

Safe boating in ship navigation areas

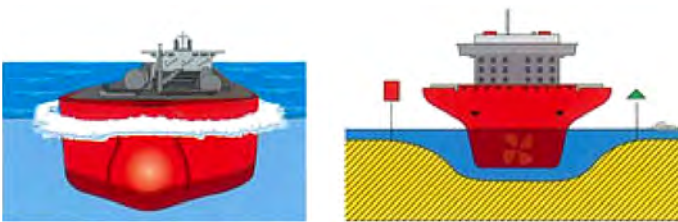
Interactions between ships and small boats

The chances of large ships and small boats interacting is high in shipping channels, pilot boarding grounds, anchorages, swing basins or port berths. Skippers should avoid or keep clear of these areas.

Ships can approach quickly and silently and do not have brakes. Large ships often travel at speeds over 20 knots and can have a stopping distance equal to 28 football fields (2.5 nautical miles).

It only takes about 15 minutes from when a ship is spotted on the horizon by a small boat until it might hit you. If the engine fails on a small boat this time can be fatally short.

When travelling in narrower channels, such as entering a port, large ships can have very low under-keel clearance and cannot turn or slow down. Large ships can only move in the designated shipping channels. Smaller boats need to avoid them and give them right of way.



When in a swing basin or beside a berth, ships are accompanied by tugs and other vessels with limited manoeuvrability. Other boats need to stay well clear.

A small boat rarely appears on a ship's radar and can be unseen from the helm of a ship. Large ships have a blind spot that can extend several nautical miles because the bow of the ship and cargo obscures the view.



At nominated locations, unauthorised boats are prohibited from mooring, anchoring or manoeuvring within a restricted operational area. Notices to Mariners (www.qld.gov.au/transport/boating/index.html) also give up-to-date information about boating in shipping channels.

Quick safety tips

- Maintain a constant and proper lookout at all times, using all means available.
- Avoid travelling in a designated shipping channel. Keep to the outer edge if you must do so.
- Monitor the appropriate VHF channel for the area when near a shipping channel to keep up-to-date with local traffic movement information.
- Don't rely only on mobile phones for marine communications – the ship's captain or pilot won't know your number and you don't know theirs!
- Always cross a shipping channel at 90 degrees behind a ship and only when it is clear and safe to travel. Never cross in front of a large ship. If a small boat breaks down or runs out of fuel, this can end with disastrous results.
- Between sunset and sunrise, and when visibility is restricted, show correct navigation lights.
- Don't anchor near, or fish in, channels or near navigation aids marking a designated shipping lane.

Contact us

13 QGOV (13 74 68)

www.msq.qld.gov.au

www.qld.gov.au