

# Starting Boardsports at HISC

A guide launching from HISC



Hayling Island Sailing Club is located on the southeasternmost tip of Hayling Island, at the entrance to Chichester harbour. The location delivers fantastic views over the water and provides launch options for almost all wind directions.

Chichester harbour is a vibrant area of outstanding natural beauty, and a wonderful place to learn to sail. Like all bodies of water the harbour is not without its hazards. This guide will introduce a few of these hazards and suggest ways to mitigate the risks of sailing.

## The Equipment to bring

Dressing for the conditions is vital to your enjoyment of Chichester Harbour. A change of wetsuit can make all the difference. Make sure that you are dressed for the time of year and weather. Wind strength, direction, recent rain and cloud cover will make a vast difference to your experience.

### Wetsuit

It is always preferable to overdress when going afloat. A steamer wetsuit (long arms and legs) will keep you warm and protect your body from the equipment. The water temperature in the harbour rarely exceeds 20 degrees. This seems warm but it is only half the temperature of the average shower. Getting cold will drastically impact your strength. You should favour warmer equipment and maximize your time on the water.

### Footwear

Wetsuit boots/shoes should be worn as the beaches can contain sharp broken shells and flints. Footwear will also protect your feet from a sharp foil, or from the mastfoot (when windsurfing).

## Helmet

A helmet serves two purposes. Firstly and most importantly it will protect your head from impacts. It will also protect your scalp from the sun on those lovely summer HISC days. You'll find you get much more frequent benefit as a sunshade making a comfortable helmet a good investment.

## Buoyancy aid

Buoyancy aids are recommended by the RYA for all boardsports participants. Beginners will suffer fatigue quite quickly in their first few sessions and should be prepared to wear a buoyancy aid. Many experienced wing-foilers will take integrated buoyancy aid/harness/impact vests afloat. It may not look like there are many buoyancy aids on the water, but there are!

**Helmets and buoyancy aids can be hired from the HISC office for a nominal fee!**



## Communications device

If you are sailing alone, on long distances, or are not sure of your ability it is recommended that you take a communications device. This could be a phone (in a waterproof pouch) or a VHF radio. Be aware that mobile phones do not have a range beyond 25 miles of the nearest cell tower and are strictly for coastal use.

## Your Vessel

Once appropriately dressed, you will need;

- Your board
- Your sail, wing or paddle
- Leashes or harness

The RYA recommends using waist and wrist leashes in areas with flowing water. Should an ankle leash become tangled on a stationary object, a little flow to make it very difficult to

remove. This has contributed to many of the safety incidents with paddle boarding in Britain. The strong tides at HISC mean that we should take the same precaution. With the exception of very proficient wingfoilers, you should always be leashed to your board and wing.

HISC offers rental of windsurfing equipment, offering setups that are suitable for beginners of all ages.

## Supported sessions

Throughout the year, HISC offers supported boardsports sessions. These high-tide sessions offer rescue boat cover and a beach presence, allowing sailors of various abilities to launch with confidence.

Dates and more can be found from reception or on the HISC boardsports page - <https://www.hisc.co.uk/sailing/winging-windsurfing-and-suping/>

## Sailing Guidelines

### Avoid launching when there is a tidal flow in either direction

Spring tides in particular (when high tide is 5+ meters and low tide is 1.5 meters or below. An ebb tide will take you out past the lifeboat station, parallel to the causeway. A flooding tide will take you away from HIM along any of the channels that you happen to be in. Ideally you will launch 30 minutes before high or low tide.

### Watch out for traffic

Chichester harbour features heavy fishing and cruising traffic particularly during the summer months. Contrary to common understanding, motorised vessels are not always obliged to yield to those under sail, particularly in narrow channels. It is recommended that we give all vessels as much room as possible and avoid loitering and swimming in the channels.

### Don't Panic

Sometimes things will go wrong. You'll be caught out by the tide, let down by the wind or have an equipment failure. Maybe a combination. Stay with your equipment and don't panic. Remember that;

- The RNLI is on our doorstep at the exit of the harbour
- There is usually someone watching from the club or from a passing vessel

Taking a phone or VHF onto the water can be a big help when things go wrong. If you can't call for help, sit on your board and wave your arms overhead.

## Rig for the lulls

This applies mostly for windsurfing, but when selecting a sail size, think bigger. HISC is surrounded by land and houses in most directions. This causes more disturbed air than on open water and leads to gustier conditions that you might expect. Maximise your time by rigging for the lulls

## Foiling Code of Conduct

HISC publishes and maintains a [voluntary foiling code of conduct](#) for wing and windsurf foilers. The intent of this document is to help mitigate the risks that foiling introduces for board riders and other harbour users. Please make sure you are familiar with the content before launching.

## Local Hazards

### Shallow water

Watch out for these areas if the tide is below 3 metres. The potential to run aground is quite high. All of these areas are mud and sand except for the area in red, which is broken flint and razor sharp oysters. It is very easy to destroy equipment and your body here, so please make it a habit to avoid foiling in this area at all but the highest tides. On the map it looks like there is a large area to avoid but we are still left with a huge playground even at low tide.

If in doubt, observe the harbour's [cardinal](#) and [lateral mark](#) navigation systems to find out where you should sail. These systems are designed to assist yachts and other large vessels but are useful for finding your way in the harbour.

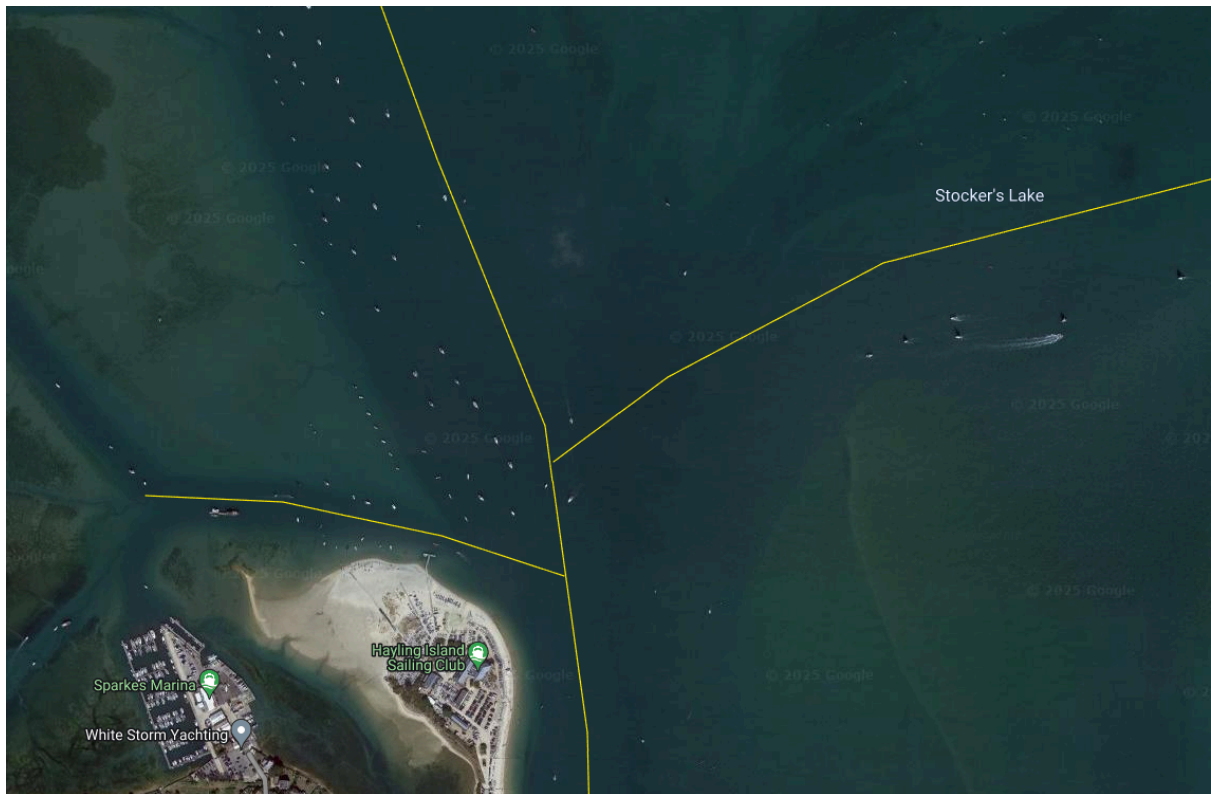




## Tides in the channels

Tidal channels are all of the deepest parts of the harbour. These never dry out. As a result you will see the greatest water movement here as the tide moves in and out. Be mindful of the tidal flow with relation to the wind direction. Avoid launching if the wind and tide are in the same direction. Avoid launching if there is tidal flow but very little wind. As a general rule, 1 hour each side of high and low tide is the perfect window to launch in.

These channels are also where you will find the majority of the marine traffic. During the summer months the traffic in these areas can be very busy. Please avoid non-navigational maneuvers (tricks) in these areas on busy days.



## Moorings

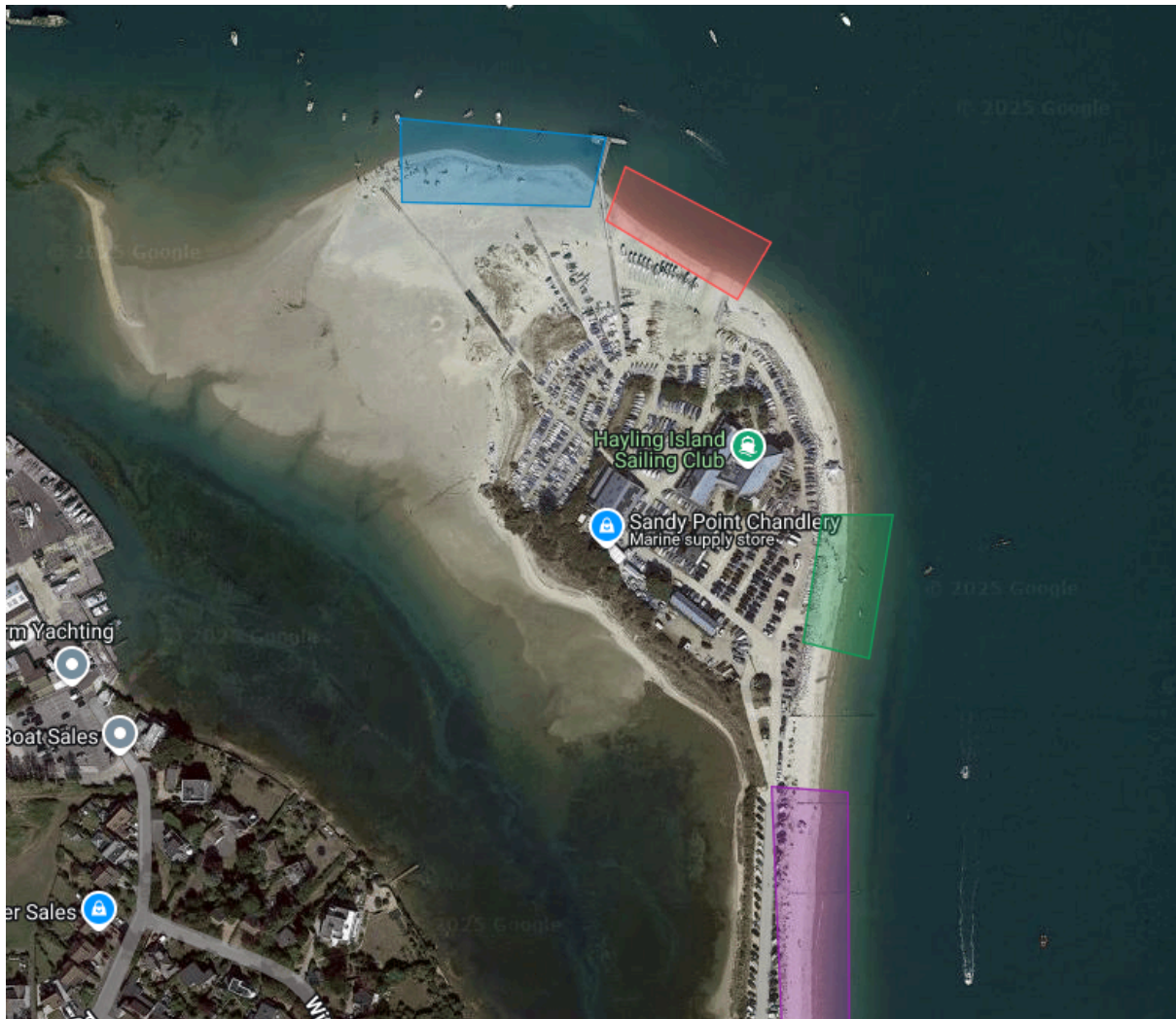
Moored yachts are a feature of Chichester harbour between May and October, but the mooring buoys remain in place all year round. Please avoid sailing too close to moored vessels and prefer to sail downwind of them. Hitting the chains is bad for fins and foils. It is also a safety risk for sports with leashes. A large number of SUP casualties in the UK are caused by leashes becoming caught on fixed points (moorings and piers) in flowing water. The line of mooring stretching to the north is known as 'the trots' and is a popular sailing area at low tide.



## Conditions and launching

The UK is well known for variable weather conditions and it is no different at HISC. Wind directions, tide and sea state will change daily and often. Becoming familiar with the daily forecast will greatly increase your enjoyment of the venue. If there is any doubt, have a walk-around the beach and see where everyone else is launching and sailing. The board and wings on the beach is often a good guide!

The diagram below shows some of the common launching spots at HISC, with some commentary.



1. The easiest and most common launch area is from **north beach** or the **main slip** in south-westerly or westerly winds. This will mean sailing on 'West mud' at high tide, or 'up the trots' at low tide. These conditions are usually very popular, with warm stable wind and flat water.
2. In easterly winds you can expect the temperature to drop significantly. The wind in the harbour will also be slightly less consistent, particularly in the harbour exit. The sea state will also be choppier, which can make it more challenging to stand on a board. Launching is recommended from north beach or the main slip. However, launching from the **eastern slipways** can be popular at low tide.
3. In southerly winds launches will be more challenging and are not recommended for unsupported beginners or for high-traffic periods in the harbour. Boards can launch from the **north beach** (near the pontoon) and sail out westerly towards sparkes. If this area you will be sailing in an offshore wind and in one of the transit channels. You can also launch from anywhere on the **causeway**, sailing east towards the West Wittering beach. This will give you a cross-shore wind (helpful for launching) but position you closer to the Winner hazard and in the main harbour channel. Please be



vigilant at busy times. The sea state can vary greatly in these conditions. In flood tides, you will see a small ocean swell entering the harbour. At high and low tides the water will be remarkably flat. Tide flow in this area is particularly fast. A launch here is not recommended until you can navigate reliably.

4. In northerly winds the temperature will be at its lowest. Expect the water to be significantly more disturbed, particularly at high tides. Launching from all areas is reasonable, but the main slip and north beach will be on-shore. This means you'll need to swim your equipment away from the beach. Another option is to launch from the **causeway** or **eastern slip ways**. Northerly conditions are not recommended for beginners, particularly during tidal or high traffic periods.

## Things to check

When you rig up you should check your equipment to make sure it is seaworthy. As you arrive at the water, check your sailing area to make sure you understand the hazards

### Windsurfing

- Is your universal joint in good order? Check rubber for cracks and metal for corrosion
- Is your boom bent or cracked? Aluminium models can fail catastrophically with age.
- Are the outhaul, inhaul and downhaul ropes in good order? Replace any frayed ropes.

### Wingfoiling

- Does your wing hold pressure?
- Are the handle attachments secure and in good order?
- Have you secured all of the valves on your wing?
- Are all the bolts on your foil tightened to the appropriate torque?

### Environment

- Where are you planning to sail?
- Will this area have appropriate wind, sea state and depth?
- Is the wind and sea state forecasted to stay suitable for the activity and equipment?
- Do you know when the tide will start flowing and in which direction it will take you?
- Can you navigate back to shore before conditions degrade?

### Tell a friend

Make sure someone knows you are going afloat and that they know where you are launching from and if you have a destination in mind.

**Most importantly** - have fun out there!