



**THE BRISTOL
PORT COMPANY**

Published on *The Bristol Port Company* (<https://www.bristolport.co.uk>)

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Bristol VTS & Navigation

Bristol Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) provides harbour users with comprehensive information concerning vessel movements, height of tide and weather conditions. The Bristol VTS area covers much of the upper Bristol Channel from the Holm Islands to the Lower Shoots including the River Avon. Pilot orders and lock times are allocated by Bristol VTS to ensure the safety and efficiency of navigation in the estuary



Bristol VTS



The Bristol Pilot Boat 'Bristol Interceptor'

The Bristol VTS Centre is located on the South Pier at Avonmouth overlooking King Road. Bristol VTS is operated on a 24-hour basis providing an Information Navigation Service (INS) and Traffic Organisation Service (TOS) as defined by the IMO and in accordance with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Participation with Bristol VTS is mandatory for vessels greater than 50 GT. The Bristol VTS Area can be seen [here](#) [1].

The Bristol Port Company is a Competent Harbour Authority and authorises pilots for ships arriving at Avonmouth and Portbury Docks. Bookings are made via Bristol VTS and the Pilot Boarding Area is located in vicinity of the Breaksea Buoy, to the West of the Holm Islands.

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VTS Communication

Bristol VTS can be contacted in a number of ways. VHF monitoring takes place on the below channels and all participating vessels (over 50GT) must monitor the following VHF Channels. Vessels below this size are requested to maintain a continuous watch on VHF channel 12.

Ch 12 call sign 'Bristol VTS' (entire VTS Area)

Ch 14 call sign 'Avonmouth or Portbury Dock' (Lock and Dock movements)

Telephone: +44 (0) 1179 802638

E-mail: signal.station@bristolport.co.uk [2]

[Live Shipping Information](#) [3]

CERS

Vessels and shipping agents must use a CERS Workbook to provide the information needed to the harbour authority. The Consolidated European Reporting System (CERS) Workbook should be used by Masters, shipping agents and port authorities to provide mandatory port call, dangerous and polluting goods (hazmat) information, waste information and security information to the MCA.

CERS3 workbook

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/77677
[4]

Reduced file size

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/77677/lite.xlsx [5]

Who does this apply to?

The notification requirement applies to UK ships bound for a port located in the UK or another EEA state and non-UK ships bound for a port located in the UK, with the exception of:

- Ships of less than 300 gross tonnage
- Fishing vessels having a length of less than 45 metres
- Traditional ships having a length less than 45 metres
- Recreational craft having a length of less than 45 metres
- Warships, naval auxiliaries and other ships owned or operated by the Government of an EEA State which are used for non-commercial public services.

[Download CERS workbook](#) [4]

Pilotage

The Bristol Port Company is a Competent Harbour Authority (CHA). The CHA area is defined in the [Pilotage Directions](#) [6] along with the requirements for carriage of a pilot. The [Pilotage Regulations](#) [7] provide information, conditions and dues/charges for the booking of a pilot and information on obtaining a Pilot Exemption Certificate.

Recreational craft pilotage below the limits that compulsory pilotage is required (i.e narrow boats) is provided directly by Bristol Pilots Partnership LLP.

MCA Boatmaster candidates requiring a Local Knowledge Endoresment can obtain

information [here](#) [8].

[Pilotage Directions and Regulations](#) [9]

Towage

Information on towage requirements at Bristol Port can be found in the [Towage Guidelines](#) [10]. Tugs operating at the Port are required to hold a valid license as detailed in the guidelines. Towage at Bristol Port is provided by [Svitzer Marine \(UK\) Ltd](#) [11]. Details of the type and capability of tugs available, published tariff and contractual arrangements are available from Svitzer Marine directly.

[Towage Guidelines](#) [12]

Linehandling

The handling of vessels' mooring lines in the locks and within the enclosed docks are undertaken by the [Pill Hobbler Ltd.](#) [13] Enquiries should be addressed through the ships' agents. These linesmen are licensed by The Bristol Port Company.

Vessels may, after considering the safety implications and undertaking a risk assessment, utilise members of their own ship's company for this purpose. However, it is generally considered an unsafe practice to disembark crew members in the lock prior to the vessel being made fast in order to handle lines. Consequently this practice is considered unsafe and masters are discouraged from this.

[Pill Hobbler Ltd](#) [14]

Recreational Craft

Recreational Craft Navigation Advice can be downloaded [here](#) [15] and is also available as a printed leaflet at the following locations:

- Bristol City Docks – Harbour Office
- Gloucester Harbour Trustees - Harbour Office at Sharpness
- Portishead Marina – Marina Office
- Penarth Marina – Marina Office

A number of presentations are carried out at local Yacht Clubs and Marinas advising recreational Harbour Users on safety, navigation and general advice about marine activities in the area.

Notice to Mariners

Regular [16]Notice to Mariners [17] are issued concerning changes to charted depths, availability of Navigation Aids and any other information that may affect mariners navigating within the Harbour Area.

Notice to Mariners [17]

Related links

- View and download maps [18]
- View and download marine documentation [19]

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Source URL: <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/shipping/harbour-authority/bristol-vts-navigation>

Links

[1] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/about-us/map-listing/bristol-vts-statutory-harbour-area>

[2] <mailto:signal.station@bristolport.co.uk>

[3] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/shipping/tide-tracker>

[4]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/776731/CERS3_V

[5] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/776732/CERS3_V
lite.xlsx

[6] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/pilotage/pilotage-directions>

[7] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/pilotage/pilotage-regulations>

[8] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/marine-guidelines/mca-boatmaster-local-knowledge-endorsement>

[9] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/pilotage>

[10] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/towage-guidelines/towage-guidelines>

[11] <http://www.svitzer.com>

[12] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/towage-guidelines>

[13] <http://www.pill-hobblers.co.uk>

[14] <http://www.pill-hobblers.co.uk/>

[15] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/marine-service/recreational-craft-navigation-guidelines>

[16] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/notice-mariners/test-marine-document>

[17] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/notice-mariners-0>

[18] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/about-us/maps>

[19] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation>