



MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

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Pleasure Craft Community

STAYING SAFE WHEN PARTICIPATING IN RECREATIONAL WATER ACTIVITIES AT SEA

1 This is a joint circular issued by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), in partnership with Sport Singapore (SportSG), National Parks Board (NParks), Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC), Singapore Land Authority (SLA), Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) and Police Coast Guard (PCG) on staying safe when participating in recreational water activities at sea.

2 Persons engaging in recreational water activities at sea should be aware of the potential dangers of strong currents in waters surrounding Singapore. In general, most areas surrounding Singapore experience strong tidal currents daily.

3 All areas of Singapore can be susceptible to stronger currents and choppy waters (swells) induced by high winds during inclement weather and the monsoon seasons. Information on tides and weather can be found on the websites of the National Environment Agency (www.nea.gov.sg) and Meteorological Service Singapore (www.weather.gov.sg).

4 Strong tidal currents can also occur between high and low tides. Tidal currents¹ are especially strong during spring tides which occurs during a full moon or a new moon². These currents are also amplified in water channels between islands due to the funnelling effect caused by a large body of water flowing through a narrow channel between the islands. Areas which are susceptible to strong currents include the waters off/around Changi Beach Park, Sentosa Island (especially in the Buran Channel, and just beyond the islets at Siloso, Palawan and Tanjong Beaches³), Sisters' Island and the Southern Islands, amongst others.

¹ Tidal currents are caused by the gravitational pull exerted by astronomical bodies (the Moon, Sun etc) on large bodies of water.

² Moon phases are available in the annual MPA Singapore Tide Tables publication which can be purchased from chart distributors (<http://www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home/media-centre/publicaitons/singapore-tide-tables>). Alternatively, the information is freely available from multiple online sources (we highly recommend that users verify the reliability of the source and information before use).

³ Guests at Sentosa's beaches are advised to swim between the Red and Yellow ("Swim Here") flags, as this area is monitored by Beach Patrol Officers from 9am – 7pm.

5 These strong currents are dangerous as they may not be visually apparent and can be difficult to go against, pulling those caught in them in the direction of their flow. The strong tidal flows can generate eddy currents which add to the risks. Fixed/anchored obstacles (e.g. floating barriers, jetties, anchored ships) may further compound the risks of strong tidal flows and eddy currents to nearby boats and swimmers.

6 Persons engaging in recreational water activities at sea should (i) be mindful of the weather, tidal and sea conditions, (ii) observe the prevailing safety guidelines for the activities that they are undertaking, (iii) wear a life vest or suitable personal floatation device, where applicable, (iv) know what to do in an emergency, and (v) act responsibly to ensure their own safety and the safety of the persons under their care. Those taking part in sea activities should also avoid fixed/anchored obstacles to minimise the risk of being trapped at these locations.

7 Separately, pleasure crafts should not beach on the shores of any swimming lagoons. When manoeuvring, pleasure crafts should be mindful of persons engaging in recreational water activities within the sea, especially at swimming lagoons.

8 An Open Water Sport Safety Committee comprising of representatives from government agencies and water sport-related National Sports Associations has recently been formed to review overall safety measures and make recommendations for a framework covering preventive measures to improve open water sport safety in Singapore. Detailed information will be released once the Committee completes the work.

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