

The Mooring Line

Brought to you by the Maritime Services Team at Waikato Regional Council

Welcome

Kia ora, and welcome to the sixteenth edition of *The Mooring Line*.

The Mooring Line newsletter is a helpful way to keep up to date with the region's news, local information, and tips to keep our beautiful harbours and inland waters safe.

We've had some new biosecurity threats in our waterways. Keep an eye out for exotic *Caulerpa* seaweed and gold clam species on your travels and remember the check, clean, dry rules when moving between waterways.

Check out the marine biosecurity info provided for more on why these are a problem, how to clean your gear properly and how you can play your part in preventing the spread.

With winter now upon us, rough weather and cold winds are also on their way. Make sure you're prepared for the winter conditions before they set in, and stay safe out there!

The Maritime Services team

We love where we live

We love where we live in the mighty Waikato and we want to make it even better.

Our region's awesome coastal and inland waterways play a big part in that. That's why it's so important to make sure they're safe and easy to navigate, so you and your whānau can

keep enjoying the activities you love out on the water. It's not just Maritime Services that works to improve the areas that boaties enjoy.

Check out waikatoregion.govt.nz/coast to see what other coastal work is being done by the regional council.

Mooring Inspections

Mooring inspections in the Waikato region are required every three years to keep our harbours and your vessels safe. It's the licence or consent holder's responsibility to arrange the inspection with an approved mooring service provider. Your local service provider will check all parts of the mooring during the inspection and look out for components that show considerable wear. If required, they will generally give you a call and recommend replacements to improve the safety of your mooring and maintain compliance with council requirements.

Once the inspection has been completed, the mooring owner must provide Waikato Regional Council with the inspection report confirming their mooring meets the consent conditions. We have many mooring owners assume this is the responsibility of the service provider, which can result in delays.

Waikato Regional Council has no affiliation with any of the service providers. You pay the costs associated with the inspection, and any repairs and maintenance of the mooring, directly to the service provider, not Waikato Regional Council (please refer to your consent conditions for details of your full responsibilities as a mooring owner).

Is yours due?

Please visit our website for a list of providers in our region at: waikatoregion.govt.nz/mooring-service-providers.

Failure to have your mooring inspected by the due date listed on your previous inspection report means you'll be non-compliant with the conditions of your resource consent. This may result in enforcement action.

Mooring Essentials

As a mooring owner, there are several things you need to keep up with to ensure your boat remains safe, legal and, in some cases, covered by insurance.

It's your responsibility to inspect and maintain your mooring on a regular basis. This is especially important if you know severe weather conditions are coming, as neglected lines can and do let go, with expensive results.

Most commonly, boats break free due to the head-rope wearing through. A chafe guard can make a significant difference to help prevent this.

Key responsibilities

Your responsibilities as a mooring owner include:

- ensuring your consent conditions are complied with
- paying the annual administrative charges
- ensuring the mooring structure is sound and appropriate for the vessel size
- having the structure inspected every three years by an approved inspector:
 - a signed report from the inspector confirming the mooring's structural soundness and that it is in compliance with the resource consent conditions *must be provided, by the mooring holder*, to Waikato Regional Council
- checking the mooring regularly between inspections and addressing any issues
- paying the costs associated with repair and maintenance to the approved service provider.



Hardware from a mooring where the owner couldn't show an up-to-date inspection certificate, meaning this hardware could be up to 6 years old. If it had failed, they most likely wouldn't have been covered by their insurance, creating an expensive problem for the owner.

Dos and Don'ts

These rules are designed to keep you and other users of our region's waterways safe, and to ensure you can be contacted in an emergency.

Do

- Ensure your vessel is clearly named and contact details can be found on board.
- Inform Waikato Regional Council of any change of address or change of vessel information.
- Check your vessel is securely fixed to the mooring itself and not the buoy rope.
- Make sure your mooring buoy is clearly marked with the correct mooring number and vessel name.
- Contact a maritime officer if your vessel is damaged while occupying a mooring.
- Contact a maritime officer if your mooring is occupied by a vessel that isn't authorised to be there.

Don't

- Don't sell your mooring without going through the Transfer of Mooring Consent process with Waikato Regional Council
- Don't relocate or move your mooring without first obtaining an approved change to your mooring consent and obtaining written approval from the harbourmaster.
- Don't moor a vessel with a greater overall length (LOA) than that specified in the mooring consent. A mooring may be structurally rated to 12 metres but, if the consent is for 8 metres, then 8 metres LOA is the maximum permitted.
- Don't remove any unauthorised vessel from your mooring without first contacting and getting approval from the harbourmaster.
- Don't discharge waste from your vessel while on a mooring, within 500 metres from land (mean high water springs), in water less than 5 metres deep, or within 500 metres from a marine farm or mātaimai (traditional food collection) reserve..



Mooring transfers and changes

Transfers

Mooring transfers can be used for a change of name if the new occupant continues to meet the consented conditions – if you sell a mooring and the buyer has a vessel the same size or smaller, for example, you can request a transfer without any issues.

New owners need to confirm they have sighted the existing consent certificate before they apply for a transfer, to make sure they know the limits of the resource consent.

It's also important to bear in mind that consented length is the maximum length of vessel that can be placed on that mooring regardless of the mooring construction and design. Always check your consent conditions before any sale.

If the buyer has a larger vessel than the mooring is consented for, they cannot lawfully put that vessel on that mooring. They will need to contact a maritime officer to ascertain whether there is space in the mooring field for increased swing room, or depth for an increased draft. Many of the Waikato mooring fields are at capacity and increases are unavailable, so we would recommend making these enquiries prior to purchase to avoid unnecessary cost and disappointment.

Please note that the regional harbourmaster must approve a multihull (catamaran/trimaran) before it's located on a new mooring as these require a greater swing circle and most zoned mooring areas have limited capacity for these vessels.

Changes

A change of consent is for a change of location or a change to the LOA of the moored vessel to what is currently consented. While the consent is based on length overall, if you have an unusually large displacement vessel for the length, contact your mooring service provider to ensure the mooring is suitably rated.

Zoned Mooring Areas (ZMAs) are at capacity across the region, so finding a new location for moorings is extremely difficult at the moment and, in some areas, impossible. So, in a sale situation where the new owner's vessel is outside the bounds of the current resource consent for that mooring, we recommend working with the buyer to complete the change of consent before the sale is finalised. This will help avoid a situation where they're left with a mooring they can't use for their vessel. Changes of consent will also require an on-water assessment and harbourmaster comments, whereas transfers don't.

Buying or selling

We offer a free listing service to rent or sell your mooring on our moorings page: [waikatoregion.govt.nz/moorings-4-sale-or-rent](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/moorings-4-sale-or-rent).

If you're buying or selling your mooring, you'll need to ensure your mooring consent is transferred to the new owner.

A resource consent is a legal document. This means written authorisation from all relevant parties is required before it can be transferred. A transfer of mooring consent form must be completed and signed by both the current and new consent holder.

If you're buying a mooring, we recommend you get in touch with us to see whether or not it may be suitable for the vessel you plan to moor there.

You can apply to change the conditions of a mooring resource consent if needed – for example, if you intend to moor a larger vessel. However, this needs to be assessed by the regional harbourmaster before you submit a change to mooring consent form.

The best way to get in touch with us to request the assessment is to contact our moorings officer. Once we have provided you with a copy of the mooring assessment report, you can submit your transfer form.

[✉ moorings@waikatoregion.govt.nz](mailto:moorings@waikatoregion.govt.nz)

[📞 0800 800 401](tel:0800800401) (ask for the moorings officer)

[🌐 waikatoregion.govt.nz/contact-us](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/contact-us)

Weathering the storms

Over the last year, we've seen several severe weather events across the country, with hundreds of thousands of dollars of damage caused to vessels, so being prepared for the next storm is vital.

Here are our top tips to get your boat storm ready.

- **Remove windage** – taking down anything that the wind can grab is crucial because it reduces the loads on mooring lines and the risk of dragging the mooring.
- **Take valuable equipment home** – that way, if the worst should happen, you haven't lost everything.
- **Close and lock all hatches, portholes and windows** – rain will almost always find a way in during a gale, through weak seals and cracked hatches. Check them annually and replace them with fresh rubber before a storm hits.
- **Protect against chafe** – left unchecked and unprotected, your lines will need replacing in no time, so always try to protect them where they pass through fairleads or run over a toe rail.
- **Fasten your lines to sturdy points** – any fastening point is only as strong as the surface it's mounted to. Ensure cleats in a fibreglass or wooden vessel have backing plates. Without them, the cleat can easily be ripped out in rough weather. Check for rot or corrosion in these areas at the same time, as this will further weaken the cleat's holding ability.

- **Secure lines high on pontoon pilings** – if your vessel is on a pole mooring and a storm surge is expected, or a gale blows in with a spring flood, secure lines as far up the pontoon pilings as you can, the higher the better.
- **Enlist a spotter** – if you live a long way from your mooring, think about finding someone local who can keep an eye on it and act on your behalf. Remote monitoring may also be an option if you invest in something such as 4G security camera. But keep in mind these aren't as reliable as physically being able to check on the vessel.

Unwilling as you may be to leave your beloved vessel as the storm clouds roll in, don't be tempted to stay aboard. Boats and kit are replaceable, lives are not. Prepare as best you can, then lock it up and leave.



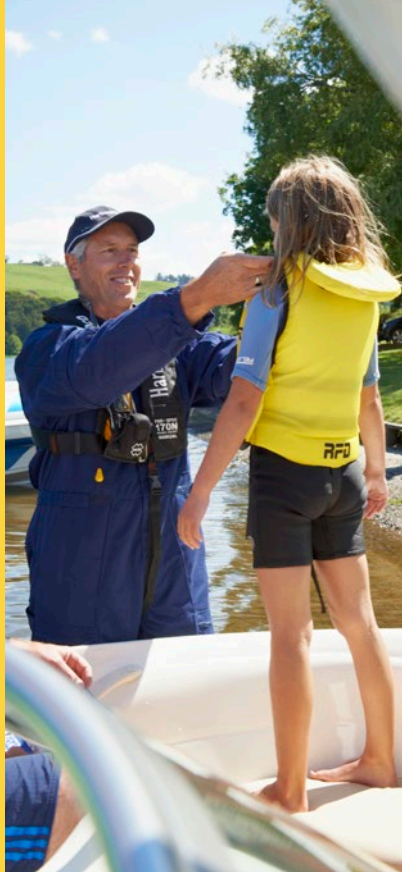
Legal considerations

Often forgotten about until it's needed, compliance with insurance requirements is important to have sorted beforehand.

Boats break their moorings in storms – it happens. You'll want to ensure that you've done everything right up until that point to make sure the fault doesn't rest on your shoulders or you may find yourself without insurance coverage.

Every year, we salvage vessels that have broken their moorings and collided with other boats, sunk, or been washed against the rocks. Time spent identifying vessels and tracking owners down all adds significantly to the cost of salvage. If insurance doesn't accept your claim, you may be needlessly adding to the salvage cost due to missing information, so keep your contact

details current and make sure your vessel name is clearly visible with no characters less than 90mm in height. Vessels will be randomly checked by Maritime Officers throughout the year and those without names will be subject to enforcement. Names must be kept current with your mooring, so notify our moorings officer of the new name when it's been added.



Make it a safe trip

Wear your lifejacket

If you're not wearing one, you'll find it challenging to stay afloat after 10 minutes and other important survival activities will become difficult, especially in cold weather. Owners of moored vessels need to wear their lifejackets even if they're just taking the tender to-and-from shore. This is crucial if you're alone. You may think you can swim to shore but fighting even a 2-knot current will quickly tire you out. You can rapidly be separated from your tender or main vessel so remaining afloat until help can reach you is essential. Remember that stand-up paddleboards (SUPS), kayaks and canoes are classed as a vessel under our navigation safety bylaw and a lifejacket must be worn.

Be prepared and let others know where you're going

New Zealand's weather is changeable at the best of times, so it's important to let friends and family know where you're going and when you will return. You can also use your VHF radio to file a trip report with your local coastguard. Be sure to leave enough time for your return trip to avoid a bar crossing at low-tide or nightfall.

Take two waterproof ways to call for help

Ensuring you have two forms of working waterproof communications, like a VHF radio, PLB (personal locator beacon) or EPIRB (emergency position indicating radio beacon) on board will increase your chances of survival in the event of an emergency. Before you head out, make sure everything's in working order and stored in waterproof containers, or bags if they're not waterproof.

Check the marine weather forecast

Check the forecast before departing and regularly during your trip, as things can change quickly and unexpectedly. If in doubt, don't go out! Keep an eye on the time and tides too, you don't want to be caught out in waning light with a bar crossing ahead.

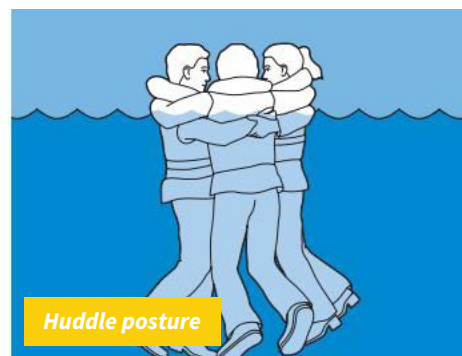
Avoid alcohol

It will impair your judgement and reaction times so it's best to avoid it if you're in charge as you need to be making the best decisions possible in situations like bar crossings or when offshore.

Dress for the weather

A sunny day can still get cold! With winter upon us, the survival time in water will be even lower. Pack an extra set of clothes in case you get wet and ensure everyone has a jumper in case the wind picks up or the weather turns. Numb hands make skippering significantly harder, so it's a good idea to keep some gloves somewhere. Choose clothing that's water-resistant, lightweight and dries quickly. Remember, dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature. If you end up in the water, don't get undressed if you can remain afloat as you are. A person wearing warm clothing will lose less heat than a person wearing only swimming clothes.

Postures for conserving your heat and energy



Rule reminders

- Lifejackets must be worn by all occupants on any vessel under 6 metres long at all times when underway.
- All vessels must have enough life jackets for every person on board and these must be correctly sized for the people wearing them. They must be easily accessible in a location known to all on board.
- No vessel shall exceed 5 knots in coastal/harbour areas:
 - within 200m of shore
 - within 200m of a structure or vessel displaying a dive flag
 - within 50m of another vessel or person in the water
 - within a mooring zone or designated 5 knot zone.
- No vessel shall exceed 5 knots on inland waters:
 - within 30m of shore
 - within 200m of any vessel displaying a dive flag
 - within 50m of another vessel, structure or person in the water
 - within any designated 5 knot zone.
- Nobody should be towed behind the vessel in a 5-knot zone.

More information on cold water survival is available at maritimenz.govt.nz.

Marine biosecurity

Caulerpa exotic seaweeds at Great Barrier and Great Mercury islands.

Two non-native *Caulerpa* seaweed species have been found in waters at Great Barrier Island (Aotea) and Great Mercury Island (Ahuahu). This seaweed can spread rapidly and could affect native species.

Biosecurity New Zealand is working closely with Aotea and Ahuahu mana whenua and the local communities, along with Auckland Council, Waikato Regional Council and the Department of Conservation to collectively decide the most appropriate course of action.

To minimise the spread of this seaweed, Biosecurity New Zealand has placed a controlled area notice on the three affected harbours at Great Barrier Island (Blind Bay, Tryphena Harbour and Whangaparapara) and from Ahikopua to Maunganui points at Ahuahu Great Mercury Island. Mana whenua have imposed a rāhui on the same areas.

If you are visiting Ahuahu Great Mercury Island, please avoid anchoring within the controlled area. If anchoring in the area can't be avoided, please inspect the anchor and chain when lifting it and remove any attached seaweed before relocating. Either dispose of any seaweed removed on shore or drop it back in the anchoring area.

To find out more about what you can and can't do within the controlled areas, visit biosecurity.govt.nz/caulerpa.

How you can help

Keep an eye out for exotic *Caulerpa* species. If you believe you have seen them in areas outside of Blind Bay, Tryphena Harbour and Whangaparapara at Great Barrier Island or along the coastline of Great Mercury Island between Ahikopua and Maunganui Points:

- note the location
- take a photo if possible
- contact Biosecurity New Zealand on 0800 80 99 66 or complete the online reporting form at report.mpi.govt.nz.

What it looks like:

Both exotic *Caulerpa* species: *Caulerpa parvifolia* and *Caulerpa brachypus* look identical and have very similar fronds.

They have been found growing at depths up to 30 metres on both hard surfaces and in sandy areas.



After stormy weather, *Caulerpa* can wash up on the beach, as has been seen on Aotea Great Barrier Island. To avoid any risk of spreading it, do not remove these non-native *Caulerpa* species from the beach.

Native seaweeds that look similar

Caulerpa parvifolia and *Caulerpa brachypus* are identical in appearance. There are also two native *caulerpa* species that look similar to *Caulerpa parvifolia*, but they have obvious differences.

Caulerpa articulata has round, bead-like lumps on the stem where the leaf blades emerge. It is found around the North Island, including offshore islands.

Caulerpa brownii (also known as sea rimu) has more three-dimensional fronds than *Caulerpa brachypus*, where the leaf blades are flat. It is also not typically found in northern parts of the North Island.



Caulerpa parvifolia



Caulerpa articulata



Caulerpa brownii



Accidents and incidents

If you want to report an incident, or see unsafe behaviour on the water, we encourage you to report it to our team. Call us on 0800 800 402 and ask for the Harbourmaster's Office or report it online at waikatoregion.govt.nz/contact-us and a member of our team will be in touch with you.

Accidents must also be reported to Maritime NZ as soon as possible at services.maritimenz.govt.nz/incident.



Contact the Moorings officer for all mooring related enquiries: moorings@waikatoregion.govt.nz

For more information, call Waikato Regional Council on 0800 800 401 or visit waikatoregion.govt.nz.

 Follow us on Facebook [@WRCHarbourmaster](https://www.facebook.com/WRCHarbourmaster) for more tips and to stay up to date with maritime safety in the Waikato.