

COOS BAY BAR HAZARDS

CROSSING THE BAR

The bar is the area where the deep waters of the Pacific Ocean meet with the shallower waters near the mouth of the river.

Most accidents and deaths that occur on coastal bars are from capsizing.

Coastal bars may be closed to recreational boats when conditions on the bar are hazardous. Failure to comply with the closure may result in voyage termination, and civil and/or criminal penalties. The regulations are enforced by Coast Guard boarding teams.

Improper loading and/or overloading are major causes of capsizing. Improper/overloaded boats have less stability and less freeboard, which can allow seas to break into the vessel, causing the boat to become even less stable.

Boats are more likely to capsize when crossing the bar from the ocean because the seas are on the stern and the boater may have less control over the vessel.

Boaters must make sure the bar is safe prior to crossing. Check with other boaters or the Coast Guard to find out the condition of the bar.

If you are caught on a rough bar running in...

- Make sure everybody aboard is wearing a personal flotation device.
- Keep the boat square before the seas.
- Keep the boat on the back of the swell. Ride the swell and stay clear of the following wave.

Avoid sudden weight shifts from passengers or gear moving around in the boat. If possible, have passengers lie down as near the centerline of the boat as possible.

Do not allow the waves to catch your boat on the side (beam). This condition is called broaching, and can easily result in capsizing.

TIDES

Tides are the vertical rise and fall of the water and tidal current is the horizontal flow of the water. There are roughly four tides each day in the Pacific Northwest. Tidal movement toward the shore or upstream is the flood current. Movement away from the shore or downstream is the ebb current. The period between the two is known as slack water. Tidal currents may gain tremendous velocity, particularly when the ebb current is augmented by river runoff.

- It is extremely dangerous to get caught on the bar during strong ebb current. Even on days that are relatively calm, fast moving ebb can create bar conditions that are too rough for small craft.

BAR AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

Listen to the local broadcast on 1610 AM

- Always know the stage of the tide!
- Avoid getting caught on the bar during an ebb tide.

It is normally best to cross the bar during slack water or on a flood tide, when the seas are normally calmest.

REGULATED NAVIGATION AREAS

The Coast Guard has established a Regulated Navigation Area. If the yellow lights on this sign are flashing, indicating a restriction has been placed on recreational and uninspected passenger vessels crossing the bar. In accordance with 33 CFR 165.1325, the U.S. Coast Guard has the authority to restrict all recreational and uninspected passenger vessels from crossing the bar when hazardous conditions exist. Failing to comply with posted bar restrictions may result in a maximum civil penalty of \$25,000.00

WARNING SIGN LOCATIONS

White diamond shape signs with an orange border indicating "Rough Bar" and amber flashing lights are located 8 feet above the water on the jetty just north of the Charleston Boat Basin. One sign faces south toward the Charleston Boat Basin and the other north toward South Slough Red Lighted Marker #2. Additional warning signs are located at the boat ramps areas in Charleston and Empire. These signs are blue in color and have amber flashing lights that read: Warning When Flashing, Bar Restrictions in Effect, Tune to 1610 AM. When the amber lights are flashing on any of the warning signs hazardous conditions are present and a bar restriction is in place and mariners should tune in to listen to the restriction information.

BAR CONDITIONS AND OBSERVATION REPORTS

Observed weather and bar conditions are updated every four hours or more frequently if there is a significant change in weather. Marine Information Broadcasts on Channel 16 VHF FM are conducted by the Coast Guard when hazardous bar conditions and restrictions are put into place or are lifted. Mariners are strongly encouraged to monitor channel 16 VHF/FM for all notices and weather updates. The AM radio broadcast is audible within a 6-mile radius from the Coast Guard Station in Charleston. It provides a continual broadcast on radio station 1610 AM containing bar conditions, bar restrictions, and local weather. As a public service Radio Station KBBR (1330 kHz) broadcasts bar conditions once each hour during the summer months. Current weather advisories are also posted at the Coast Guard Station in Charleston.

You can also access current bar conditions and restriction on your smart phone or hand held device by going to, <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/marine/BarObs.php>.



EMERGENCIES

VHF-FM Radio: Channel 16

If in distress (threatened by grave and imminent danger):

1. Make sure radio is on
2. Select Channel 16
3. Press/Hold the transmit button
4. Speaks slowly, and clearly say: MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY
5. Give the following information:
 - Vessel Name and/or Description
 - Nature of Emergency
 - Position and/or Location
 - Number of People Aboard
6. Release the Transmit Button
7. Wait for 10 seconds – If no response, repeat "Mayday" call. If not in immediate danger, switch to CH 22 and follow the same steps as above, except do not use the word "MAYDAY."

Make Sure Everyone is Wearing a Life Jacket!

Phone 911. Tell the operator that you have a marine emergency. Be ready to provide the same information required in item number 5 of the mayday call.



Coast Guard Stations:

Coos Bay
Coos Bay, OR
(541) 888-3267

BOATING SAFETY TIPS

- Check Weather, Tide, and Bar Conditions – The latest information can be heard on 1610 AM
- File a Float Plan With Friends/Relatives
- Don't Overload Your Boat
- Wear Your Life Jacket
- Carry Flares and a VHF-FM Radio
- Stay Well Clear of Commercial Vessels
- Have Anchor With Adequate Line
- Boat Sober



"Within seconds of seeing the wave, the boat flipped. The fact that I had my life jacket on kept me alive."

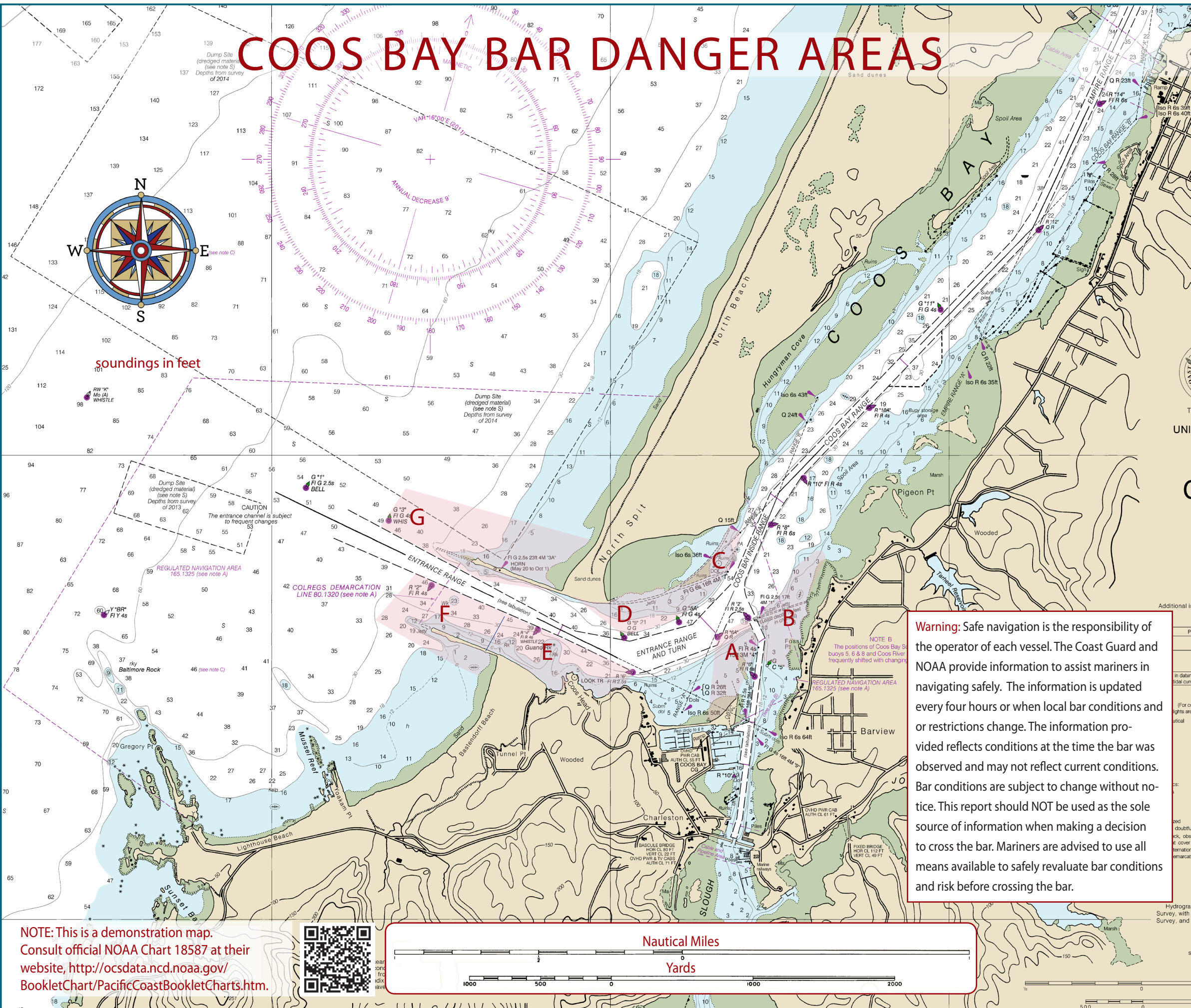
Graden Davis
Survivor

CROSSING THE COOS BAY BAR



More Boating Safety Information: www.uscgboating.org and www.boatoregon.com
Boating Class and Vessel Safety Check Information: www.uscgaux.org/~130/,
www.usps.org or 1-800-336-BOAT (2628) (class information only)

COOS BAY BAR DANGER AREAS



A. Sand spit south slough. As you leave the Charleston Boat Basin, the South Slough Sand Spit extends north and parallel to the channel from South Slough Red Lighted Marker #8, approximately 450 yards north towards South Slough Red, Lighted Marker #4. South Slough Lighted Buoy 2 marks the north end of the sand spit. It is dangerous. **DO NOT CROSS THIS AREA.**

B. South Slough/Charleston Channel submerged jetty. From the entrance to the Charleston Channel from Green Lighted Marker #1, shoreward marks the end of the submerged jetty. This jetty is visible only at low water. When departing the Charleston Boat Basin, stay in the South Slough Charleston Channel to the left of Green Lighted Marker #1 at all times..

C. Sand spit, North Beach. This area, commonly known as the cribs is located shoreward of buoy 7 and is dangerous due to its shallow depth and submerged jetties. Occasionally, on strong ebb tides, breakers will form in this area. This area should also be avoided because of the possibility of aground or striking submerged jetties and pilings. Inbound and outbound commercial tugs and deep draft vessels also pass close to channel boundaries and cannot stop for obstructions or small vessels in the channel.

D. Area north of Coos Bay Channel lighted buoy 5 and 5A. This area is shallow and can be very dangerous when there are any large swells on the bar or during ebb tide. Breakers are very common in this area, and without warning. While vessels transit this area on occasion, this area should be avoided. The main channel is the safest navigable water.

E. South jetty, Guano Rock area. This is a very dangerous area because of shoals extending out from the south jetty to the entrance channel. Breakers are frequently experienced from Guano Rock Lighted Whistle Buoy 2 extending out to just past the end of the South Jetty. Exercise extreme care in this area at all times, especially on ebb tides.

F. South jetty submerged. The outward end of the south jetty is submerged from the visible end of the jetty. **NEVER CROSS THIS AREA.** There are breakers in this area most of the time. When departing the bar southbound, be sure to pass seaward of Coos Bay south jetty Lighted Gong Buoy 2 before turning to the south.

G. North jetty submerged. The North Jetty extends approximately 200 yards to the West of the visible tip. The seaward end of the jetty is submerged from the visible tip towards Coos Bay North Jetty Lighted Whistle Buoy 3. **NEVER CROSS THIS AREA.** There are breakers in this area most of the time. When departing the bar northbound, be sure to pass seaward of Coos Bay North Jetty Lighted Whistle Buoy 3 before turning to the north.

Warning: Safe navigation is the responsibility of the operator of each vessel. The Coast Guard and NOAA provide information to assist mariners in navigating safely. The information is updated every four hours or when local bar conditions and or restrictions change. The information provided reflects conditions at the time the bar was observed and may not reflect current conditions. Bar conditions are subject to change without notice. This report should NOT be used as the sole source of information when making a decision to cross the bar. Mariners are advised to use all means available to safely reevaluate bar conditions and risk before crossing the bar.

NOTE: This is a demonstration map. Consult official NOAA Chart 18587 at their website, <http://ocsddata.ncd.noaa.gov/BookletChart/PacificCoastBookletCharts.htm>.

