

# Port Authority`s Basic Boating Safety

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## **A. Rules for Arriving and Departing vessels, boaters, Swimmers, Snorkelers & Divers**

### **1. Collision Rules**

#### **Between Power Vessels**

When two vessels are coming at each other head on, each steers to the starboard, so that they pass each other on the left. This is only necessary if it is a true collision course.

When two vessels are heading generally in the same direction, but on a collision course, the vessel on the left yields to the vessel on the right.

#### **Between Power and Sail Vessels**

Generally, it is the duty of the power vessel to keep out of the way of the vessel under sail. However, this does not give the sailing vessel the right to hamper the safe passage of a power vessel in a narrow channel if it can only navigate inside the channel.

#### **Fishing Vessels**

International rules require that all vessels not engaged in fishing keep out of the way of fishing vessels. This does not give fishing vessels the right of obstructing a fairway. ( New Port Regulations require that all vessels stay at least one hundred yards away from an anchored fishing boat flying a white flag.)

#### **Common Sense**

The International Rules note that regard must be had for all dangers of navigation and collision, and to any special circumstances including the limitations of craft involved, which may render departure from the rules necessary in order to avoid immediate danger.

## **2. Control of Vessels**

It is the duty of any person having control over a power driven vessel to navigate it so as to avoid collision or injury to any other person or vessel in the area occupied by the vessel or disturbed by its wake. The vessel must be managed with due care and with regard to both the prevailing conditions and the likelihood of anyone being present or coming into the area occupied by the vessel or its wake. The master is as responsible for the effects of the vessel's wake as for the effects of the vessel itself.

When a dispute arises as to who is in control of a power driven vessel, every person aboard shall be presumed to be in control until he proves the contrary.

No person under the age of fifteen may navigate or drive a power vessel unless under the control of a person over that age.

The person in control of any vessel must obey all lawful navigational orders made by the Port Director, or his designate.

Whoever, within fifteen hundred feet of a port terminal facility, proceeds at a speed exceeding five knots or endangers other vessels or structures or causes any wake damage is guilty of an offence.

### **Arriving and Departing Vessels**

All vessels arriving or departing the territorial waters must contact Port Security via radio or phone and provide their relevant information, ie; name of vessel, last port of call, how many souls onboard, next port of call, and vessels particulars, also any vessels arriving into the Cayman Islands from a foreign country, must hoist a plain yellow flag "Q" of the International Code Flag, and keep it flying until Customs and Immigration clearances have been completed. No one must embark or disembark the vessel until it is cleared. Vessels over 500 GRT are required to file a Pre-Arrival Notice 24 hrs in advance of arrival. Forms are available on the Port's website at [www.caymanport.com](http://www.caymanport.com)

**The Port is located on the west side of the island and point of reference is Lat, 19 17. 88 N, Long, 081 23.20W.**

### **Vessels**

Vessels anchored more than two hundred yards from the shoreline must carry riding lights by night, unless otherwise authorized in that behalf by the Director or in areas protected by reef.

### **Animals on Board**

Animals are not permitted to land from vessels without a certificate from a veterinarian at the last port of call and port of origin (if different) and a permit from a Government Veterinary Officer showing that the said animal is free from diseases.

### **Pollution of air and water**

Whoever deposits, places, or discharges into the territorial waters, any matter which is capable of producing floating matter or scum on the surface of the water, sediment or obstruction on the ocean bed, or odors or gases of putrefaction is guilty of an offence.

### **3. General Rules of Navigation in Coastal areas for all Vessels**

#### **Navigating Channels:**

List of a few commonly used channels around the islands, these coordinates are within clear visibility of the channel markers.

#### **Main Channel**

Outside- 19 23.19N / 081 20.00W

Inside - 19 22.40N / 081 20.29W

#### **Rum Point**

19 22.82N / 081 17.48W

19 22.18N / 081 17.49W

#### **Gustus / Pappagallo**

19 23.87N / 081 22.14W

#### **Yacht Club**

19 21.52N / 081 22.85W

#### **Harbour House**

19 18.36N / 081 19.40W

#### **Scotts Bacadere**

19 18.42N / 081 21.17W

#### **South Sound**

19 15.97N / 081 21.30W

#### **Frank Sound**

19 17.44N / 081 10.66W

#### **East End South**

19 17.71N / 081 05.49W

#### **East End Wreck**

19 18.75N / 081 04.45W

#### **Safe Haven / Ritz Carlton**

19 20.31N / 081 21.63W

#### **Camana Bay**

19 19.46N / 081 21.77W

#### **Designated Swim Area**

Beach Front properties may, with approval of the Port Authority, designate swim areas within 200yds of the shore and mark them with white buoys bearing an orange diamond and the words "swim area ". No vessel may enter any such marked swim area, unless engaged in rescue operations or in an emergency, and unless the Master is satisfied that there is no danger to any swimmer.

#### **Dive Areas**

Dive areas may be marked by the Port authority by red buoys with a stripe, using the same symbol as the divers down flag. Within these areas, the same rules apply as apply when approaching any divers down flag or float. (See General rules below).

#### **General Rules**

No vessel shall exceed a speed of five knots when within two hundred yards of shore or when within fifty yards of any vessel at anchor.

No vessel may travel parallel to shore unless it is more than fifty yards from shore, except in inland waterways. When speed should be adjusted so as to avoid any damage whatsoever from the vessel's wake.

**Note:** this means that within fifty yards from shore, you must travel perpendicular to shore at a speed of five knots or less. Between fifty and two hundred yards, you may travel in any direction, but not exceed five knots.]

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Any vessel within two hundred yards of a “divers down “ flag or light must slow to a speed of three knots or less, have a look-out at the bow for divers and swimmers, and if the flag or light is displayed from a vessel, make either visual or radio contact with the person acting as look-out on the vessel.

No vessel may approach within one hundred yards of an anchored fishing vessel which displays a white flag, unless the vessel being approached gives permission.

### **Rules for Dive Boats**

The ‘divers down flag to be displayed during the daylight hours is a red flag with a white diagonal bar. Although the white and blue ‘A’ flag is also legally recognized in Cayman, the red and white flag is universally understood, and therefore much preferable. The divers down light, to be used at nights, is three lights, red over white over red, displayed vertically, 360 degree visibility and minimum visibility range of 200 yards.

You should always display a ‘divers down ‘flag or light when you have divers or snorkelers in the water.

No one may display a ‘divers down ‘flag or light unless actually engaged in diving or snorkeling operations.

There must be one person on board to act as a look-out when a vessel has divers or snorkelers in the water.

No commercial vessel may dive the Bloody Bay Marine Park in Little Cayman without prior permission from the Marine Conservation Board.

Traditional fishing areas may be set aside as ‘No Diving Zone‘, Within these areas, diving and fishing from a commercial vessel are prohibited. At the present time, there are two such zones located off of North Side.[ **See map** ]

### **Rules for Ski Boats**

There must be two people operating a ski boat: One at the wheel and the other acting as a look-out. The crew must keep constant watch to ensure that there is no danger to other vessels or swimmers and divers.

The ski boat must have clear water one hundred yards ahead and fifty yards to each side. The water must be totally free from swimmers and divers.

In designated Water sports Areas (of which there are eight in Grand Cayman and one in Cayman Brac, **see map**, vessels may exceed a speed of five knots near shore. All other navigational rules, including the requirement that you not travel parallel to shore within fifty yards, apply.

**Outside of Water sports Areas, ski boats must observe all navigational rules.**

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**Anchoring Rules:**

Vessels may anchor within the Port Anchorage Area in George Town Harbour (which runs approximately from the north side of Eden Rock to Pageant Beach). Because of heavy traffic, this area is under constant control of the Port Authority. Permission is required before any vessel can anchor in the Port fairways, which is a band whose width is measured from the northern tip of Eden Rock shoal due north for two hundred yards, and which runs from the shore to the drop off.

The Port also has mooring buoys for vessels not exceeding 125ft in up to 20kts winds and is recommended for use instead of anchoring. There is also one mega yacht mooring for vessels not exceeding 210ft in up to 20kts winds.

Kindly contact the Port for locations so as not to create any confusion with any personal buoys. The Ports buoys are orange in color and are located in the Port anchorage area of George Town, Spotts and a white can buoy off Seven Mile Beach.

When anchoring is required anywhere in the territorial waters, note you must anchor in sand and no grappling hooks to be used, also use the rule of thumb of three to five times of rope to the depth of water to give the vessel proper scope so as not to drag the anchor.

Anchoring is prohibited in marked channels, turning basins, within all Marine Park Zones and Environmental zone (outside of the Port Anchorage Area) vessels over sixty feet in length are prohibited from anchoring.

All commercial and private vessels are prohibited from anchoring in such a manner as to cause damage to coral by the anchor or chain. This rule applies in all Cayman waters.

At night, any vessels anchored in the Port Anchorage Area or moored more than two hundred yards from shore must carry one white light visible for 360 degrees.

**Note:** The Port Director has the power to permit anchoring of a vessel anywhere in circumstances which he determines to be an emergency.

**Use of Public Moorings:**

Public moorings, located on dive sites are intended to protect the most popular dive sites from anchor damage, they are located around all three islands. They are marked with white mooring buoys with a blue stripe. Those with a buoy 18 inches in diameter are safe for vessels up to 60 feet long, and those with the larger buoys of 30 inches diameter are meant for vessels above 60 feet long. Local rules of courtesy require that these moorings be used for only an hour or two by any single vessel.

**Rules for Snorkelers and Divers**

All snorkelers and divers must have a divers down flag or light or a white float or marker which is visible from two hundred yards if they are diving anywhere outside of a designated swim area which is demarcated with buoys. You must have a float or flag even within the two hundred yard limit of shore.

**Diving and Snorkeling is Prohibited in Navigational Channels (See maps)**

### Rules for Swimmers

Shore-based swimmers must stay within two hundred yards from shore, except that they may go beyond that limit during daylight hours if they display a white float or divers down flag.

Swimmers should exercise caution when outside of designated swim areas, and should be aware of boats in the area. A float or divers down flag is recommended for swimmers in areas of heavy boat traffic

**Swimming is prohibited in Navigational Channels (See maps)**

### Safety Equipment

Jet-skies / Wave runners and sail boats, each person is required to wear a life vest. And sail boats must carry a pocket mirror.

**Requirements for larger vessels are as follows:**

Size of vessel	8` - 20`	20` - 40`	over 40`
Buoyant vest	One for each person	Yes	Yes
Oars or paddles	yes	N/A	N/A
Life buoy/ Ring	N/A	One	Two
Bailer or manual bilge pump	Either	Either	Pump only
Anchor and rope	50`	75`	100`
Sound signaling device	N/A	Yes	Yes
Hand Held Flares	One	Three	Three
Pocket Mirror	Yes	Yes	N/A
Waterproof Flash light Or one Hand Held Flare			
And two Parachute Flares	Light	Either	N/A
Parachute Flares	N/A	Two	Three
Orange Smoke Signal	N/A	N/A	One

Any vessel equipped with an in board motor, fitted with built-in or fixed fuel tanks, or equipped with a cooking or heating appliance must carry an appropriate fire extinguisher

Size of vessel	8` - 20`	20` - 40`	over 40`
One Carbon dioxide	< 4lbs or	Ten lbs or	Ten lbs or
Or a dry chemical	< 2lbs	6 1/4 lbs	6 1/4 lbs

Dive boats must carry appropriate rescue and medical equipment including a backboard and oxygen supply. All vessels carrying passengers for hire should carry a well equipped first aid kit.

## **C. Marine Conservation Laws**

### **Key Points**

No litter or effluent of any kind may be dumped into Cayman waters. Vessels with toilet facilities must have holding tanks.

No marine life of any kind may be taken while on scuba.

No coral or sponges may be taken anywhere in Cayman waters.

The use of spear guns without a license is prohibited; licenses are granted only to Caymanians. No one may import spear guns and or parts thereof into The Cayman Islands.

You may not damage coral with your anchor or chain anywhere in Cayman waters

### **Protection of Certain Marine Species**

#### **Lobsters:**

Closed season is 1<sup>st</sup> March through 30<sup>th</sup> November

Open season catch limit: three per person or six per boat per day, whichever is less.

Six inch tail minimum size,

No one may purchase or receive more than three lobster from Cayman waters in any one day.

Only spiny lobster (P.argus) may be taken.

#### **Conch:**

Closed season runs from 1<sup>st</sup> May through 31<sup>st</sup> October

Open season catch limit: five per person or ten per boat per day, whichever is less

No one may purchase or receive more than five conch from Cayman waters in any one day.

#### **Whelks:**

Closed season runs from 1<sup>st</sup> May through 31<sup>st</sup> October

Open season catch limit: two and a half gallons in the shell or two and a half pounds of processed whelks.

No one may purchase or receive more than two and a half gallons in the shell or two and a half pounds of processed whelks from Cayman waters in any one day.

Chitons, Perwinkles and Bleeding Teeth may not be taken from Cayman waters at any time

#### **Grouper:**

Closed season: No one may take Nassau Grouper from any of the Eight designated Spawning areas from 1<sup>st</sup> November through 31<sup>st</sup> March. **(See Map)**

No one may spear fish or set a fish pot within one mile radius of any Designated Grouper Spawning areas from 1<sup>st</sup> November through 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Grouper spawning sites off the East and West End of Cayman Brac, Little Cayman and Twelve Mile Bank. Coxswain Bank and South West Point Grand Cayman.

Size limit: Twelve inch (12) minimum size limit applies throughout Cayman waters year round

Line fishing only is permitted in these areas by individuals normally resident in Cayman.



### **Protected Fish:**

Jew fish (Goliath Grouper), Tilefish (Whities), Filefish (Pipers), and Angelfish, including grey, French and Queen Angels (Old Monks), may not be taken from Cayman waters at any time. Eight inch (8) minimum size on all other fish except Goggle Eyes, Herrings, (including Sprats), Anchovies and Silversides(including Loggerhead and Fine Fry).

### **Fish Pots**

Maximum two per household.

Must be licensed by the Marine Conservation Board.

Only Caymanians over 18 may be granted licenses.

Must be identified with a DOE tag.

No fish pot may be set within one-mile radius of any grouper spawning area from 1<sup>st</sup> November through 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Must have no more than one entry funnel.

Mesh must be at least two and a quarter inches (21/4), and vertically oriented to allow undersized fish to swim through.

The trap door must be at least eight and a half inches high by eleven inches wide, and hinged at the bottom. It must also be secured with a decomposable material in the event of the fish pot becoming lost underwater.

### **Sharks**

No one may feed, attempt to feed or provide or use food to attract any shark in Cayman Waters.

### **Turtle**

No one may disturb, molest or take turtle in Cayman waters without a license from The Marine Conservation Board.

Possession of turtle eggs is prohibited.

For licensed fisherman, closed season is 1<sup>st</sup> May through 1<sup>st</sup> October.

### **Echinoderms**

Echinoderms (includes starfish), all sea urchins (sea eggs, sand dollars, sea hearts etc,) and sea cucumber may not be taken from Cayman waters at any time

### **General Rules**

Damaging coral by anchor, chains or any other means **ANYWHERE** in Cayman waters is prohibited.

No taking of **ANY** marine life while on scuba.

No taking of any coral, sponges, etc from Cayman waters.

Export of live fish or other marine life is prohibited.

Fishing with gill nets, poison or other noxious substances is prohibited.

Dumping **Anything** in Cayman waters is prohibited.

Wearing gloves while diving or snorkeling in Cayman waters is prohibited

The export of more than three conch shells and or any black coral requires a CITES permit, issued through the DOE.

## **Control of Fishing Methods**

### **Spear guns and Seine nets**

No one may use a spear gun, includes (Hawaiian sling, pole spear, harpoon, hook stick, or any device with a pointed end which may be used to impale, stab or pierce any marine life but does not include a striker) or seine net without a license from the Marine Conservation Board.

No one may possess or use a spear gun in Cayman waters without a license issued by the Marine Conservation Board. Any licensed user must carry his license when using a spear gun.

Importation and local manufacture of spear guns and parts are totally prohibited.

Spear guns may not be used in any of the Marine Zones also within one mile of any designated grouper spawning areas from 1<sup>st</sup> November through 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Catch limit: Three fish per person per day, also no one may possess more than six fish that have been caught by a spear gun.

No one may use a spear gun in water less than 20ft deep.

No one may take any Coral, Algae, Sponges, Turtle Eggs, Hermit Crab or any fish less than eight inches (8) in length other than the following: goggle eyes, herring fish, anchovy fish or silverside

## **Marine Parks Regulations**

**The DOE wishes to remind the public that the following laws still apply:**

### **Marine Parks** (See map insert)

No taking of any marine life alive or dead except:

Line fishing from shore is permitted.

Line fishing at 80ft and beyond the drop off is permitted.

Taking fry and sprats with a fry or cast net is permitted.

**Note** that fish pots, spear guns, pole spears, and seine nets are totally prohibited in these areas.

No anchoring, use of fixed moorings only, except, boats of sixty feet (60ft) or less may anchor in sand, so long as no grappling hook is used, and neither the anchor nor the rope or chain will impact the coral.

Anchoring permitted in designated Port Anchorage areas, contact Port Security VHF channel 16 or 345- 949-2055 Email [info@caymanport.com](mailto:info@caymanport.com)

Anchoring prohibitions suspended during emergencies and permission of Port Director.

Bloody Bay, Little Cayman – Special restrictions have been placed on the use of the Bloody Bay Marine Park, no commercial operations may use the park without a license from the Marine Conservation Board.

**Replenishment Zones (See map insert)**

No taking of conch or lobster by any means.

Line fishing is permitted and anchoring permitted

Taking fry and sprats with a fry or cast net is permitted.

Spear guns, pole spears, fish traps and nets prohibited.

**Note** that these zones include the outside edge of the reef to a depth of twenty feet.

**Environmental Zones (See map insert)**

No taking of marine life, alive or dead, with no exceptions.

No in water activities are permitted.

Public may access at speeds of five MPH or less.

No anchoring of any boat.

**Note** Line fishing, fish pots, spear guns, pole spears, strikers and nets are totally prohibited.

**Wildlife Interaction Zones (WIZ)**

No taking of any marine life by any means,

No selling of fish from boats,

No removing of any marine life from the water,

No anchoring in water shallower than three feet or so that the anchor or boat is within 20ft of any reef structure,

No feeding of any marine life with food of any kind or amount other than that approved by the Marine Conservation Board,

No wearing of any footwear in the water shallower than four feet,

Fish feeding is prohibited anywhere in Cayman waters outside of a designated WIZ unless licensed by the Marine Conservation Board.

Special conditions apply to commercial boats whom must have a license issued by the Marine Conservation Board and clearly displayed on the boat to enter this area.

**Penalties**

**Violation of any of these laws is an offence carrying a maximum penalty of \$500,000.00 fine and one year in jail. Upon conviction, forfeiture of the vessel or other equipment may also be ordered.**

**Department of Environment  
580 North Sound Rd, Grand Cayman  
PH# 345-949-8469 FX# 345-949-4020  
VHF Channel 10 or call 911  
Email: doe@gov.ky**

**Stress on the Marine Environment**

Every one who dives, snorkels, fishes, drops anchor, and otherwise enjoys the sea puts some stress on the marine environment. Cayman reef systems and marine populations are in very delicate balance and subject to many stresses. Those who enjoy the sea should do all that they can to ensure that they cause as little stress and damage as possible. This means:

### **Divers and Snorkelers Must Avoid Diver Damage:**

Avoid touching the coral with hands, fins, tanks, etc. Never stand on coral

Avoid overweighting, and work on your buoyancy control, so that you don't accidentally crash into coral.

Watch your console and octopus – don't let them drag along the reef.

Don't climb into barrel sponges, molest or otherwise harm any of the sea creatures you see.

Don't throw or dump **Anything** overboard,

Use great care when anchoring anywhere where there is coral. Use permanent moorings whenever possible.

## **C. Boating Safety**

### **File a Float Plan**

Whenever you are out in a boat, you should leave information with someone regarding where you are going, a description of your boat and the route expect to take, a description of your car and where you plan to leave it, who is with you and what time you expect to return.

You can pick up forms at the Port Authority or just leave the information with someone who can alert authorities if you don't return on time. Be sure to let the person know when you return!

### **Carry Safety Equipment**

The safety equipment required by the Port Authority Regulations (See Section A above) is the minimum gear you need for safety. Be sure you have what's required and that it is dry and in working order. You should also have fresh water

All vessels departing the territorial waters, shall be equipped with a radio, telephone or other wireless apparatus, in effective working condition, capable of emitting distress signals.

### **Make sure your Vessel is Seaworthy**

Be sure that there are no fuel leaks, fuel spilled during loading and that your equipment is free of excessive corrosion.

Your boat should be free of fire hazards and in good overall condition with reasonably clean bilges and the hull and superstructure sound.

Keep your boat tidy: properly secure and stow all equipment and supplies; keep deck and spaces clean and free of clutter and trash; perform regular safety checks and necessary maintenance.

Carry tools and spare parts and learn how to make minor repairs.

### **Fuel Management**

Use the “One Third Rule” in fuel management; one third to get their, one third to get back and keep one third in reserve.

### **Radio Etiquette:**

#### **The general rules for using the radio are:**

Stand by / contact on Channel 16, Switch to another channel for conversation

When trying to establish contact, call vessel name three times, if not answered, wait one minute before calling again.

**Port security can be contacted at any time on V.H.F channel 16**

## **D. Other Useful information**

Fathoms to feet multiply by 6

Knots to miles per hour, multiply by 1.2

Gallons to pounds of water multiply by 8.33

Mile (land) is 5280ft

Mile (nautical) is 6080feet

1 cable is 100fms/ 600ft

1 degree of latitude is 60 nautical miles (Charts)

1 minute of latitude is 1 nautical mile

Aft/stern is rear and bow is front of vessel

On board vessel facing the bow the Port side is left and Starboard is right

Grand Cayman is about 500nm South of Miami, 200nm South of Cuba and 180nm North West of Jamaica at the closest point to point.

Grand Cayman is about 76 sqm

Cayman Brac is about 14 sqm

Little Cayman is about 10 sqm

The Sister Islands are about 65nm North East of Grand Cayman at the closest point to point.