

**Fremantle Port is Western Australia's major trading gateway. For many recreational boat-users it is also a gateway to Rottnest Island, Cockburn Sound and beyond.**

The Fremantle Port Authority is responsible for the safe navigation of shipping in the Port's 383 square kilometres of water. (see map of Port waters).

The Port operates 24-hours a day, 365 days a year and there are more than 4,000 shipping movements annually.

Thousands of recreational boat-users also travel through Fremantle Port waters every year. This guide highlights some of the special considerations recreational vessels should be aware of to safely navigate Fremantle Port waters.

The safety of shipping and recreational boating is critically important to Fremantle Port. It is important that recreational boat owners understand the operational limitations of large vessels in restricted waters, such as the Port's shipping channels.

Department of Transport regulations require small boats to keep clear of commercial shipping in all Western Australian ports.

For more information about recreational boating, call Maritime Transport on (08) 9216 8999 or consult "The Official Western Australian Boating Guide", which is published by the Department of Transport and available from [www.dot.wa.gov.au](http://www.dot.wa.gov.au), the Department's website.

For more information about Fremantle Port shipping channels please contact the Port on 9430 4911.

Useful Contacts

*Fremantle Port Authority*  
9430 4911

*Shipping Information*  
9430 3567

*Fremantle Port Website*  
[www.fremantleport.com.au](http://www.fremantleport.com.au)

*Maritime Transport*  
9216 8999

*Department of Transport website*  
[www.dot.wa.gov.au](http://www.dot.wa.gov.au)

*Weathercall Perth Boating Weather Service*  
1900 955 350

*Weather-by-fax Perth Boatweather Service*  
1902 935 720



Navigating Fremantle Port Waters

Limited Vision

**Vision is limited from a cargo ship's navigation bridge. Containers, cargo-handling gear and the ship, itself, all obscure vision of what is around it to some degree.**

Boat users cannot assume that because they can see a ship, the ship can see them. You must be able to clearly see the centre windows of the ship's bridge to ensure you can be seen.

The distance from which you can be seen can vary depending on the size of the ship and position of the bridge. In the most severe cases, container vessels may have a "blind" sector extending 600 metres ahead of the ship.

The bright orange stripe above the bridge helps ships see each other while at sea and should not be used as an indicator of whether a ship can see you. Keep the centre of the bridge windows in sight and you will increase the likelihood of the ship seeing you.

If in doubt, always stay well clear of commercial shipping.

Limited Manoeuvrability and Keeping Clear in Channels

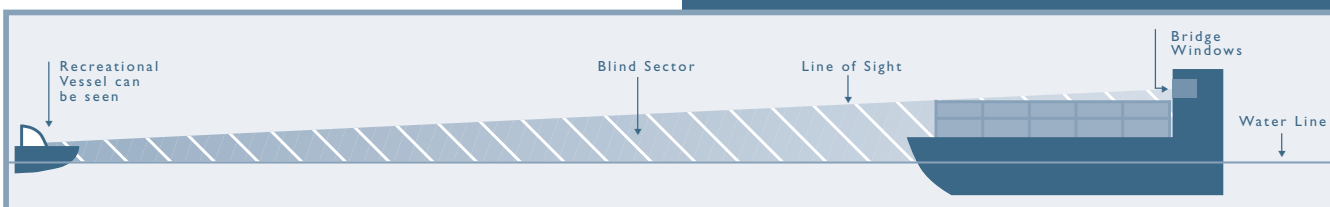
**Commercial ships have manoeuvrability limitations. Cargo ships generally cannot steer well if they are navigating at slow speed, so it is important a ship maintains heading and speed once on course.**

Size also limits a cargo ship's ability to manoeuvre quickly. Fremantle Inner Harbour entrance channel is maintained at about 13.4 metres in depth. Most large cargo ships visiting Fremantle Inner Harbour have drafts of between 10 and 13 metres. When operating in the Inner Harbour entrance channel they have no room to manoeuvre out of the centre of the channel.

Ships transiting the Success and Parmelia Channels to and from Cockburn Sound are also restricted and must keep to the centre of the channel.

There is also a Deep Water Channel in Gage Roads and boat owners should recognise that this channel has the same constraints for shipping as all other marked channels in the Port.

Regulations to prevent collisions at sea require small vessels to keep clear of a vessel restricted in its ability to manoeuvre. Any commercial ship transiting a marked channel should be considered to have restricted movement and recreational vessels should stay clear.



# Port Limits

## Travelling Through

### Fremantle Port Waters

Fremantle Port waters are part of a busy working port. The marked channels required for shipping should not be considered as recreational areas.

Kayaks, windsurfers, jetskis, waveskis or any other personal watercraft should avoid the marked channels and should also be aware of the safety equipment requirements, which restrict these watercraft to inshore waters. Personal watercraft needing to travel through the Inner Harbour must obey the eight-knot speed limit and keep to the right of the main channel.

The general boating rule of: *look right, give way to the right, turn to the right and stay to the right* applies to Fremantle Port waters.

When travelling through shipping channels, including Fremantle Inner Harbour, stay to the right and not the centre. Recreational vessels should also keep well clear of berthing vessels to avoid going between a ship and the berth.

Small boats must give way to any large vessel travelling in the same channel. A small boat can move safely out of a channel but a large vessel cannot move into open water.



## Recognising Shipping

### Movements

Commercial shipping movements are slow and deliberate, due to the size of the ship. Movements within the Port are conducted under the control of skilled pilots.

As ships cross into the port limits they can appear to zigzag through Gage Roads. These movements are made to keep the ship within the Deep Water Channel that provides safe passage to the Inner or Outer Harbours, or to safe anchorage for deep draft ships.

Many of the aids that help the masters and pilots navigate a course are shore-based and are not always apparent to recreational boat-users at sea. Stay well clear of large ships.

In Fremantle Inner Harbour, imminent shipping movements are easy to recognise. Some signs include:

- tugs or the orange and blue FPA pilot boat waiting close by ships
- a red and white vertical 'pilot on board' flag flying from a ship
- crew activity on a ship's bow and stern

Avoiding commercial shipping activity can be as simple as staying well clear, observing shipping activities before entering a channel and being aware that small boats are far more manoeuvrable than large ships.

# Inner Harbour

