



Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

Marine Safety Plan (MSP) 2026-2028



Version Control

Date	Version	Update Reason	Author	Authorised (Duty Holder)
April 2026	1	New plan period		

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Section 1: Introduction

Northern Ireland Fisheries Harbour Authority operating the Authority Harbours of:

- Ardglass;
- Kilkeel; and
- Portavogie.

Is the Duty Holder under the Ports and Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC). This also makes the Authority the Local Lighthouse Authority (LLA) with respect to aids to navigation by virtue of Section 193 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995.

The Ports & Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC) is published by the Department for Transport and sets out a national standard for port marine safety. The Code applies to all Harbour Authorities and other organisations such as marine facilities, berth owners and terminals operators in the UK.

As part of its compliance with the requirements of the PMSC, The Authority publishes this safety plan for marine operations which covers a period of three years. This 'Marine Safety Plan' (MSP) is one component of a comprehensive (strategic level) Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) and serves to support the continuing improvement of marine safety performance.

This Marine Safety Plan commits the Authority Duty Holder to undertaking the proper management and regulation of marine operations within the scope of its powers and authority, and in line with its stated marine policies.

Section 2: Previous Marine Safety Plan Report

The Authority has successfully implemented the objectives outlined in its 2021–2024 Port Marine Safety Plan, in line with the requirements of 'the Code'. Over the three-year period.

The Authority has maintained a high standard of safety and operational effectiveness across all marine functions within its jurisdiction, ensuring the safe and efficient movement of both commercial fishing vessels and leisure vessels.

A robust Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) has been sustained, with regular internal and external audits completed, and all incidents investigated and reported in compliance with statutory obligations.

Risk assessments have been systematically reviewed and updated, and 100% of incidents and near misses have been logged.

The Authority has further demonstrated its commitment to continual improvement through staff training, equipment upgrades (including shore power and slipway equipment upgrades), and proactive monitoring of performance indicators.

These efforts have ensured that marine operations remained compliant, risk-aware, and environmentally responsible, while safeguarding both infrastructure and all port users. Overall, The Authority has met or exceeded its marine safety objectives and remains fully compliant with 'the Code', as it applies to the Authority, with all risks effectively managed to levels that are tolerable and As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP).

Section 3: Marine Policies

The Authority has several policies in support of the management and regulation of marine operations, including the regulation of vessels and near miss reporting. These strategic policies are embedded in the MSMS and are approved by the Duty Holder under 'the Code'.

These are:

- Navigational Safety Policy
- Marine Training Policy
- Conservancy and Environmental Policy
- Enforcement and Prosecution Policy

Section 4: The Management of Marine Operations

A comprehensive overview of the Authority's, management and documentation is maintained in the MSMS which supports the delivery of this Plan. External audits of the MSMS are undertaken on a three yearly basis by the Designated Person. The Authority is committed to ensuring a positive safety culture and to enhancing its risk-based MSMS.

Risk assessments identify marine hazards and identify control measures to mitigate those risks within the Authority's risk tolerability thresholds and aligned with the principle of ALARP (As Low As Reasonably Practicable). The Authority has a responsibility to provide an appropriate level of vessel traffic management and, as far as its powers allow, to facilitate the safe transit of vessels using Authority Harbours.

Section 5: Plan Period

This plan covers a three-year period of 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2029.

Section 6: Management Objectives

The Authority has split its objectives into two sets, the first addresses 'Standing Objectives' the second set addresses 'Period Objectives'.

6.1 Standing Objectives

The objectives support the ongoing improvement plan for Authority harbours. This plan is owned by the Authorities Chief Executive, on behalf of the Duty Holder, and aims to address high level improvement targets which will benefit the harbours and fulfils the requirement of the PMSC for the Duty Holder to maintain a 'Marine Safety Plan'.

Number	Provision / Activity	Objective	Measure
1	Duty Holder	Duty Holders to have received training on their role and responsibility under the Code in the last three years.	100% of Duty Holders trained
		Duty Holders to have undertaken an operational tour of Authority Harbours in the last three years	100% of Duty Holders undertaken an awareness tour
2	Designated Person	Report by the Designated Person to the Duty Holder at least once per year.	Annual
3	Legislation	Review legal duties and powers at least once every three years.	Three years
4	Duties and Powers	MAIB Reportable Incidents: make all reports to the MAIB within 24 hrs, with investigation followed up.	24 hrs initial report, investigation sent at incident close
5	Risk Assessment	All Marine Risk Assessments to be in-date.	100% in-date
6	MSMS	Review of all Authority Harbour Policies on a three-yearly basis.	Three years
		The Marine Safety Management System will be reviewed annually (or following any significant industry changes).	Annual
7	Review and Audit	External Audit completed three yearly.	Three years
8	Competence	Ensure staff with marine safety responsibilities are trained to undertake their duties.	100% of mandatory training completed
9	Plan	Publish a three yearly 'Marine Safety Plan' (this plan).	Published and in-date
		Publish an assessment of the organisation's performance against the last plan.	Three years
10	Conservancy	Aids to Navigation: Three-year performance meets or exceed IALA performance threshold.	Cat 2 = 99.0% Cat 3 = 97.0%

6.2 Period Objectives

Specific improvements are identified within the plan period and laid out in the table below

Number	Provision / Activity	Objective	Measure
a	Annual external audit	To obtain clear audit	Clear audit
b			
c			
d			
e			