

Falmouth Harbour Seasonal Moorings

Frequently Asked Questions

Understanding Mooring Risk

Is a harbour mooring completely risk-free?

No. Moorings operate within a natural marine environment where wind, tide, waves and vessel movement all interact. While moorings are designed, installed and maintained to recognised industry best practice, no mooring system anywhere can guarantee absolute protection from failure.

How does Falmouth Harbour manage this risk?

Moorings are specified, installed and maintained in line with recognised industry best practice methods and the principle of ALARP (As Low As Reasonably Practicable). This means risks are reduced as far as reasonably possible through appropriate design, inspection and maintenance.

How reliable are the harbour moorings?

Over the past three years we have recorded only one mooring component failure across the 600 Harbour moorings we maintain, outside of extreme weather conditions. This incident occurred in strong and adverse weather conditions and related to the failure of a rope strop, where investigations indicated potential damage to the strop from contact with a vessel's propeller.

What role does the Port Marine Safety Code play?

Falmouth Harbour operates as a Statutory Harbour Authority and applies the principles of the Port Marine Safety Code to manage navigational safety and risks within the harbour environment. Insurers are demanding improved asset management, and as the Statutory Harbour Authority, mooring safety and management is critical as we have key safety responsibilities under the Port Marine Safety Code for all Harbour users.

How do Falmouth Harbour define failure?

"Failure" is interpreted broadly and may include vessels dragging, mooring lines or strops parting, fittings failing, vessel-related equipment failure, or any other loss of holding that results in a vessel moving from its intended position.

Why do I still need insurance?

Vessels remain the responsibility of their owners, so appropriate insurance is essential to manage risks associated with severe weather, collisions or equipment failure. Within a marine environment no mooring system can completely eliminate risk, particularly during significant weather events and Vessel owner insurance forms an essential part of the harbour's overall risk management. For this reason, harbour mooring licence conditions require vessel owners to maintain appropriate insurance. This reflects standard practice across the UK marine industry.

Vessel Movement on Swinging Moorings?

Can vessels sometimes touch when on swinging moorings?

Occasional contact between vessels on swinging moorings can occur due to wind and tidal changes; this is normal in tidal harbours. Falmouth Harbour plans mooring positions carefully but cannot always guarantee 360-degree clearance. Vessel owners should use proper fenders and secure their boats. Report any contact or concerns about spacing to the Harbour team for review.

What can I do to reduce the effects of wind against tide on my vessel?

High-sided yachts and vessels with shallow keels interacting with deep keeled vessels, are especially affected by wind-over-tide conditions, which can alter their alignment or increase movement at mooring. Usually, tide is the dominant factor for most vessels, it helps to have any rudders or control surfaces centred.

Why do boats sometimes sit differently on their moorings?

Vessels may lie differently on swinging moorings depending on their design, keel type, windage and how they interact with wind and tide. For example, vessels with high topsides, shallow keels or large cockpit enclosures may respond more strongly to wind than to tidal flow.

Why can't moorings always be spaced further apart?

Swinging moorings must be arranged carefully within the available harbour space while maintaining safe navigation channels, fairways and access for other harbour users. The layout also needs to consider water depth, seabed conditions, vessel sizes and swinging circles. While Falmouth Harbour works to provide appropriate spacing between vessels, it is not always possible to provide large clear areas between every vessel in a busy tidal harbour and continue to supply to the demand.

General

What are the benefits of a Falmouth Harbour mooring?

Customers benefit from a professionally managed mooring system supported by harbour teams operating daily on the water. A duty Harbour Master and Leisure Manager are available 24/7 to respond to emergencies. Additional benefits may include:

1. Discounted fuel from the harbour fuel barge
2. Slipway launch and recovery discounts
3. Free pump-out facilities
4. Visitor marina discounts
5. Falmouth Havencard discounts

Mooring Allocation

How are moorings allocated?

Moorings are allocated once a completed application has been received and the seasonal licence fee paid. The vessel length overall, keel type, superstructure, and draft are key considerations that inform vessel placement. All endeavours are made to place vessels around other vessels with which they will have similar characteristics.

Can I apply for a mooring without owning a boat?

Yes, however if you cannot accept a mooring offer at the start of the season the mooring will be reallocated to another customer on the waiting list and you may lose your waiting list spot.

Why do you ask for vessel measurements?

Accurate measurements allow us to ensure the correct mooring location, swinging circle and strop configuration are provided for your vessel.

Can I change my boat during the season?

Possibly. Any change of vessel must be approved by the harbour to ensure the mooring remains suitable.

Mooring Strops

Who provides the mooring strop?

Falmouth Harbour provides chain and rope strops as the standard arrangement as part of the seasonal mooring licence.

Why were private strops phased out?

Standardising strops improves safety, allows better control of swinging circles and enables a more consistent maintenance programme across the mooring estate.

Why do FH provide chain strops?

Falmouth Harbour now offers chain strops as standard for all moorings, improving management, safety, and efficiency. This change helps control vessel swing, reduces collisions and costs, and enables a more streamlined maintenance schedule for our 600 moorings.

Do I own the strop?

No. Strops remain Harbour assets and are hired as part of the mooring licence.

Who is making the mooring strops?

Chain strops will continue to be made in-house by Falmouth Harbour. Rope strops are made by local riggers. In 2025, we conducted a competitive review of our providers to ensure that the best value was achieved for our customers and in 2026 into 2027 we are moving towards a new local supplier AllSpars.

What if my boat requires a different strop arrangement?

Alternative arrangements such as rope or bridle are available for vessels with specific requirements.

Mooring Maintenance

How often are moorings checked?

Harbour teams operate on the water daily and carry out regular inspections of moorings and vessels. Moorings are fully lifted and maintained annually – winter moorings are fully maintained at the start of the winter season.

What maintenance is carried out?

Strops are removed annually at the end of the season, inspected, cleaned and stored during winter before being reinstalled for the following season.

What happens after storms?

Harbour teams often carry out additional inspections following severe weather.

Why is it important to stop breakaway yachts?

A vessel breaking free from its mooring can damage nearby yachts, cause financial loss to owners and the Harbour, trigger costly environmental clean-up efforts, and leads to increased insurance costs for mooring providers and vessel owners throughout the area. Recovery is difficult and poses risks to personnel.

Vessel Owner Responsibilities

Who is responsible for securing my vessel?

The vessel owner must ensure the vessel is correctly secured using appropriate warps, fenders and configuration suitable for the vessel and expected weather conditions.

Do I need insurance?

Yes. Vessel owners must maintain appropriate insurance cover. This should be at minimum third party cover with specific provision for a swinging mooring.

What condition should my deck fittings be in?

Cleats, fairleads and attachment points must be suitable for the loads experienced on a mooring.

What should I do if I am concerned about my vessel during a storm?

Owners should monitor weather forecasts and check their vessels before strong winds or heavy weather. If severe weather is expected, consider extra steps like inspecting mooring lines, adding fenders, setting a riding sail, or moving the vessel ashore. Discuss storm plans with your insurer to clarify policy requirements.

Weather and Winter Conditions

Can I leave my boat on the mooring during winter?

Many vessels remain on harbour moorings year-round. However, owners should consider whether it is appropriate during severe winter storms.

What should I do during severe weather?

Owners should monitor forecasts and assess whether their vessel should remain on the mooring, be relocated or removed ashore.

What is the safest place for a vessel during extreme storms?

In many cases the safest option during extreme conditions is for vessels to be removed ashore.

Payments and Licensing

When are mooring fees due?

Seasonal licence fees must be paid before a mooring is allocated. This are usually invoiced in Jan/Feb.

What happens if my mooring fee is not paid?

Unpaid moorings may be reallocated to other customers. If a vessel is on an unpaid facility Falmouth Harbour may detain the vessel until its account is cleared.

When will mooring numbers be allocated?

Mooring numbers will only be allocated upon full application form being received and licence fee being paid.

Can I sublet my mooring?

Moorings are licensed to a specific vessel and licence holder. If you are intending to not use your mooring for an extended period, then Falmouth Harbour can manage a sublet for you. This ensures that the licensee is not held responsible for any issues that may arise due to a different vessel being on the mooring and that Falmouth Harbour has full and correct contact details for any vessel on the mooring. The licensee receives 40% of any revenue made from the mooring in their absence in credit.

Are refunds available?

Mooring fees are normally non-refundable once the season has started.

Operational Matters

Can the Harbour move my mooring?

Yes. The Harbour may relocate vessels where operational or safety considerations require it.

What happens if my pick-up buoy is missing or damaged?

If your pick-up buoy is missing or damaged please report it to the harbour office for inspection and replacement.

What happens if a vessel breaks free?

If a vessel breaks free, the harbour team will respond where possible However, vessel owners remain responsible for recovery and insurance arrangements.

What is the Port Marine Safety Code?

As the Competent Harbour Authority for Falmouth Harbour, the Ports and Marine Facilities Safety Code published by the Department for Transport (“the Code”) applies to all statutory harbour authorities and other marine facilities, berths and terminals in the UK. “The Code is designed to reduce the risk of incidents occurring within the harbour marine environment and to clarify the responsibilities of organisations within its scope.” [Port Marine Safety Code](#)

What contributes to the cost of a Falmouth Harbour mooring?

Falmouth Harbour moorings remain some of the best value full-tide moorings in the area. Factors that contribute to your licence fee include annual inspection and maintenance using quality components on a strict replacement schedule and harbour dues which are often a further cost across other authorities along the south coast.