

Whakatane and Ohiwa Harbours

Recreational harbour guide including Waioeka and Rangitaiki Rivers



The Bay of Plenty region covers 21,740 square kilometres of land and sea, including 18 islands. It sweeps from Lottin Point near Cape Runaway in the east to the southern end of Homunga Bay north of Waihi Beach in the west.

Inland, where the Rotorua lakes are the main geographical feature, the watersheds of the river catchments that flow into the region mostly determine the boundaries. The offshore boundary extends to the 12-nautical mile limit.

The main urban centres of the Bay of Plenty are Tauranga, Mount Maunganui/Papamoa, Rotorua, Whakatane, Te Puke, Kawerau, Katikati, Opotiki and Waihi Beach.

Important telephone numbers

Emergency services (use only in an emergency) 111
Harbour Master (Eastern Bay of Plenty) 07 308 8570
Pollution Hotline 0800 884 883

Whakatane

Police 07 308 5255
Hospital 07 307 8999
Ambulance 07 308 6111
Whakatane Volunteer Coastguard Association 07 308 7110
Whakatane Information Centre 07 308 6058

Opotiki

Police 07 315 1110
Hospital 07 315 8500
Ambulance 07 315 8222
Opotiki Volunteer Coastguard Association 07 315 6051
Opotiki Visitor Information Bureau 07 315 8484

Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Telephone: 0800 884 880
Facsimile: 0800 884 882
Pollution Hotline: 0800 884 883
Email: info@boprc.govt.nz
Website: www.boprc.govt.nz
Address: 5 Quay Street, PO Box 364, Whakatane 3158, New Zealand

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Whakatane Harbour

The Whakatane Harbour is a river port primarily servicing a commercial and charter fishing fleet. Because of its proximity to rich inshore fishing grounds, the port also provides access for up to 15,000 pleasure vessel movements annually.

The Whakatane Volunteer Coastguard broadcasts the status of the Whakatane bar daily along with the marine forecast and outlook periodically on channel 80.

Coastguard operates from 0630 to 1830 hours every day. A daily update of tide times, marine forecast, outlook and sea and swell conditions are indicated on a whiteboard at the boat ramp. Other safety information is also displayed. Boaties please read this information before you leave.

If the bar is considered unworkable by the Harbour Master, a red ball (day) or red all round light (night) is exhibited on the signal mast towards the river mouth. This means the bar is closed; do not cross the bar. Navigation of the entrance is also constrained by water depth. The local radio station 1XX FM includes navigation restrictions that may be in place during the bar condition reports. 1XX FM broadcasts on 90.5 FM and 1242 AM, and 92.9 FM (Ohope Beach).

**Always remember:
If you are in doubt – don't go out.**

All navigation within the harbour is restricted to a maximum speed of 5 knots.

Ohiwa Harbour

Ohiwa Harbour lies 11 km east of Whakatane.

Small boat operators should seek advice from regular users of the entrance or physically take a look at the bar at low water. Reasonable depths of water are maintained naturally within the channels.

There are numerous sandbanks within the harbour that do not dry at low tide and small boat operators should exercise caution when navigating within the harbour.

Ohiwa Harbour is a very popular recreational waterway and various activities have been segregated to allow enjoyment by all. Please read the information signs at the boat ramps.

Thornton (Rangitaiki) and Opotiki (Waioeka – Otaga)

The entrances to these ports are river mouths and can be dangerous. It is difficult to provide accurate information on where the deeper water lies because of the constant shifting nature of the sand bars.

Remember: Exercise extreme caution, seek local knowledge and cross towards the top of the tide. Facilities are limited at both ports. Small wharves next to the boat ramps should only be used to set down or pick up passengers or equipment.

Rules and regulations

The person in charge of any craft must abide by the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, New Zealand Maritime Rules and Bay of Plenty Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaw 2010.

Operating a vessel

- Move away from the berth or ramp at an idle speed and at 5 knots until 200 metres from the shore.
- Your boat speed must not exceed 5 knots when:
 - Within 200 metres of shore or structure
 - Within 50 metres of another boat, raft or person in the water
 - Within 200 metres of any boat or craft flying International Code Flag A (dive flag)
- The driver of any powerboat capable of speeds in excess of 10 knots must be over 15 years of age.
- No person may operate a vessel over 5 knots while any person has any portion of his/her body extending over the fore part, bow or side of that vessel.
- It is an offence to moor your craft to a navigation mark/beacon.
- Every person who propels or navigates a vessel must ensure that its wake does not cause unnecessary danger or risk of damage to other vessels or structures, or harm to other persons.



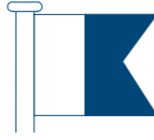
Diving

The following rules must be observed when diving:

- Always dive in pairs and have an observer in the boat.
- Do not dive in shipping lanes or areas of frequent traffic.
- Avoid popular fishing spots.
- Agree to a dive plan and then adhere to it.
- Display the International Code A Flag from the dive boat.
- Do not exceed 5 knots within 200 metres of a Code A Flag (dive flag).

Some diving takes place within the Ohiwa Harbour so users are asked to be aware of this.

This flag means: "I have a diver down, keep well clear at slow speed"



The Navigation Safety Bylaws require all craft to reduce speed to a maximum of five knots within 200 metres of a Code "A" Flag. This flag may also:

- be attached to a small marker buoy towed by a diver.
- be flown by craft escorting long distance swimmers.

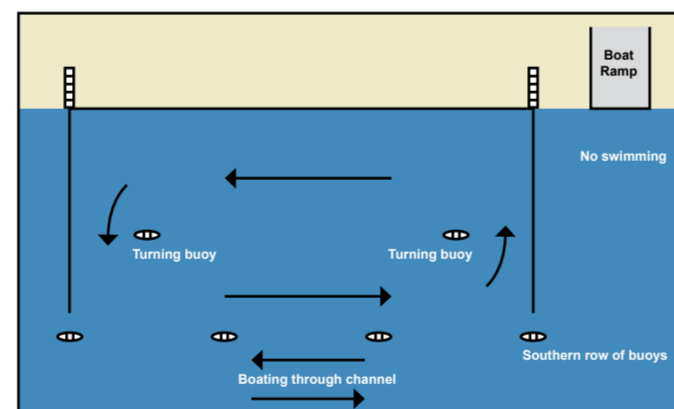
Sail boarding and kite surfing

All normal boating rules apply to sail boarding. Areas used for sail boarding and kite surfing are also used for swimming, so sail boarders are asked to keep a watchful eye on bathers, particularly young children.

Water skiing

- Skiing from shore is only permitted within a designated ski access lane or ski reserved area.
- All ski lanes operate in an anticlockwise direction.
- You must enter and drop off on the right side of the lane as you face the **land**.
- You must take off and exit on the right side of the lane as you face the **water**.
- Water skiing is a three-person sport. You must carry an observer who is over 10 years of age.
- The skier must wear a life jacket.
- Vessels are prohibited from operating within the ski areas unless they are engaged in water skiing.
- Please consider the effect your wake may have on other craft.
- No person may allow themselves to be towed by a vessel between sunset and sunrise.

There are special rules that apply to water skiing within Ohiwa Harbour. Water Skiing is confined to one area – west of the Port Ohope boat ramp.



The ski reserved area is marked as follows:

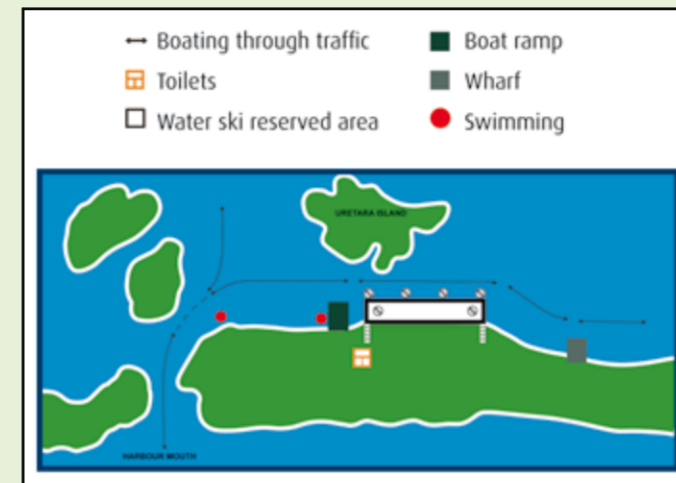
On the beach, the east and west extremities are marked with white and black poles (horizontal bands). The outer limits of the ski area to the south are marked by a row of four white and black buoys. All skiing is to take place inside this area and in an anticlockwise direction. At each end of the ski area, two white and black buoys are the turning marks. These are positioned inside the ski area to assist vessels turning and preventing straying outside of the area. All boating through-traffic must keep clear of the ski area by using the channel to the south.

Personal water craft (PWC) - Jet Skis

- Jet skis, wet bikes and wave runners are increasingly popular recreation vehicles. Operators should be aware that regulations governing personal water craft are the same regulations which govern any power driven vessel.
- A reserved area has been set up adjacent to and west of the Maraetotara Stream on Ohope Beach for the use of Personal Water Craft. The east and west limits are marked by poles painted with white and black horizontal bands.
- A second reserved area has been established to the west of the Whakatane River mouth.
- In these reserved areas the speed restrictions do not apply.
- When personal water crafts are present, swimmers must exit the reserved area.

Special provisions apply to the use of personal water craft in the Ohiwa Harbour.

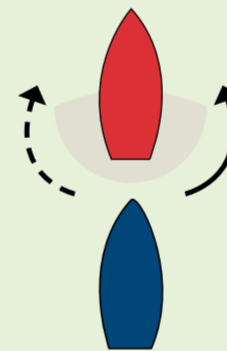
Areas of operation are restricted. Please read the descriptive signs at the boat ramp before launching.



Collision prevention rules

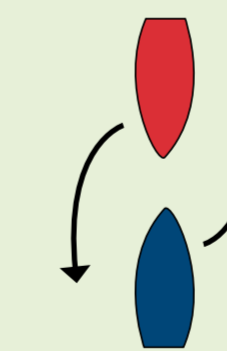
Overtaking boats

All boats, sail or power, overtaking from astern are responsible for keeping clear until finally past the vessel being overtaken. Assume that the boat in front may not be aware of your presence or intentions.



Head on situation

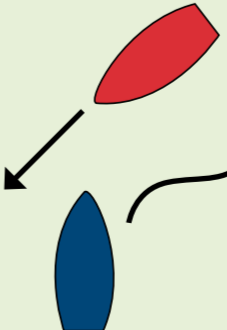
Powerboats meeting head on must each alter course to starboard to pass on port (left side) of the other (opposite to the highway).



KEEP RIGHT

Crossing situation

Powerboats converging at an angle (crossing), the boat having the other to starboard (right) gives way. (As on the road, give way to your right.)



Stop when directed

If a harbour master, maritime officer or harbour warden requests you to stop you must comply.

Harbour wardens

To assist in the promotion of safe boating, and the policing of rules and regulations, Harbour Wardens are appointed. They carry an official warrant. During the summer period the Harbour Master, along with a number of wardens, patrol the boat ramps to educate and regulate. Serious breaches of the regulations may result in prosecution.

Harbour Wardens' main objectives are to promote boating safety and to keep local boaties informed of changes to rules and regulations. They are also the ideal people to answer your questions about local conditions, where local ski lanes are, and other matters. Harbour Wardens can advise prosecution when considered necessary.

Lateral marks

Starboard hand marks



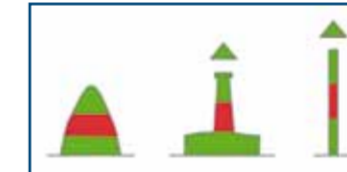
Shape: Conical, pillar or spar.
Colour: Green.
Topmark: (if any) Green cone.
Light: (if any) Green; any rhythm other than preferred channel.

Port hand marks



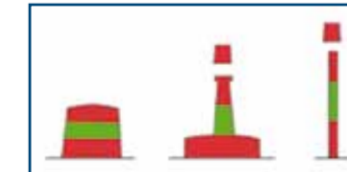
Shape: Can, pillar or spar.
Colour: Red.
Topmark: (if any) Red can.
Light: (if any) Red; any rhythm other than preferred channel.

Preferred channel to port



Shape: Conical, pillar or spar.
Colour: Green with red band.
Topmark: (if any) Green cone.
Light: (if any) Green composite group flash FI (2+1).

Preferred channel to starboard



Shape: Can, pillar or spar.
Colour: Red with green band.
Topmark: (if any) Red can.
Light: (if any) Red composite group flash FI (2+1).

Recommended Publications

The following publications are valuable reading for boaties:

'Safety In Small Craft' – available from most bookshops and boating shops.
'Safe Boating – An Essential Guide' – available free from Water Safety New Zealand, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Maritime New Zealand and Coastguard.

Ramp users

- Please ensure your vessels are loaded and prepared for launch prior to using the ramp.
- Do not wash down your vessel on the ramp.
- Do not leave rubbish or fish remains on or around the ramp: please use the bins provided.
- Please familiarise yourself with the rules and regulations for the area you intend using. There are information signs at most launching facilities.
- Please clear the ramp as quickly as possible.
- Please be courteous to other ramp users and offer assistance wherever possible.

Powerloading vessels onto trailers is not permitted.

Please note that the launching ramps and their maintenance is the responsibility of the local district council.

Life jackets/PFDs

It is a legal requirement throughout New Zealand that every pleasure boat has on board a Personal Flotation Device for each person. The PFD has to be the correct size to fit properly and it must be in a serviceable condition.

It is a legal requirement for everyone to wear a PFD in all situations where there is a heightened risk. Heightened risk means crossing bars, strong tides, or in water that is rough for the size of the boat.

If you are being towed, either in a boat, water skiing or similar activity, you are required to wear a lifejacket at all times.

When using a jet ski, it is recommended that you wear a life jacket at all times.

Marine radio – Whakatane frequencies

International distress and calling signal	16
Boat to boat	6
Waihou Bay Coastguard	83
Whakatane Coastguard Working Channel	80

The entrance to the Whakatane Harbour can be difficult and caution should be shown during all bar crossings. Bar condition reports are broadcast on radio station 1XX FM just after the local news on the hour, along with the marine forecast and sea conditions. 1XX broadcasts on 90.5 FM and 1242 AM, and at Ohope Beach on 92.9 FM.

Safe boating checklist

- Weather forecast
- Life jackets of the correct size for all on board
- Bailer, oars and boathook
- Emergency equipment, i.e. flares, VHF radio, cellphone, torch
- Fire extinguishers
- First Aid Kit
- Tell someone where you are going and when you will return
- Spare fuel
- Anchor with chain and enough rope
- Knife
- Chart of area
- It is wise to include the following, especially outside the harbour limits:
 - An emergency position indicator radio beacon – EPIRB
 - Communications – VHF or SSB radio

Tips about boating safety

- Check the boat, engine and equipment before leaving.
- Check the weather forecast and tides before leaving.
- Tell someone where you're going, and when you'll return.
- Avoid alcohol when boating.
- Never overload the boat.
- Take a proper lifejacket for each person on board; wear them.
- Have aboard: anchor, bailer, spare fuel, torch, warm gear.
- Guard against fire.
- Know the: Collision Prevention Rules, local Navigation and Safety Bylaws.
- Take two means of communication that work even when wet: VHF Radio, flares, EPIRB, cellphone in a plastic bag.

Enjoy safe boating



CAUTION: All bar entrances can be dangerous. Please exercise caution during crossing. These maps are not to be used for navigational purposes.

