

23. HIGH SPEED CRAFT

Source: Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Former Notice 23/09 is cancelled. Additions and amendments to the former Notice are indicated by sidelines.

1. The definition of High Speed Craft (HSC) is given in the IMO International Code of Safety for High Speed Craft (the HSC Code). Speed alone is not the criterion for classification as an HSC; it is a combination of displacement and operating speed.
2. The number and size of HSC have continued to grow in recent years. HSC are generally engaged on a fixed route, carrying passengers, cars and, in some cases, freight. They proceed at speeds faster than other commercial and leisure vessels.
3. HSC carry no special identification signals and have no special privileges or obligations in the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (1972) with later amendments. However, they represent a potential new hazard in the areas where they have recently commenced operations. Their speed may potentially accelerate hazardous situations and bring risk of collision from unexpected directions. Some HSC generate a significant shallow water wave effect as they accelerate or decelerate or when they alter course. This can have a serious impact on small craft and their moorings, close to the shore and on shallow off-lying banks.
4. In the United Kingdom, the lead authority on all matters relating to HSC is:
Vessel Policy Branch,
Maritime and Coastguard Agency,
Spring Place,
105 Commercial Road,
Southampton,
SO15 1EG