

3. Movement and Traffic Procedures

3.1 General Ship size limits

Gold Coast Seaway entrance (see map in section 9.3)

- Length Overall 75 metres
- Beam 25 metres
- Under keel clearance 1.0 metre

South Channel (see map in section 9.4)

- Length Overall 75 metres
- Beam 25 metres
- Under keel clearance 0.5 metres

North Channel to Gold Coast Marine Precinct via Coomera River (see map in section 9.5)

- Length Overall 60 metres
- Beam 12.7 metres
- Under keel clearance 0.5 metres

3.1.1 Oversize Vessel Movements

Vessels in excess of any one of the above dimensions may be permitted to enter pending a risk assessment conducted by the Regional Harbour Master.

This risk assessment will assess the following;

- Proposed period of planned transit
- Weather conditions
- Vessel characteristics
- Crew qualifications and experience
- Manoeuvrability of the vessel
- Mooring arrangements of the vessel.

If permitted to enter, there may be additional conditions placed on the vessel for both its planned manoeuvre and precautions it may need to take during its period alongside.

These may include, but not limited to;

- A prescribed transit window to achieve under keel clearance
- Daylight and visibility conditions
- Prescribed environmental conditions (wind speed and direction)
- Escort by Queensland Police Service and/or pilot launch to ensure channel clearance, possible at additional cost to vessel.
- Escort by support vessel such as workboat or tug with prescribed bollard pull/push.
- Environmental conditions established for evacuation in the event of extreme weather forecasted.
- Additional mooring arrangements in the event vessel cannot put to sea in the event of extreme weather.

3.2 Speed limits

The South Channel has a speed limit of six knots that applies to all ships commencing immediately north of beacons S11 and S12, south to the Gold Coast Bridge.

The Southport Broadwater and North Channels have a 40 knot limit however, rules in regard to a ship's wash limit larger vessels to maneuvering speeds only (see below text).

The Coomera River (south arm) has a speed limit of six knots for vessels 6.5 metres and over in length.

Under the provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) a person must not operate a ship at a speed at which the ship's wash can cause a marine incident or damage to the shoreline.

Pilotage throughout the Gold Coast is normally planned and undertaken at the following speeds;

- Pilot Boarding: 4knots
- Seaway Channel: 8-10knots
- North Channel (Coomera River): 6 knots
- South Channel (Broadwater): 6 knots

3.3 Ship sourced sewage

Under the provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Pollution\) Act 1995](#) it is an offence to discharge untreated or treated sewage in certain areas throughout the Southport Pilotage Area.

The Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 (TOMPA) is designed to protect Queensland's marine and coastal environment by minimising deliberate and negligent discharges of ship sourced pollution. Discharges of oil, noxious liquid substances, packaged harmful substances and sewage and garbage (MARPOL Annexes I, II, III, IV and V) from ships are prohibited in Queensland coastal waters and pilotage areas.

Maritime Safety Queensland has the authority to detain any vessel suspected of causing marine pollution and to intervene where there is imminent danger to the coastline.

Ships should dispose of all waste ashore using waste reception facilities. Contact Brisbane VTS Brisbane or visit the [Maritime Safety Queensland website](#) for more information.

3.4 Channel depths

The latest survey information may be sourced from the [Notices to Mariners](#) on the Maritime Safety Queensland website.

Location	Design depth (LAT)
East of Seaway (centre line leads)	4.5 metres
East of Seaway (southern approach leads)	4.8 metres
Inside Seaway (west of Seaway Tower)	4.8 metres
South Channel	4.3 metres

North Channel (Currigee)	3.0 metres
Coomera River (Paradise Point)	3.0 metres
Coomera River (Sanctuary Cove Marina Island)	3.0 metres
Coomera River (off Gold Coast City Marina – port side heading upstream)	3.0 metres

Table 1 – Channel Design Depths

3.5 Berth depth

Location	Design depth (LAT)
Alongside Mirage (outside berth)	4.0 metres
Alongside Southport Yacht Club (SYC) Super Yacht berths	4.5 metres
Alongside SYC (north-south berth)	4.5 metres
Gold Coast City Marina	4.0 metres (unofficial)
Alongside SYC Mega Yacht Berth	5.8 metres

Table 2 - Berth Depth

The latest survey information may be sourced from the [Notices to Mariners](#) on the Maritime Safety Queensland website or by contacting MSQ Southport office.

3.6 Tidal streams

Velocity of tidal streams (maximum)

- South Channel 2.0 knots
- North Channel 2.5 knots
- Seaway Channel 3.2 knots

During times of heavy rain and minor flooding, expect these velocities to increase.

At the Seaway entrance the direction of the tidal stream is dependent upon the prevailing winds. As a general rule, the ebb tide will set a vessel towards the northeast when southerly winds generate an inshore current along the beach.

Note: the tide at Paradise Point makes one hour after the tide at the Gold Coast Seaway. Tidal height at Paradise Point is a factor of 0.87 of the height at the Gold Coast Seaway.

3.7 Notice to Mariners

Maritime Safety Queensland circulates marine safety information to mariners, organisations and other interested parties in the form of Queensland Notices to Mariners and Advice to Mariners, which advise of:

- Navigation warnings and hazards (such as aids to navigation which may have been destroyed, missing or unlit);
- Changes to the uniform buoyage system (which assists with the correction and updating of marine charts);
- Navigation depths (necessary when navigating in channels with depth restrictions); and

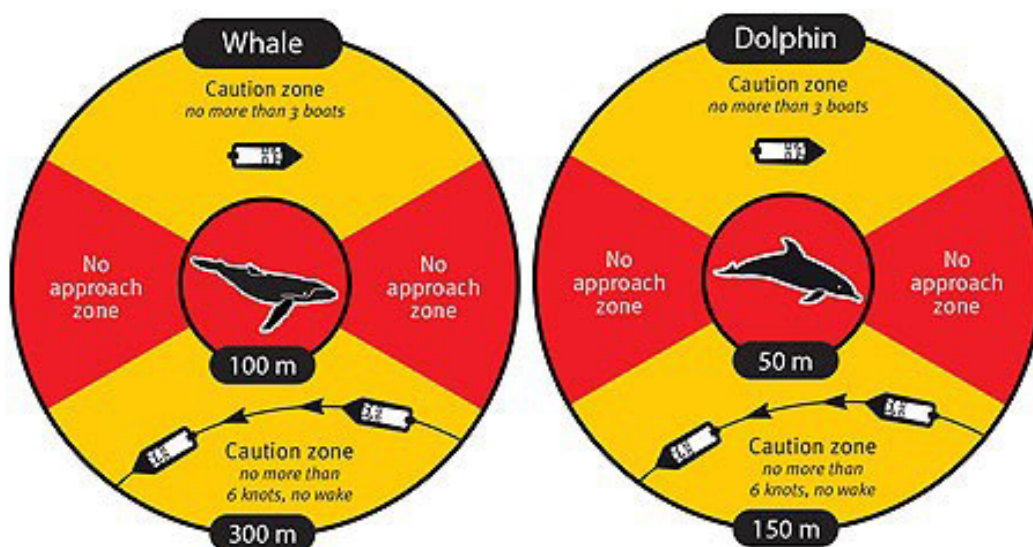
- Any other works which may affect the safe navigation of vessels in Queensland coastal waters and ports (such as dredging operations and construction works).

Australian Notices to Mariners are produced by the Australian Hydrographic Service.

3.8 Advisory Note – Interaction with Marine Mammals

The presence of whales or marine mammals indicates that our ports are seen as environmentally attractive places. The safety of life and the security of the environment from ship based incidents is paramount.

All vessel masters are required to fully comply with relevant marine mammal legislation, such as the provisions of the [Nature Conservation \(Animals\) Regulation 2020 Chapter 6 Part 1](#) which prescribes minimum approach distances and maximum speeds within proximity to whales as illustrated in the diagram below.



When whales or marine mammals are reported in the vicinity of port areas and a risk to marine mammals is perceived, then every possible endeavour will be undertaken to manage shipping movements around the marine mammals to keep them safe, provided the safety of life, the ship and other environmental protection objectives are not threatened. Such action may include not commencing transits until the mammals are deemed clear.

In situations where a vessel is underway and restricted in its ability to manoeuvre or constrained to a channel and marine mammals are reported in the vicinity of the transit and a risk to marine mammals is perceived, the master must take all reasonable action necessary to keep them safe, without endangering the vessel, crew and the environment. Such action may include the reduction of speed to the minimum safe speed to safely navigate the channels.

Masters are required to report collisions with marine mammals to Brisbane VTS and Department of Environment and Science **1300 130 372**

[Marine wildlife strandings](#) | [Environment, land and water](#) | [Queensland Government](#)