

About the Boats

We have 2 RHIBs (Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats), Mercia 1 and Mercia 2.

The grey boat has a higher transom (Blunt bit at the back) than the blue boat which means it is less likely to be swamped when there are a lot of divers on board, but other than that the 2 boats are pretty much identical.

They both have a Mariner 2 stroke engine and both have a 90 litre **Unleaded** petrol tank and separate 2 stroke oil tank. The oil should be topped up before any dive trip but if extra oil is required on a trip it is essential that you use '**Quicksilver**' marine 2 stroke oil, the only brand recommended by Mariner.

The burn ratio of petrol to oil is 50:1 (50 litres of petrol to 1 litre of oil) and the cost ratio of oil to petrol is 10:1 (£10/litre oil : £1/litre petrol) so for every £20 of petrol used you will use £4 of oil. This should be collected by the trip organizer and the oil revenue should be paid back to George.

Useful boat terms:

Bow – pointy bit at front.

Stern – flat bit at back.

Transom – board at the back of the boat where the engines attached.

Portside – Left hand side looking from stern to bow.

Starboard side – Right hand side looking from stern to bow.

Sponsons – Inflatable tubes.

Hull – hard shell underneath the inflatable tubes.

Painter – Rope attached to front of boat – not long enough to trail to the engine.

Keel – centerline of the hull.

Knots – unit of measure (1 nautical mile per hour), 1 knot equates to 1.15078 mph.

Basic Rules of the Road

Port – Left (Red)

Starboard – Right (Green)

Passing oncoming vessels – Portside to Portside

Always give way to vessels from the starboard side

Always give way to non-motorised vessels (yachts, rowing boats etc.)

Know your limits

Harbours, marinas and most inland waterways have a speed limit of 3knots, the general rule is when passing other moored vessels leave no wake. Some coastal areas, particularly near 'bathing beaches' (e.g. Durdle Door) the speed limit is 8knots, these areas are usually marked by yellow buoys.

VHF Marine radio protocols

Channel	Purpose
16	International Distress, safety and calling
6	Primary Inter ship
8, 72, 77	Inter ship
12, 14	Port Operations
67	Small Craft safety
M, M2	Marina Special Licence
2, 24, 26, 28	Ship to shore (public correspondence)
6, 67, 73	Search And Rescue Co-ordination

Monitor channel 16 (emergency channel)

Ship to ship communications on pre-agreed channel unless someone else is already using that channel in which case switch to another 'Public correspondence channel'.

Always inform local coastguard of your intentions for the day and ALWAYS acknowledge end of day return with coastguard (Channel 16 initially then move to another channel at request of coastguard)

Towing

Speed limits:

- Single carriageways: 50mph
- Dual carriageways: 60mph
- Motorways: 60mph

Check that your license is valid for towing, and whether you need to pass a practical test.

Example: Portland Coastguard

Going out:

Portland coastguard Portland coastguard Portland coastguard. This is Mercia 1 Mercia 1 Mercia 1 – Over
Mercia 1 this is Portland coastguard please go to channel 26 – Over
<i>Switch to channel 26</i>
Go ahead Mercia 1 – Over
This is Mercia 1. We are a Blue dive rhib sailing from Castletown slip to the Countess of Earne. We are 6 divers and 1 cox our expected return time is 12:45 – Over
Thank you Mercia 1 have a good day and don't forget to report your return - Over and out
Mercia 1 – Over and out.

On Return

Portland Coastguard this is Mercia 1 - Over.
Mercia 1 this is Portland coastguard please go to channel 26 – Over
<i>Switch to channel 26</i>
Go ahead Mercia 1 – Over
This is Mercia 1, we have returned to Castletown. We have finished for today. Closing down on this frequency - Over'.
This is Portland coastguard, roger,

Example: Plymouth Long Room

NB Plymouth rules are different as this is a major shipping area all diving activities should be registered with Plymouth port control call sign 'Long room'. Checking in with Long room should be on Channel 14

<i>Switch to channel 14 and listen to make sure no-one else is talking.</i>
Long Room this is Mercia 1, over.
This is Long Room, over
Long Room this is Mercia 1, we are a blue RHIB about to launch from Cremyll slipway with 5 P.O.B. We will be operating in the Sound for the next 90 minutes and listening out on channel 71, over.'
Long Room will then either acknowledge your message: This is Long Room, roger, out Or will pass any traffic information, such as: This is Long Room, roger, we have one merchant vessel departing Cattedown Wharves at 1030. Keep well clear, over
This is Mercia 1, roger, out

Boat Checklist

Each boat should be equipped with the following:

	1 x fire extinguisher (attached to 'A' frame)
	1 x first aid kit (in dry box attached to 'A' frame)
	Wheel brace, axle stand and jack
	Locking wheel clamp
	Tube inflator foot pump
	Ropes, shotline and buoy
	VHF radio aerial
	GPS and Sonar
	Hosepipe
	Tap connectors
	Flares
	Lighting board (and appropriate number plate)
	Spare wheel
	Jerry cans