

# Introduction to Cruising Hovercraft





## Introduction

- Welcome to the Hovercraft Club of Great Britain.
- Taking part in a hovercraft cruise is an exciting way to explore the coast line and many of our members take part in cruising events around the country.
- However, going off shore is challenging and can be potentially dangerous
- This presentation is to give some pointers on what to consider before first taking your craft out.
- Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of the information presented, but no reliance should be made on this data.
- For information on people local to you with cruising craft or more information on how to get involved contact [cruising@hovercraft.org.uk](mailto:cruising@hovercraft.org.uk)



## Getting Started

- Before going on any cruising event you need to make sure you have insurance in place.
- The Hovercraft Club of Great Britain has preferential rates with Bay Marine: [www.baymarineinsurance.co.uk](http://www.baymarineinsurance.co.uk)
- To find out about Cruising Events check our Cruising Calendar: [www.hovercraft.org.uk/events](http://www.hovercraft.org.uk/events)
- It's much safer (and fun) to go on cruises with other members of the club when you start out.
- To find out about members near you with cruising craft either contact your local branch, post on our members Facebook page or email [cruising@hovercraft.org.uk](mailto:cruising@hovercraft.org.uk)



## Equipment

- Always dress to the conditions, it's much colder out on the craft than on land. Waterproofs are useful even on sunny days as you may get a lot of spray on your first trips out.
- Life Jackets are recommended over buoyancy aids
- Communication aids should be on board in case of trouble, ideally VHF radio and a mobile phone. You should also carry flares on board.



## Getting over hump

- Getting over hump is when the hovercraft goes from sub hump (moving through the water like a boat) to over hump when it is flying over the surface.
- The ability to get over hump is a critical safety issue when cruising – If you can't get over it the craft won't go more than 4mph, your range will fall to about 10% and you'll get very wet!
- Always know you can get over hump!
- If you are struggling to get over hump your craft may be overloaded.
- Be careful with payloads. For example, you might find a craft described as a 3 person craft by the manufacturer in struggles to get over hump with 3 people.



## Plough Ins

- Plough-in is where the front of the skirt tucks in bringing the craft to a sudden stop
- Most likely when travelling fast in a straight line with the wind
- Plough-ins regularly eject pilots and passengers
- If your craft is susceptible, you will learn to predict and correct
- If you feel the front of your craft dip: Move your weight back, reduce thrust and increase lift



## Emergency maintenance

- You may need to make repairs during your trip so these items are useful to always have with you
- Good basic toolkit
- WD40 –large can!
- Zip ties(100)
- Insulation tape
- Spare sparkplugs, filters etc.
- For skirt repairs –Spare segments, or glue & material (zip ties)



## Before You Go!

Make sure you:

- Have the right craft –Be sure your craft will get you back
- Have the right skills –Be sure you can get your craft back
- Know the local byelaws
- Have all your equipment –Correct clothing for conditions – Life Jacket – Radio –Phone –GPS –Flares –First aid kit –Water –Tools
- Check the weather
- Plan emergency bolt holes – places you can get out along the route (and be rescued from by trailer!)
- Do pre – flight checks on engine, controls and skirt



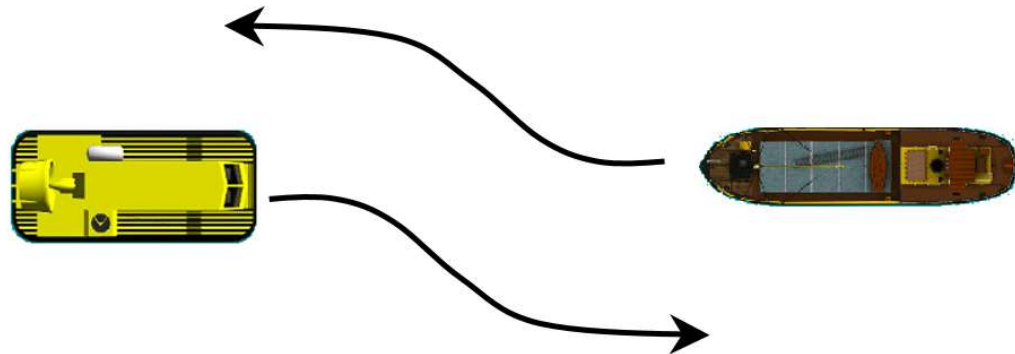


## On the Cruise

- All craft have the absolute responsibility to: Keep watch and avoid collisions

### Head on

- Both vessels turn starboard (right)
- In narrow channel keep right

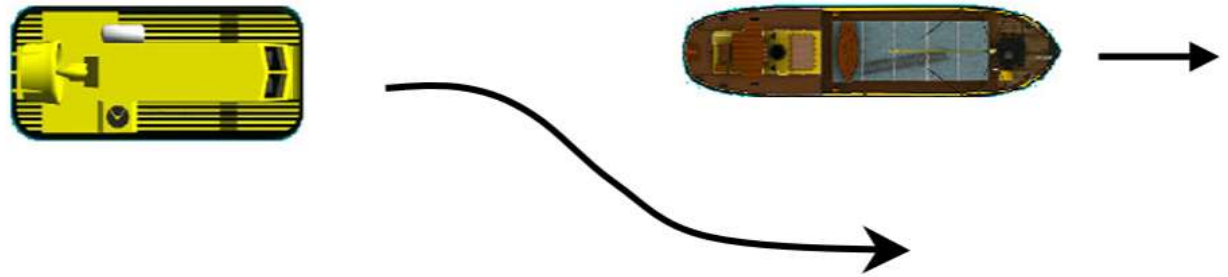




On the Cruise

## Overtaking

- Overtaking craft keeps clear

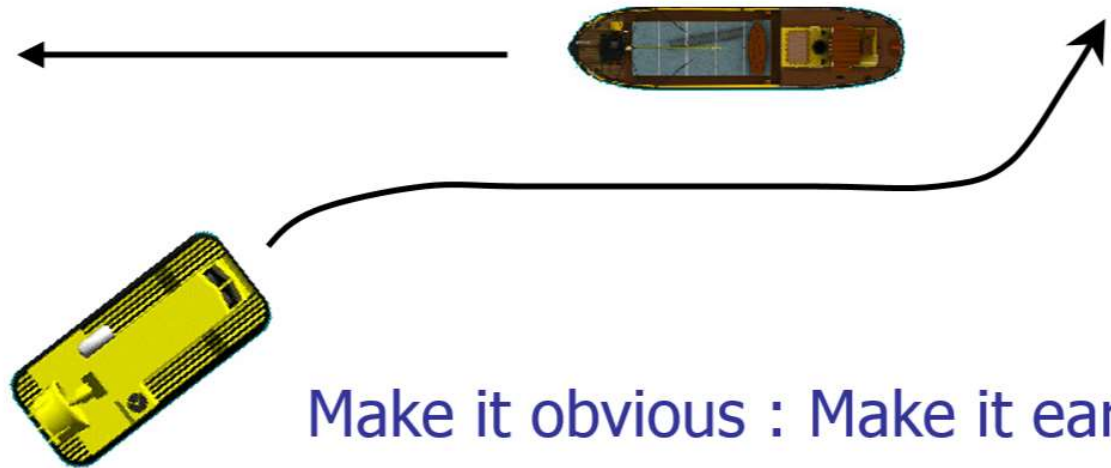




On the Cruise

## At an angle

- Craft with vessel on starboard (right) gives way
- Other vessel maintains course (stands on)



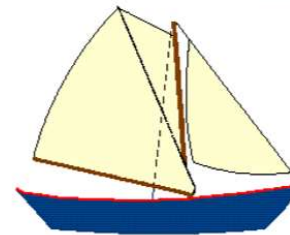
Make it obvious : Make it early



## On the Cruise

Give way to:

- Sailing boats
- Fishing boats
- Sea monsters
- Anything big even if is your right of way!



**Make it obvious : Make it early**

Information can be found on-line : [www.collisionregs.com](http://www.collisionregs.com)



## On the Cruise

## Lights

- Hovercraft less than 12m
  - Green sidelight on starboard (right)
  - Red sidelight on port (left)
  - White all-round light
  - Flashing yellow all-round light



- Lights only prescribed after sunset and before sunrise



## On the Cruise

A special note –mudflats & sandbars

- •Mud can be very sticky to drive over, and you can sink in it if you get out to repair your craft!
- •Mudflats aren't flat! Be careful of going up gulleys that get too narrow to turn round. There can be sudden deep drops off the side you can end up nose diving into!
- Banks and Sandbars –Dry sand = DANGER it's getting higher and there could be a sudden drop!



## On the Cruise

A special note –mudflats & sandbars

- Shoes –Light slip-off type in case you get stuck in the mud
- Engines –Leave running if stopping, just in case it doesn't start again
- If you stop for a while on the tide line your skirt could fill with sand. If it feels heavy when you move off, hover in on the sport first to allow it to wash out of the skirt – don't force it to move and rip the skirt.



## Post Cruise

- Inform as required that you have returned
- Check craft for damage
- Thoroughly wash the craft in fresh water!
- Record your cruise in your HCGB Log Book (available in the HCGB online shop)





## Recommended Training

- RYA Basic Navigation and Safety at Sea – Available via local colleges or via the HCGB
- RYA Short Range Radio course
- RNLI Safety at Sea booklet (handout)



## The HCGB Code of Conduct for Cruising Hovercraft

And finally the HCGB Code of Conduct for Cruising Hovercraft

- Planning

Plan your cruise: Make sure you are aware of your craft (and your own!) limitations and plan accordingly – carefully check weather forecasts and be aware of pull-out locations and sheltered spots. Make sure someone knows where you are going.

Fuel: Pay close attention to fuel management – re-fuel in a safe way and in a safe place. Make sure you carry enough fuel for your journey (include a 20% reserve for unforeseen situations)

Know your craft limits: Plan your route according to your craft capabilities. No overloading – an overloaded craft will be operating near or at its limit – any minor weather change could push it over that limit!



## The HCGB Code of Conduct for Cruising Hovercraft

Keep within the law: Before operating ensure that your intended route will not infringe local byelaws, navigation restrictions or wildlife sanctuaries. Obey all rules or directions issued by any authority responsible for the area you are operating in.

- Safety

Be Prepared: Full safety equipment is to be carried and checked - do a craft preflight check every time you stop! Make sure you carry suitable clothing for all possible conditions (getting wet can be very dangerous – carry spare clothing). Carry a basic first-aid kit, clean water and an emergency repair kit with you at all times.

Communication: Make sure you have a means by which to summon help in an emergency (e.g. mobile phone – check it works where you are going, VHF radio – check reception, flares, etc.).

Don't drink and drive: You know it makes sense.



Good Luck  
and  
Have Fun!





- Have more questions? Want to hear more about the club?
- [www.hovercraft.org.uk](http://www.hovercraft.org.uk)
- [facebook.com/groups/HovercraftClubMembers/](https://facebook.com/groups/HovercraftClubMembers/)
- [cruising@hovercraft.org.uk](mailto:cruising@hovercraft.org.uk)
- [www.instagram.com/officialhcgb/](https://www.instagram.com/officialhcgb/)

Everyone at the club is happy to help so please do get in touch!