

HARBOR TRAFFIC THINGS TO KNOW

Welcome to the Port of Charleston. Our deep water and world-class ship terminals comprise the nation's 9th largest seaport, and our beautiful harbor is one of the nation's largest sailing venues. In a typical year, Charleston attracts well over 2000 ship calls, and 2,000 starts on sailing courses. That's no coincidence. Our harbor is central to our way of life, as a prosperous gateway for commerce, as our setting for sportsmanship and recreation, and as a fitting venue for competition amongst the best sailors in the world!

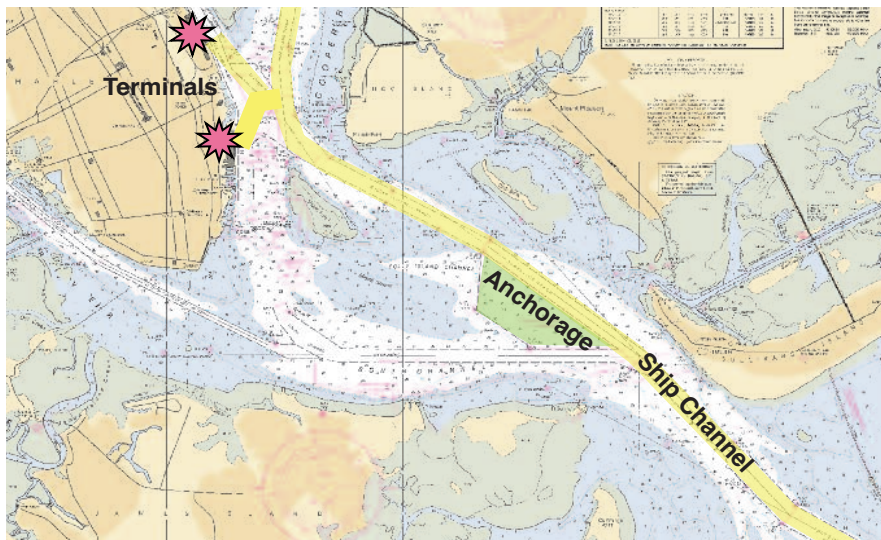
Preventing incidents between ships and boats is therefore one of our continual concerns. Sharing the harbor requires constant attention to the rules of the road and the rules of racing.

Racers have a distinct maneuvering advantage over ships. Ships are fairly predictable, because they're confined to the channels. While there are shallow areas of the harbor, sailboats are far less restricted. From the ship's perspective, sailboats can appear to be fairly random. While pilots understand racing and race courses, Race Week is a series of courses each with a series of fleets. What's going on in your fleet and your race is quite apparent to you, but what's going on across the entire waterway is much more difficult to assess.

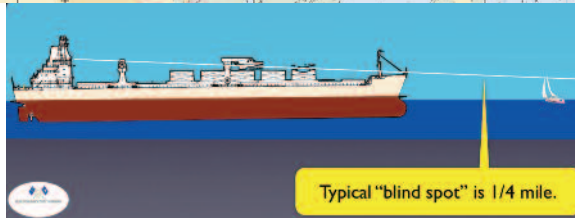
Anytime you're near a ship, or crossing a channel in sight of a ship, or sailing along the edge of the channel ahead of a ship, call the ship on channel 13 or 16 VHF and broadcast your intentions. The pilot will appreciate it. If you can't see the name of the ship, simply call the "inbound" or "outbound" ship in "the lower harbor," for example, and tell him what you're up to. Use your sail number as an identifier, and the ship will know exactly who you are.

Charleston now handles the largest ships trading on the East Coast, carrying more than 14,000 containers. Our container berths are continually turning over, and therefore, when you see one container ship coming in, there's probably one just around the bend coming out. Two ships meeting in the channel is a precise maneuver, and getting too close to this is dangerous for everyone involved. Frequent places here for ships to pass each other are right off the Yorktown, near the Anchorage, near Fort Sumter, and through the jetties and all the way out to the Entrance Buoy 13 miles offshore. Passing ships need the entire channel. In these areas, particularly, please take advantage of the deep water outside the buoys.

Vigilance while sailing to the course or back into the harbor is just as important as when racing. The few close calls we've had were most often when racers were coming back into the harbor after a full day of racing. Along the entrance channel, when in sight of a ship, please sail outside of the buoy line, especially between the jetties. Under no circumstances



should you try to take the middle between two passing ships. The ships will induce turbulence and wind shifts



between them that will not work in your favor. This may seem like common sense, but it wasn't to one racer a few years ago.

Race courses can and may cross a channel. Even if the course doesn't, the favored tack may. When approaching and crossing channels, make sure you're aware of approaching ships, and their tugs, and observe Rule 9 when in sight of a ship. Rule 9 obliges smaller vessels to give way to vessels confined to the channel. There is nowhere in Charleston Harbor where a Race Week entrant is restricted to the same channels the ships are, so the ship is always going to be privileged.

Please also remember that ships are just as confined to the channel outside the harbor as they are inside the harbor. Rule 9 applies all the way to the "C" buoy 13 miles offshore.

Ships tend to go faster than most assume, up to 22 knots in the offshore channel, and up to 15 knots in the harbor. If you see a ship coming, plan on it getting to you faster than you think.

If you must cross the channel when in sight of a ship, remember that the ship has a blind spot 1/4 mile ahead. If you can't see the windows on the bridge of the ship, the ship can't see you. Shipboard radar has roughly the same blind spot. If your entire boat cannot be seen by the pilot during the entire time you're crossing the channel ahead of the ship, you are way too close.

Remember also that sailing has its unexpected moments. If you pop a halyard or foul your sheets and can't tack when you planned, you'll want plenty of time to get things sorted out

and still stay clear of the ship. Please maintain a buffer to allow for the unexpected.

The most unpredictable maneuver you're

likely to observe is when a ship is going into or out of the anchorage. The anchorage is just north of Fort Sumter, nearby the inshore courses. If you see a ship slowing down or making any turns in this area, the ship may be anchoring. Please familiarize yourself with anchorage "A" on the chart, and if you're unsure of what a ship is doing, stay clear and call it on channel 13 or 16.

Another rule of thumb is, if you're considering using a ship to gain an advantage over a competitor, you're too close. Set the example for everyone around you with prudent tactics.

You may see a ship with a Coast Guard escort. In these cases, expect the Coast Guard to keep you up to 500 yards from the ship. Plan ahead, and heed the Coast Guard's warnings if you didn't plan well enough. A Coast Guard boarding will slow you down a lot more than an extra couple of tacks.

Many of Charleston's harbor pilots are racers themselves, and we're very proud of the success of Race Week. Many of the pilots that are working would rather be on the course with you. We hope during Race Week, the ships are nothing more than part of the ambiance of the harbor. We are so pleased to have you here adding to the ambiance of our homeport!

Sail safe, sail fast, and enjoy Charleston!

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