



Weather

The Southport Pilotage Area regularly experiences storm events, such as tropical thunderstorms and squalls and east coast low pressure systems, primarily during the warmer months.

The most severe storms in the Gold Coast area occur between the months of September and March. When such storms hit the Gold Coast region they are usually accompanied by strong to gale force winds with heavy rain and sometimes large hail and flash flooding. Severe thunderstorm advices are issued by the [Bureau of Meteorology \(BOM\)](#).

The probability of a cyclone striking the Gold Coast region is at its greatest between the months of November to April. While a cyclone has not crossed the Gold Coast area since Cyclone Zoe in March 1974, the region has experienced severe weather associated with other cyclones crossing the coast to the north, or remaining out to sea. A [Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre](#) is located at the BOM office in Brisbane.

Extreme weather contingency plans

Masters and owners have an obligation to take appropriate precautions for the safety of their ships, passengers and crew. To assist Masters and owners, each marina has their own extreme weather contingency plans. Masters and owners should familiarise themselves with the plans and keep a record of emergency numbers.

In extreme weather conditions, the Regional Director (Gold Coast), or others as delegated, may give directions in relation to ships in the Southport area. All masters, passengers and crew must immediately comply with any directions given by Regional Director (Gold Coast), Emergency Services personnel or marina management.

Personal safety is of prime importance at all times. Flying debris can be lethal and due to storm surges, sea levels may be as much as two to five metres higher than normal tides. If conditions dictate, all non-essential crew and children should leave the marina. Persons remaining on board must realise that conditions may preclude persons electing to remain on board from returning to land. It is very important to advise the marina office of your presence aboard.

It is the Master's/owner's responsibility to ensure that their ship is adequately secured. In general:

- It is unlikely that your ship will need to be evacuated during a severe weather event.
- Larger ships may need to use anchors to hold them off the marina berths
- Mooring lines are to be doubled with secondary lines to alternative cleats.
- Check boat cleats for integrity.
- Ensure that the ship is positioned in a manner that if the primary lines fail, that there is not enough slack on the secondary lines to allow the ship to move on to the main or adjacent finger.
- Have plenty of line to secure your ship and position spare fenders and lines.
- Do not use chain to secure the ship.
- Ensure ropes and other synthetic fibres are in good order and capable of withstanding high loads.
- Ensure that all scuppers are clear and will stay clear.
- Confirm that all bilge pumps are working.
- Secure loose articles below deck and secure all hatches.
- Reduce wind loading to a minimum and stow all loose gear below.
- Shore power and water leads are to be disconnected.
- Monitor the weather forecasts.
- Make sure you comply with all directions issued by the Regional Director (Gold Coast) or delegates.

Dangerous goods

All ships irrespective of type and size, carrying substances, materials or articles defined as marine pollutants in the International Maritime Organization Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code are subject to the provisions of this Code. Dangerous goods are determined to present one or more of the dangers in the classes below, marine pollutants and, if applicable the degree of danger:

1. explosives
2. gases
3. flammable liquids
4. flammable solids, substances liable to spontaneous combustion, substances, when in contact with water, emit flammable gases
5. oxidising substances and organic peroxides
6. toxic and infectious substances
7. radioactive material
8. corrosive substances
9. miscellaneous dangerous substances and articles.

Dangerous goods must not be brought into, or handled in the pilotage area until notification is provided in the approved format (see [Section 8.5 of the Port Procedures](#)) to the MSQ Gold Coast office.

Customs and quarantine

Southport is not a first port of entry for foreign ships. Any foreign ship entering Australia from any overseas destination must first clear customs and quarantine in Brisbane or other nominated Australian port.

[Customs](#) and [quarantine \(AQIS\)](#) can provide further information about procedures and legal requirements for masters of superyachts arriving in and departing from Australia. Australia has strict laws to protect its citizens and natural environment and penalties may be imposed if you breach those laws by illegally importing:

- drugs
- animal or plant material
- firearms, weapons or ammunition
- protected wildlife and products made from them
- some food items
- some medicinal products including performance enhancing drugs.

Qualifications and registration

Boat licences and certificates of competency

In Queensland, a marine licence is required to operate a recreational boat which is powered by a motor greater than 4.5 kW (over 6 HP) and additionally you must have a [personal watercraft \(PWC\) licence](#) to operate a personal watercraft. From January 2013, new recreational boat licence applicants wanting to operate a boat 12 metres or over will need to obtain an [advanced recreational marine driver licence endorsement](#). Holders of a recreational marine driver licence issued prior to 1 January 2013 and those with a master's certificate for a commercial or fishing ship will be able to operate recreational ships of any size without further requirements.

If the ship is a commercial ship or will be used for commercial purposes while in Queensland and you have a current and valid unrestricted Uniform Shipping Laws Code certificate of competency issued by another state or territory, you can use this in Queensland. If your certificate of competency has a restriction, contact the [MSQ Gold Coast office](#) for further advice. International qualification holders should refer to the [Australian Maritime Safety Authority website](#) for further advice.

Equivalent recreational licences

Licences issued by other safety authorities within the Commonwealth of Australia or other entities that are recognised by MSQ include current boating licences issued in other states (excludes junior licences).

From January 2012, particular types of international boating licences will be recognised in Queensland (a list will be published on the [MSQ website](#)).

Unlicensed recreational drivers

Unlicensed drivers may drive a recreational boat provided a licensed driver is onboard supervising and is able to take immediate control of the boat. Unlicensed drivers must not operate boats while towing someone else by a line attached to the ship for example, someone waterskiing or riding a toboggan or tube.

Personal water craft licences

To operate a personal watercraft or jet ski, you must hold a personal watercraft licence. You must hold a current and valid marine licence before being able to get a personal watercraft licence. Short-term, interstate visitors can use their boat licence equivalent if that is all that is required to operate a personal watercraft in their home state.

Registration of ships

In Queensland, all ships with a motor or auxiliary of 3 kW or more (over 4 HP) must be registered when on the water. A recreational boat registered in another state or territory that is on an interstate voyage does not require Queensland registration while in Queensland waters.

Under s60 (2) (l) of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2004](#), a recreational ship from a foreign country is exempt from registration if the ship is in Queensland waters for less than one year and the owner or charterer meets other considerations based on places of residence and business.

Foreign registered superyachts may be granted a temporary recognition as a commercial ship under the [NMSC superyacht policy](#). Contact the [NMSC](#) and the [MSQ Gold Coast office](#) for further information.

Insurance

Legislation requires all ships over 15 metres (for example 15.01 metres) in length to have insurance sufficient to pay for potential pollution clean up, salvage and wreck removal. The insurance policy must meet the following requirements:

- All recreational ships more than 15 metres but less than 35 metres in length must have an insurance policy that provides:
 - A\$250 000 for the clean up costs of the discharge of a pollutant from the ship into coastal waters
 - A\$10 000 000 for the costs of salvage or removal of the ship from coastal waters if the ship is abandoned or wrecked.
- All commercial ships more than 15 metres but less than 35 metres in length must have an insurance policy that provides:
 - A\$500 000 for the clean up costs of the discharge of a pollutant from the ship into coastal waters
 - A\$10 000 000 for the costs of salvage or removal of the ship from coastal waters if the ship is abandoned or wrecked.
- All ships 35 metres or more in length must have a policy that provides A\$10 000 000 for pollution clean up costs, salvage and wreck removal.

Ships visiting Queensland coastal waters are also required to comply with this legislation.

Temporary insurance cover may be necessary if existing insurance coverage does not meet the above requirements.

A current certificate of insurance must be carried onboard and be available for inspection by compliance officers. Penalties apply for non-compliance.

For those ships which cannot reasonably obtain insurance, the ship owner may be able to seek an exemption to the insurance requirement. In such cases the ship owner must apply to [MSQ](#).

Tenders

Tenders to registered recreational ships are exempt from registration provided they are used within two nautical miles of the primary ship. The tender must be marked on the exterior with the word 'tender' and the primary ship registration numbers, at least 75 mm high. If this is not possible, markings should be on the inside of the boat in the largest characters possible. If the tender is used for more than one ship, it may be marked with the owner's name.

Restrictions

Anchoring restrictions

A deep anchorage is available for transient ships east of the South Channel between beacons S6 and S8. A seven day anchoring limit applies to all ships in this area.

All Gold Coast waterways are subject to anchoring and mooring restrictions. Information can be sought from the office of MSQ, Gold Coast.



Berthing and ship facilities

Southport Marina Precinct

Southport has four main marinas where berthing of ships up to 65 metres in length can be achieved:

- Southport Yacht Club – up to 55m
- Mariners Cove – up to 30m
- Marina Oceanus (Marina Mirage) – up to 65m
- Palazzo Versace – up to 32m.

Masters should check proposed marina berth design loadings to ensure they are capable of mooring their ships alongside. The channel is approximately 100 metres wide where swing room is required for berthing. The tidal stream sets strongly through the channel near the marinas and ships should take advantage of slack water for manoeuvring. Depth of water at the marina berths varies, however, 3.5 to 4.0 metres lowest astronomical tide is the constant.



Berth depths

Location	Minimum depth	Date of last survey
Alongside Marina Oceanus (Marina Mirage) (outside berth)	3.5 metres	31 May 2011
Alongside Southport Yacht Club superyacht berths	4.2 metres	31 May 2011
Alongside Southport Yacht Club (north-south berth)	4.0 metres	31 May 2011
Anchorage off Nara Resort	4.0 metres (unofficial)	1 August 2011

Coomera River

The Gold Coast City Marina and Shipyard can accommodate superyachts seeking refits, blasting, paintwork and new builds. Masters should check proposed marina berth design loadings to ensure they are capable of mooring their ships alongside. Direct access to water is available via the 150 tonne travel lift. Berthing of ships up to 50 metres in length can be achieved and the depth of water at the marina is 3.5 metres lowest astronomical tide.



Bridges

Bridges span some waterways on the Gold Coast. In general, the channels normally navigated by superyachts are not affected. There are three bridges in the vicinity of the Southport Broadwater.

Sovereign Islands Bridge

The Sovereign Islands bridge is a multispan vehicular bridge linking the Sovereign Islands to the mainland at Paradise Point. The bridge has a clearance height of 5.0 metres at Highest Astronomical Tide. The bridge is marked by a fixed red light on the side approaches to the bridge.



Ephraim Island bridge

The Ephraim Island bridge is a multispan vehicular bridge linking Ephraim Island to the mainland at Paradise Point. The bridge has a clearance height of 5.9 metres at Highest Astronomical Tide. The bridge is marked by a fixed blue light on the side approaches to the bridge.



Gold Coast Bridge

The Gold Coast Bridge is a floodlit multispan vehicular bridge that crosses the Nerang River between Southport and Main Beach to the south of the Southport Yacht Club Marina. The bridge has a clearance height of 4.5 metres at Highest Astronomical Tide. The bridge is marked by a fixed blue light on the side approaches to the bridge.



Speed limits

A person must not operate a ship at a speed at which the ship's wash can cause a marine incident or damage to the shoreline.

The Coomera River has a speed limit of six knots for ships eight metres and over in length and the South Channel has a speed limit of six knots commencing immediately north of beacons S11 and S12, south to the Gold Coast Bridge.

The Southport Broadwater and North Channels have a 40 knot limit; however, rules in regard to a ship's wash limit larger ships to manoeuvring speeds only. As a general principle, ships over 20 metres LOA should travel at speeds up to 10 knots within smooth water limits where the speed limit is set at 40 knots.