessel is visible to others you are advised:

1. Not to venture out in conditions of reduced visibility and to wear distinctive clothing, the use of neon-coloured clothing is highly recommended.
2. Make liberal use of retro-reflective tape on clothing, PFD's and the shaft of your paddle near the blade.

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3. At night, wear white LED lights on your helmet, headgear or shoulders, take care not to destroy your night vision. LED lights favoured by cyclists are very effective. As a minimum, small sailing dinghies and oar and paddle-powered vessels should have a torch '*... showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision ...*' (ColRegs Rule 25 (d) (i) and (ii)).

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