

18th June 2020

-INFORMATION NOTICE-

IOM Harbours Division warn about Swimming in Harbours

In recent weeks Harbour staff and Coastguard Officers have responded to numerous reports of people jumping off piers and swimming in the Island's Harbours. The recent relaxation of the COVID-19 restrictions and the good weather has unfortunately resulted in an increase in such activity and therefore an increasing number of reported incidents involving near misses between swimmers and vessels. The Harbours Division of the Department of Infrastructure is urging members of the public to be aware of the dangers of associated with the harbour environment and refrain from activity which involves jumping into or swimming in a harbour.

Officers are concerned that members of the public, particularly children and young people, are not aware of the shock which can occur from entering cold water suddenly and the hazards presented by uncertain and wide ranging depth water. Swimming and jumping into harbour channels, especially when near to entrances, increases the risk of injury or death from collision with a vessel.

It is an offence under the Harbours Act and Bye-Laws to swim, bathe or dive from any harbour pier or any part of a harbour which lies within a pier head. The Act gives the power to instruct swimmers to leave the harbour and failure to comply with any instruction given by a Harbour Officer can lead to prosecution and a fine up to £5000.

The Harbours Division does not wish to spoil anyone's summer fun, especially following the unique and difficult times we have all experienced during the Coronavirus crisis. The Harbours Division does however have a responsibility for public safety in all its harbours and as such will look to exercise and enforce its powers under the Harbours Act should this dangerous activity continue.

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