

Rowing Victoria

Rowing in the Melbourne Port Area

The Port of Melbourne Corporation has raised concerns with Rowing Victoria regarding the safety of rowers and the management of the port area resulting from incidents involving rowers. A recent example of an incident was where a fleet of sculls entered the port without contacting the harbour master, and were unescorted. They subsequently held of a container ship.

The port area is critical for the sport of rowing so every effort needs to be made to avoid jeopardising access to this area. Rowing Victoria will take breaches seriously and will take necessary disciplinary action against clubs. ***The actions of a few must not jeopardise access for all.***

Restricted Activity (Rowing Shells and Dragon Boats) – Yarra River

The following is an extract from the notice to mariners No.3 of 2006 and provides the requirements for rowing boats in the port area.

- A motorised support vessel must accompany all rowing shells and dragon boats when operating more than 50m downstream of the western drip line of Bolte Bridge to pile 23 and 24, and Shepherd's Bridge on the Maribyrnong River.
- The motorised support vessel must:
 - Have a VHF Marine Band radio fitted with **Channels 12 and 74.**
 - Carry appropriate flotation devices for the number of people in the rowing shell / dragon boats
- All vessels traversing the Port zone should be mindful of wash and maintain safe distances to other vessels in the water.
- Boats using the area in the **dark must have lights** with sufficient intensity, range and elevated visibility to be seen from the Harbour Masters tower and large ships.

The role of the Harbour Master is to ensure the safe passage for all user of the port. Being aware of the vessels in the area aids the Harbour Master in the work they do.

It is also critical that the Harbour Master can communicate with the motorised vessel following the rower vessel. The Harbour Master needs to be able to warn of hazards or if a ship is being held up.

Advanced Notice to Port of Melbourne Corp. When Entering Port Area

The Harbour Master requires notification from coaches entering the port area. The 24 hour number is: 03 9644 9700

Emergency Call Sign – “Harbour Control”

In the case of an emergency the coach should call “**Harbour Control**” on VHF Marine band radio **channel 12**. The Port of Melbourne Corp has emergency procedures in place that can respond.