



Harbourmaster's Office

Guide for superyachts in Northland

Navigation, safety and operating requirements and guidelines

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Introduction

This guide provides advice for masters and agents of superyachts visiting Northland's harbours and coast. Northland's coastal area is managed by the Regional Harbourmaster of the Northland Regional Council.

Definition of a superyacht

For the purposes of this guide, "superyacht" means a vessel of 40 metres length overall or greater used by the owner and their guests and does not include any vessel that:

- carries cargo;
- carries more than 12 passengers; and/or
- is a fishing vessel, whether or not it is used for such purposes at that time.

Northland region

Northland is the area north of the Auckland region. It stretches from south-east of Mangawhai across to the Kaipara Harbour and all the way up to New Zealand's northernmost tip, Cape Rēinga.



Section One: General

Overseas arrivals

Northland's ports of entry for vessels arriving from overseas are Ōpua and Whāngārei.

An [*Advanced Notification of Arrival*](#) must be submitted to New Zealand Customs Service (customs) at least 48 hours prior to a vessel's arrival in New Zealand territorial waters (12 nautical miles off the coast). In general it is best to give customs as much notice as possible. This is especially important if the vessel is likely to be too large to get to Ōpua, and alternative arrangements for inspection at anchorage off Russell are to be made. The harbourmaster can assist with these arrangements – see page 12 for contact details.

On arrival in port all yachts and small craft will receive the New Zealand Border Agencies information pack, which lists customs, quarantine, immigration and Maritime New Zealand requirements. Biosecurity is a major concern in New Zealand and vessels are required to bag and seal all rubbish for safe disposal. Vessels are advised to run down their fresh stores before arrival.

Passage plans

A master of a superyacht must make use of a passage plan for every intended voyage and/or vessel movement.

Vessels over 100 gross tonnes entering Northland harbours should forward passage plans for the harbour approach and inner harbour movements to the harbourmaster at least two working days before arrival (along with the first notice of arrival). See page 12 for harbourmaster contact details.

The passage plan can be a scanned copy of the largest scale navigation chart for the areas showing courses and intended anchorages, along with the vessel details of draft and length overall. Alternatively, a detailed description by passages and bays with intended timings will be acceptable.

Pre-arrival notification

Notice of arrival into a Northland harbour should be given to the harbourmaster at least four days before arrival. Pilotage cannot be guaranteed on any particular day, so as much prior notice as possible is advisable, even if exact ETA cannot be provided, so that the harbourmaster can coordinate services to fit in with the yacht's itinerary. See page 12 for harbourmaster contact details.

Notification while on the Northland coast

All superyachts in Northland are also requested to send daily position updates, by area and harbour, to the harbourmaster while on the Northland coast. This can be by email – see page 12 for harbourmaster contact details.

This notification is required for safety purposes and local response in the event of an emergency or marine pollution incident. Northland has also experienced a number of tsunami warnings over the last few years, so it is important to know what vessels are in which harbours.

The report should be in one of the following formats:

- **At sea:** Departure point, destination, ETA
- **At anchorage:** Location by area and harbour, ETD and next destination.

A contact number should be provided in case of emergency.

Bridge and engine room crew complement

The number of crew members and engineers on board must be sufficient to safely navigate the vessel, taking into consideration the need for steering, manoeuvring, visual monitoring, and position fixing.

Machinery and equipment

Vessels entering Northland harbours should have all machinery and equipment in good working order. Any defects should be notified to the harbourmaster before the vessel enters harbour limits – see page 12 for contact details.

Vessels should be navigating using up-to-date charts of the largest available scale. Relevant up-to-date navigational publications should be on board and consulted when passage plans are produced. If using ECDIS systems with no paper chart back-up, vessels should comply with applicable SOLAS regulations. Masters should note that several Northland region charts are not yet available in approved Vector format.

Masters are also advised to consult the New Zealand [Notices to Mariners](#) for latest updates.

Anchors should be cleared away and ready for use in good time.

Steering should be hand steering or, as a minimum, a helmsman manning the helm station inside the harbour limits.

Engines should be immediately available for reducing speed, stopping or reversing at all times without delay.

AIS, if fitted, should be switched on and transmitting correct static and dynamic data whenever the vessel is underway or at anchor.

Compliance with Bylaw, Harbourmaster Guidelines and Maritime Rules

A superyacht must be navigated in compliance with the Navigation Safety Bylaws, Harbourmaster Guidelines and Maritime Rules. The latest copy of the bylaws and other local rules can be downloaded from the [Northland Regional Council website](#).

Navigation Safety Bylaw (regional legislation)

Masters of superyachts should be aware that numerous recreational vessels operate in Northland waters.

The harbourmaster is empowered to implement and enforce the Navigation Safety Bylaw which stipulates the local rules and requirements for vessels in the region.

The following requirements of the bylaw are applicable to superyachts.

- a) A vessel under 500 gross tonnage or under 24 metres in length must not impede the navigation of a vessel over 500 gross tonnage.
- b) While carrying out propulsion system tests:
 - i) vessels and persons in the vicinity should be warned; and
 - ii) care should be taken to ensure no damage to other vessels or structures injury to persons is caused.
- c) Vessels berthed at a wharf should be securely moored and a watch should be maintained.
- d) An anchor watch should be maintained by vessels at anchor.
- e) Vessels involved in accidents should report to the harbourmaster as soon as practicable (see 'Notification of collisions or accidents' below).
- f) When underway within harbour limits:
 - i) The use of autopilot is not permitted (see 'Machinery and Equipment' above)
 - ii) The main propulsion system should be available for immediate manoeuvring
 - iii) The anchors should be cleared away and available for letting go immediately without the need for power.
- g) The harbourmaster's permission should be obtained before immobilising the propulsion system.
- h) The harbourmaster's permission should be obtained before any hot work is carried out (see 'Hot work operations' below).

Notifications of collisions or accidents

The master of any vessel that:

- has been involved in an accident in Northland waters, including collision, grounding, fire, oil pollution or other marine casualty;
- has caused an obstruction to navigation;
- has caused damage to an aid to navigation; or
- has a defect affecting its safe navigation or seaworthiness, must report this to the harbourmaster as soon as practicable (see page 12 for contact details).

This should be followed up with a written report within 48 hours of the incident. These reports are in addition to those required by Maritime New Zealand. A report (under Navigation Safety Bylaw clause 2.10) must include:

- a full description of any injury to persons, and their names and addresses; and
- a full description of any damage to vessels or structures; and
- the names and addresses of persons in charge of the vessel.

If the incident involves damage to a vessel that affects or is likely to affect its seaworthiness, the master may not move the vessel except:

- to clear the main navigational channel or to moor or anchor in safety; or
- in accordance with the directions of the harbourmaster.

Hot work operations

Within the Northland region, the master of every vessel on board which or on the hull of which it is proposed to carry out welding or flame-cutting must first obtain a hot work permit by applying to the Harbourmaster no less than two hours before commencing the work.

Before any welding or flame-cutting operations are commenced, all precautions must be taken for the detection, prevention, and extinguishing of fire on board the vessel or elsewhere during the welding operations and any requirements specified in the hot work permit must be met. Provision must be made for the continuance of the precautions until the operations are completed.

If the harbourmaster is not satisfied that adequate precautions have been taken, the harbourmaster may forbid the operations.

Marine pollution regulations and reporting

Sewage discharge rules

Discharge of sewage from vessels is viewed very seriously in Northland and there are strict rules covering sewage discharges in Northland waters.

It is illegal to discharge untreated sewage into any coastal waters that are:

- Shallower than five metres
- Less than 500 metres from the high tide mark
- Less than 500 metres from a marine farm or a gazetted Maitaitai Reserve
- Less than 200 metres from a marine reserve
- Within all Northland harbours and the Bay of Islands.

Discharge from an approved sewage treatment system is permitted in compliance with MARPOL requirements; however, the **Northland Regional Council prefers a zero discharge policy within its harbours**. In the absence of approved treatment systems, holding tanks are acceptable; however, the capacity of such holding tanks should be sufficient for the number of people on board for the duration of stay – if not, the vessel will be required to leave the harbour.

Reporting oil pollution

All incidents of oil pollution should be immediately reported to the [Northland Regional Council's 24/7 environmental hotline](#) on freephone 0800 504 639.

Section 2: Local advice

Harbours suitable for superyachts and fees/charges

Yachts 100-500 gross tonnes

In Northland, only Whangaroa, the Bay of Islands and Whāngārei harbours are suitable harbours for superyachts. The harbourmaster may permit superyachts to enter certain other harbours on a case by case basis.

Vessels of 100-500 gross tonnes will be charged a Navigation and Safety Services Fee, payable to the Northland Regional Council when entering the harbour limits of Whangaroa and the Bay of Islands.

Yachts >500 Gross Tonnes

Vessels over 500 gross tonnes are charged a Navigation and Safety Services Fee. Visits to other Northland harbours are free of additional cost if such visits are part of the same voyage. Pilotage is compulsory for vessels of this size and additional pilotage charges apply for each visit.

The port charges payable for Whangaroa are waived if the vessel is also calling at the Bay of Islands harbour during the same voyage and has already paid a Navigation and Safety Services Fee there.

Pilotage areas and harbour limits

The harbourmaster should be notified at least two working days before a vessel arrives at the harbour limits, preferably through a local agent. The initial notice should also specify if the vessel will enter pilotage limits, so that a pilot can be arranged by the harbourmaster in good time. An early enquiry through local agents is advisable to avoid last minute delays.

Information and requirements for Whangaroa, the Bay of Islands and Whāngārei harbours are set out below.

Whangaroa Harbour

Vessels up to 100 metres in length, and/or 4.0 metres in draft and/or a maximum of 4000 gross tonnes may enter Whangaroa Harbour without a pilot. The harbour is not suitable for vessels over this size. Although pilotage is not compulsory, masters who are not familiar with the harbour are advised to contact the harbourmaster for local advice well in advance of arrival – see page 12 for contact details.

The harbourmaster will also require the master to submit passage plans for inward and outward passages, showing intended anchoring positions, speeds and abort points.

Unless familiar with the harbour, masters should arrive and depart during daylight hours, during favourable state of tidal height and flow. If visibility is restricted at the entrance then entry should be delayed. Usually fog clears an hour or so after sunrise.



Bay of Islands

The pilotage limits and harbour limits for the Bay of Islands are shown on chart NZ 5125.

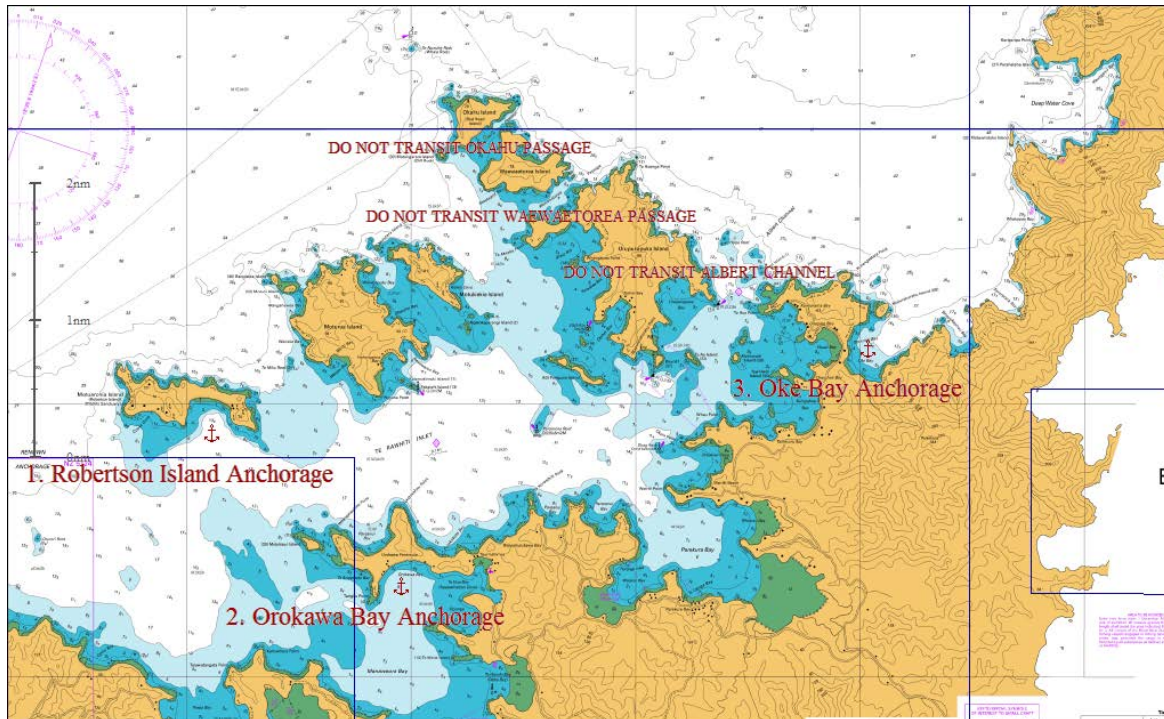
Masters of superyachts entering the Bay of Islands harbour and not passing the pilotage limits are free to anchor at a suitable location of their choosing. Anchoring within the sector limits of the Bay of Islands directional light is prohibited.

Cruise ship anchorages are detailed in the table below. Superyachts should avoid anchoring near these positions. No.3 in particular is in front of Russell; check with the harbourmaster whether it is likely to be used during the planned visit. If no vessels are booked in then this position is available.

Cruise ship anchorages					
Anchorage number	Latitude	Longitude	Charted depth	Maximum draught	Maximum length
1	35° 15'.28S	174° 06'.27E	12.0m	10.0m	330m
2	35° 15'.09S	174° 05'.87E	11.0m	9.2m	300m
3	35° 15'.76S	174° 06'.62E	10.0m	8.3m	160m

For vessels not entering the pilotage limits, the harbourmaster will also require the master to provide daily updates of the vessel's position and intentions. Notification by email is acceptable – see page 12 for contact details. Masters who are not familiar with the harbour are advised to contact the harbourmaster for local advice well in advance of arrival.

The harbourmaster provides pilotage services for those vessels crossing the pilotage limits – it is recommended to make arrangements with the harbourmaster well in advance. The harbourmaster will endeavour to anchor the vessel in a location suited to the vessel's needs. The wharf is generally not suitable for vessels over 500 tonnes due to its age. Far North Holdings, the berth owner, must be contacted for berth availability – phone 09 402 5659.



Whāngārei

The harbour limits for Whāngārei are shown on charts NZ 521 and NZ 522. The pilotage limits for Whāngārei are shown on chart NZ 5214.

Masters of superyachts entering Whāngārei Harbour and not passing the pilotage limits are free to anchor at a suitable location of their choosing. Masters should be aware that Whāngārei is a commercial port with deep draft tanker and freighter calls. The safe passage of such vessels should not be obstructed.

For vessels not entering the pilotage limits, the harbourmaster will also require the master to submit passage plans for their intended coastal voyage while in Northland waters, detailing intended tracks and anchoring positions.

All vessels over 500 gross tonnes require a pilot. Pilotage is provided by [North Tugz](#) and charges are payable directly to North Tugz. Contact by email to ntops@northtugz.co.nz or phone 09 432 8452

Masters should be aware of the restricted area around the CTS wharves east of Northport. In addition, occasional restricted areas may be in force around the Northport berths when fumigation is under way.

Pilotage exemption

Masters of vessels over 500 gross tonnes are able to obtain pilotage exemption certificates for the Bay of Islands. The harbourmaster should be contacted for details of the training, examination, certification process, costs and currency requirements – see page 12 for contact details.

Master's pilotage exemption training scheme

Maritime Rule 90 prescribes the requirements for the training, examination and certification for the issue of a master's pilotage exemption in compulsory pilotage areas.

Under this training scheme a master's pilotage exemption may be obtained for superyachts 1000 gross tonnage or less, and 90 metres length overall or less for certain pilotage areas for specific vessels:

- Bay of Islands
- Auckland
- Marlborough Sounds
- Fiordland
- Stewart Island.

Note: to date little use of this facility has been taken up due to the passing nature of most superyachts. It is suitable mainly for yachts planning on spending substantial time in the area. Any vessel planning on being based in Northland should contact the harbourmaster for advice – see page 12 for contact details.

IMO Area To Be Avoided (ATBA)

An IMO ATBA is in force around the Poor Knights islands northeast of Tutukākā. Vessels over 45 metres in length are not permitted to enter this ATBA, which is bounded by a line connecting the following positions:

- | | | |
|----|---------------|---------------|
| a) | 35° 51.30' S, | 174° 35.50' E |
| b) | 35° 34.55' S, | 174° 49.20' E |
| c) | 35° 29.60' S, | 174° 50.80' E |
| d) | 35° 24.70' S, | 174° 50.20' E |
| e) | 35° 10.20' S, | 174° 20.10' E |

Harbours not accessible to superyachts due ATBA

Whangamumu, Whangaruru, Tutukākā, Ngunguru and other harbours situated within latitudes 35° 10.20' S to 35° 51.30' S are inaccessible to vessels over 45 metres in length due to the existence of the above ATBA. This is a prohibition that is monitored and enforced by Maritime New Zealand. All queries related to the ATBA must be directed to Maritime New Zealand as the national regulatory authority.

Tendering ashore

If using tenders to transfer people from the vessel to the shore:

- Tenders should be operated by suitably qualified crew members.
- Tenders should comply with the '5 knot rule' and all other relevant parts of the Navigation Safety Bylaw, including not creating a wake that causes a hazard. Look out for 5 knot buoys and signs that mark the slow down areas.
- Tender vessel engines should be operated in such a way that no damage is caused to other vessels or structures.
- Lifejackets should be provided for every person on board.
- Local advice should be obtained on tender routes and drop-off points.
- Tender skippers should be briefed on routes, hazards, local rules and requirements.

Contact information

Northland Regional Council

Phone	+64 9 470 1200 (main office; Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1630)
Emergencies	0800 504 639 (24/7 hotline, may only be available from New Zealand mobile phones and landlines)
Email	info@nrc.govt.nz (messages checked Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1630 only)
Website	www.nrc.govt.nz

Bookings for pilotage and contacts for harbourmaster

Regional Harbourmaster	Jim Lyle jiml@nrc.govt.nz +64 27 434 3571
Deputy Regional Harbourmaster	Peter Thomas petert@nrc.govt.nz +64 27 444 4583

Other useful numbers

[Far North Holdings](#)

Owns and manages most berth facilities and piers in the Far North.
+64 9 402 5659

[Whangaroa Marina Trust](#)

Manages Whangaroa marina, a good landing point for town, a donation to the trust is appreciated if using their facilities.
+64 27 471 4588

[Whangaroa Harbour Warden](#)

Harbourmaster's local contact.
+64 9 405 1081

Whāngārei

Pilotage	Northtugz Ltd +64 9 432 845 ntops@northtugz.co.nz
Lay up berths	Port Nikau +64 9 430 2145 +64 27 473 9556 info@portnikau.co.nz ;
Repairs	Ship Repair 279 Port Rd, Whāngārei, New Zealand +64 9 438 0753 nick@shiprepair.co.nz
	Circa Marine & Industrial Ltd Peter Barnard +64 27 516 1470 peter@circamarine.co.nz
	Oceania Marine +64 9 430 3148 24 hr mobile +64 27 351 7066 brentc@oceaniamarine.co.nz