

2022 edition

A leisure sailor's guide to Oban and its approaches

Oban is a popular safe haven that owes much of its success to the shelter provided by the island of Kerrera which creates a natural harbour. The port is home to many commercial, fishing and leisure vessels and is often referred to as the Gateway to the Isles. Oban is a main public transport hub linking bus, train and ferry transport routes. Consequently it is Scotlands busiest ferry port, providing life-line services to many of the island communities.

Oban and it's surrounding waters offer any leisure user tranquil sailing, stunning scenery and excellent facilities. Approach can be made from the south through the tranquil and scenic Sound of Kerrera or, more directly via the north entrance.

This guide has been designed to provide sailors and small craft owners with information which will contribute to the safe navigation and enjoyment of the area.

More information and the full Oban Bay Code of Practice can be found at

www.obanharbour.scot

Oban Bay Management Group



CALMAC

HARBOURS

Working in Partnership to Improve Marine Safety in Oban

NOT TO BE USED FOR
NAVIGATION



Available Facilities

Available
within Oban

Oban Marina	Visitor Moorings	Pontoons	Diesel	Petrol	Water	Bottled Gas	Electricity	Wifi	Showers	Toilets	Laundrette	Chandlery	Supermarket	Bar/Restaurant	Recycling	General Waste	Launching Slip	Boat Yard/Hoist	Repair Services
North Pier Pontoons																			
Community Berthing																			
Dunstaffnage Marina																			

Isle of Kerrera

Arderive
● Hill

Hutcheson's
Monument ●



Oban Marina

Recommended
Small Vessel
Route

Large Vessel Channel
See Caution One

SPEED
10 KNOTS
LIMIT

Maiden
Island

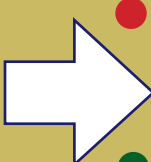
LARGE VESSEL
CHANNEL

Dunollie
● Castle

Dunollie
Light

Corran
Ledge

LISTEN
TO VHF
CH 12



DIRECTION OF BUOYAGE



Dunstaffnage Marina



4nm

Oban
Bay

Sgeir Rathaid

SPEED
6 KNOTS
LIMIT

CaIMac Pier
See Caution Two

Community Berthing

NLB Pier

Railway
Pier

OBAN

Caution One
Large Vessel Channel
Small vessels of less than 20m in length should not impede the safe passage of a large vessel entering or leaving the bay. Small vessels should avoid using the designated large vessel channel that runs through the centre of the north entrance and instead follow the recommended small vessel route shown. Also consider the swinging room required for large vessels to make a sharp turn. A large vessel's stern swings to the east side of the north channel entrance as it turns to enter or depart the bay. This area is best avoided.

Caution Two
CaIMac Pier
This area is busy with large ferries manoeuvring to and from their berths. Keep clear of this area when occupied by a vessel, or when a vessel is navigating in the area. They will require a large area of swinging room. Do not assume you have been seen, keep a good all round lookout at all times.

Welcome to Oban

www.obanharbour.scot

Oban is the perfect place to stop off and replenish, be it a great meal at the marina, a crew change at the pontoons or a safe place to leave your boat on a mooring. Planning a safe route through the busy harbour to avoid other traffic is essential to your safety and enjoyment.

Notice to Mariners

Relevant Notice to Mariners, more information and the full Code of Practice for operating in Oban Bay can be found online at www.obanharbour.scot.

Speed and Wash

There is a voluntary speed limit of 10 knots in the outer part of the bay and 6 knots east of Dunollie Lt and the Sgeir Rathaid Reef to keep wash to a minimum.

Commercial Traffic

Oban's piers host many large cruise, fishing and aquaculture vessels. Additionally Oban is a key hub for the lifeline ferry service to the isles.

VHF Channel 12

Vessels over 20 meters entering or departing Oban bay will broadcast on VHF channel 12, at a position approximately 1 mile west of Maiden Island on their entrance and immediately before departure. Use this information to plan your route through Oban Bay.

Large Vessel Channel

There is a designated large vessel channel at the north entrance where IRPCS Rule 9 (narrow channels) applies.

Manoeuvrability

Large vessels take hundreds of meters to significantly adjust their course and speed. Consequently large vessels have right of way over all small vessels of less than 20m in length, in the whole of Oban Bay.

Windage

Large vessels, especially ferries, have huge windage and can make a significant amount of leeway especially at slow speeds. A vessels direction of travel can be quite different to the vessels heading, especially in windy conditions. This is why ferries in particular will try to keep their speed up, to between 8 and 10 knots, in the narrow part of the north entrance to avoid being blown onto the lee shore.

What can you do?

Comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS).

Planning your route

Wherever possible enter and depart the north entrance of Oban Bay to the west/south side of the large vessel channel **following the recommended small vessel route**.

Small vessels should only use the large vessel channel when this will not impede the passage of a large vessel. It is best to avoid the area north/east of the large vessel channel as a large vessel's sterns will swing towards this area when they turn.

Crossing of the large vessel channel should be at 90° and made at the shortest point that is safe to do so.

Lookout & The 3 Minute Rule

Be alert. Never assume you have been seen. It's important to maintain a good all round lookout at all times.

Think 3 minutes ahead, ensuring your spatial awareness extends this far. Visualise where your vessel and all the vessels around you will be in 3 minutes time. For a vessel moving at 10 knots this is half a nautical mile or almost the entire width of the bay. Large vessels are planning a safe route this far ahead.

Have your engine ready for immediate use when entering or leaving Oban Bay, to ensure you can keep the designated large vessel channel clear.

Passaging at night

Ensure your navigation lights comply with the COLREGS and can be seen. Be aware that the background lighting of Oban bay itself can cause distraction. It also makes masthead lights difficult to see. Deck and side mounted lights are much more obvious against the sea when observing from the height of a large vessels bridge.

NB The buoyage is northbound at the north entrance.

Useful Contacts

Oban Marina

Tel: 01631 565333
VHF Channel 80

Oban Bay

Community Berthing

Tel: 07751 605746
www.obanbayberthing.co.uk

North Pier Pontoons

Tel: 07388 808 061
VHF Channel 12

Dunstaffnage Marina

Tel: 01631 566555
VHF Channel 37

Oban Harbour

www.obanharbour.scot

Railway Pier

CalMac Pier Master

Tel: 01631 565854
Mobile: 07388 808 061
VHF Channel 12

Northern Lighthouse Board Pier

Tel: 01631 562146

Oban North Pier Harbour Master

Tel: 01631 562892
Mobile: 07920 543555
VHF Channel 12

Stornoway Coastguard

Tel: 01851 702013

Kayakers and Small Craft

There are a number of launching points in and around Oban bay. Please be considerate with your parking and make sure someone on shore knows where you are going and when you will be back.

Be Safe, Be Seen Very small vessels such as kayaks, paddleboards and inflatables should make every effort to ensure that they are easily visible from the bridge of large vessels by use of brightly coloured clothing and lights when appropriate – attention is drawn to the 'Be Safe – Be Seen' guidance available from the website www.obanharbour.scot.

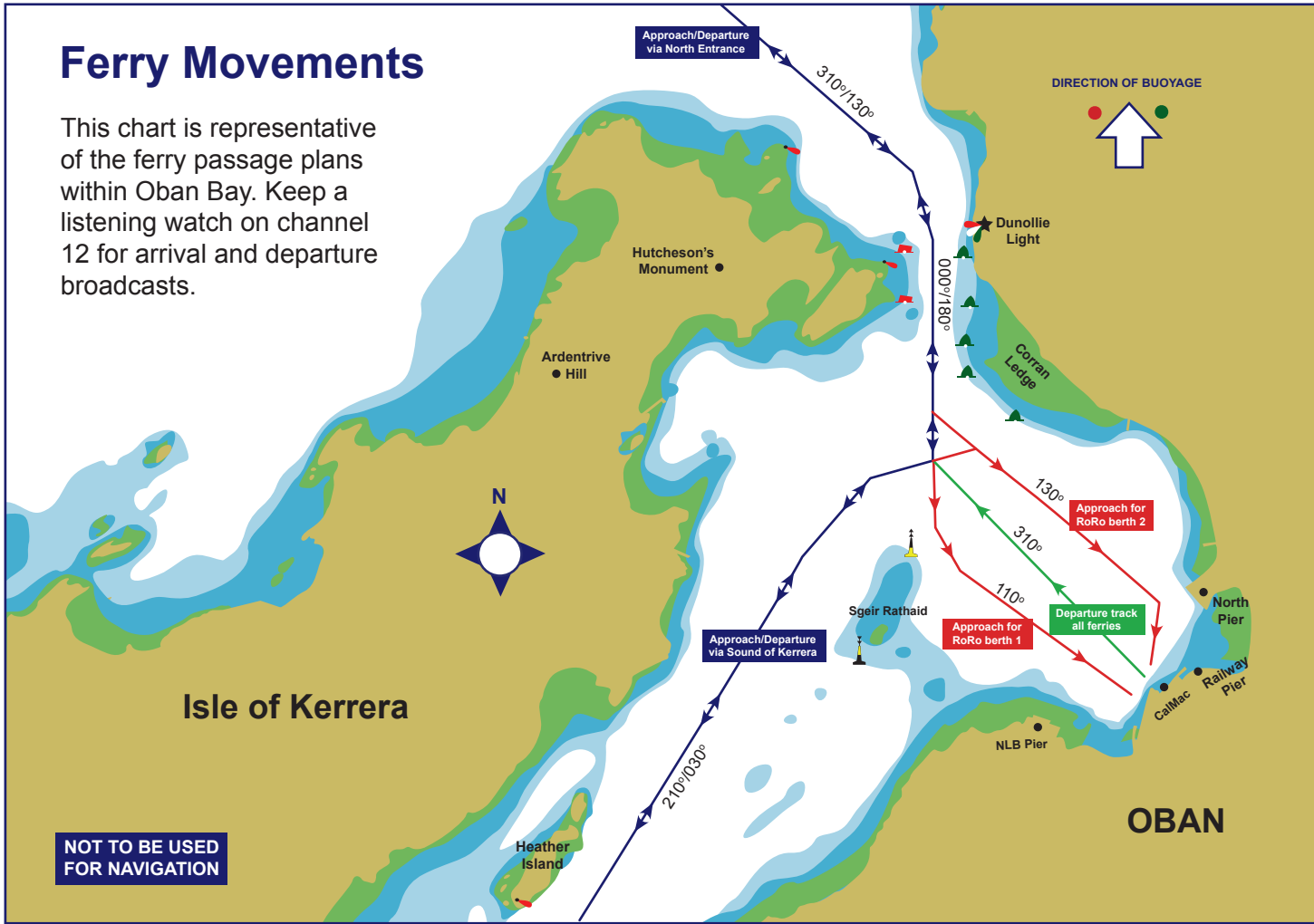
Crossing Take the shortest, safest route available. Stay together and don't hang around in the main channel. Keep a listening watch on channel 16 and 12 for large vessel movements.

North Pier Pontoons The outer breakwater of the pontoons can cause clapotic (standing) waves, take care.

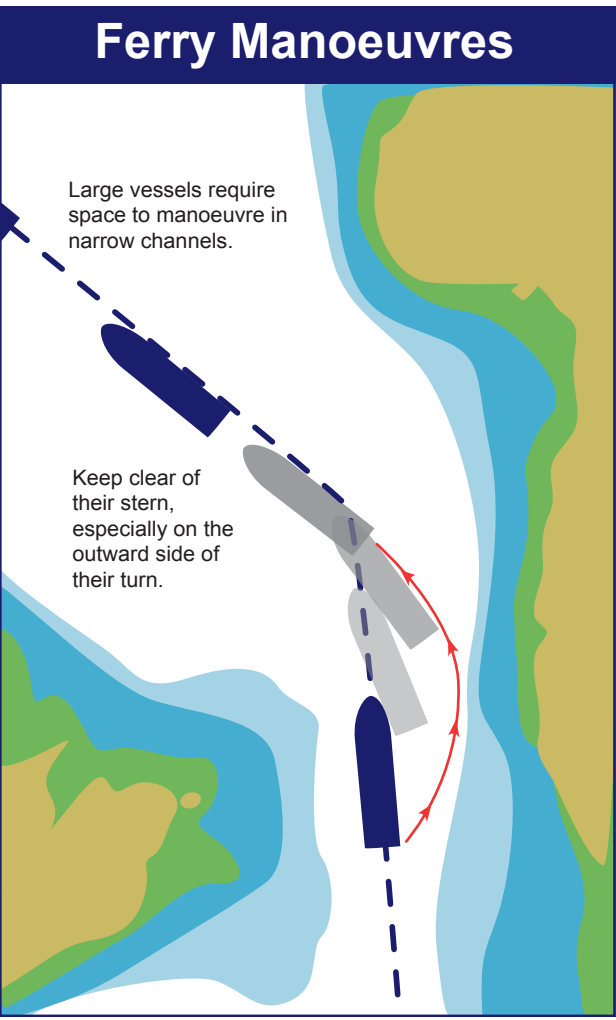


Ferry Movements

This chart is representative of the ferry passage plans within Oban Bay. Keep a listening watch on channel 12 for arrival and departure broadcasts.



Ferry Manoeuvres



Sound Signals

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| ● | Turning to starboard |
| ● ● | Turning to port |
| ● ● ● | Operating astern propulsion |
| ● ● ● ● ● | Unsure of your intentions |

Incident Reporting

We hope that you make safe passage and enjoy your visit, however should you be involved in or witness an incident or near miss please report it online at www.obanharbour.scot



This guide has been produced to aid the safe navigation of Oban bay, it has not been designed as a navigational aid alone and should be used in conjunction with other navigational means.

Design by Art & Sea www.artandsea.co.uk