**Richardson’s Bay Regional Agency**

**Vessel Regulations and Responsibilities**

The purpose of this pamphlet is to summarize some of the key regulations, enforcement priorities. and mariner responsibilities for vessels in the area of Richardson’s Bay governed by the Richardson’s Bay Regional Agency (RBRA).

Please note that each vessel owner and operator is responsible for their vessel and complying with regulations. More information can be found at [www.rbra.ca.gov](http://www.rbra.ca.gov).

**Laws and Regulations**

The Richardson's Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) is a governmental agency comprised of the County of Marin and the cities of Belvedere, Mill Valley, and Tiburon formed to collectively govern and manage their jurisdictional waters. The City of Sausalito governs and manages its own waters, which are located along its shoreline up to the navigation channel.

The ordinances and rules concerning Richardson's Bay can be found online for free at [www.rbra.ca.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.rbra.ca.gov&data=02%7C01%7CCHavel%40marincounty.org%7C6f26cf6bf5634b76292b08d741352364%7Cd272712e54ee458485b3934c194eeb6d%7C0%7C0%7C637049568794370264&sdata=IQPg3tyjlLnt3bIqHKG3C4h8l7UGfaChyz3CK56Aspk%3D&reserved=0) - you can also contact the Harbormaster at (415) 971-3919 if you would like to purchase a hard copy of the RBRA code.

**Federal Anchorage Provisions**

Nautical Charts 18649 and 18653 prepared by the Office of Coast Survey of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration identifies Richardson's Bay as a "Special Anchorage.” The charts refer mariners to "Note A" which directs the reader to review Chapter 2, Section 110.126a of the U.S. Coast Pilot for information concerning regulations pertaining to the anchorage which states, "Mariners anchoring in the special anchorage area should consult applicable ordinances of the Richardson Bay Regional Agency and the County of Marin. These ordinances establish requirements on matters including the anchoring of vessels, placement of moorings, and use of anchored and moored vessels within the special anchorage area. Information on these local agency requirements can be obtained from the Richardson Bay Harbor Administrator."

**RBRA Enforcement Priorities**

In July 2019, RBRA Board of Directors added enforcement of time limits on vessels entering the bay into its enforcement priorities, with adoption of Resolution No. 03-19. Any vessel entering Richardson’s Bay is limited to a 72-hour stay unless it obtains a 30-day permit from the Harbormaster. The determination of whether a vessel is new to the bay is based on the results of a survey conducted by the Marin County Sheriff of RBRA waters in August, 2019 – after the Board action.

Vessels that arrive in the anchorage will be notified of the 72-hour limit, and an option to apply for a 30-day anchoring permit provided they meet seaworthiness requirements and compliance with USCG regulations.

Vessels identified as marine debris, unoccupied, and/or do not properly disposed of sewage are also a high priority for enforcement. Vessels that fail to voluntarily comply are subject to actions such as citation, impound, removal, and destruction.

Please note that Personal Watercraft (e.g. Jetskis) are prohibited on Richardson's Bay pursuant to Ordinance 3302 of the Marin County Board of Supervisors.

**Waste Discharge**

Richardson’s Bay is designated a “No Discharge Zone” and dumping of trash or sewer is strictly prohibited. Many of the local marinas are equipped with pump-out stations, and there is a free mobile pump-out service available, **MT Head: (650) 483-5689**.

**U.S. Coast Guard Requirements**

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) has minimum requirements each vessel must meet. Generally, vessels must be able to present the following items if boarded by the USCG:

Life Jackets that are easily accessible for every soul aboard

Fire Extinguishers

Operable Navigation Lights

Sound Signaling Devices

Visual Distress Signals (e.g. flares)

Self Contained Sewage Holding Tank (Through Hull Cannot Be Opened to Bay)

Ventilation System (for motorboats)

Muffling System

Backfire Flame Arrestor

**Responsible Seamanship**

When you purchased, took possession of, or moved onto a vessel, you actively chose to become a mariner. It is in your best interests to maintain the vessel you are on to ensure its seaworthiness. The seas are unforgiving and a lapse in judgement and/or maintenance could result in dire circumstances!

It is your responsibility to learn how to properly set your anchor, as well as keeping the vessel safe and operable. As many mariners know, no anchorage is safe in all weather conditions. There may come a time when you need to leave the anchorage to escape a lee shore or other dangerous situation.

It is very important for you to understand that it is your responsibility to maintain your vessel in a seaworthy state. The responsible mariner keeps their decks clean and clear of obstruction, regularly inspects their ground tackle, and ensures that steering and propulsion systems are kept in working order. If your vessel cannot withstand a storm or being anchored in deeper water, then it is not considered seaworthy.

For more information about basic boating requirements, please refer to the "ABCs of California Boating" published by the California Department of Boating and Waterways. Hard copies can be obtained from the Harbormaster, or online at [https://dbw.parks.ca.gov/?page\_id=28731](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdbw.parks.ca.gov%2F%3Fpage_id%3D28731&data=02%7C01%7CCHavel%40marincounty.org%7C6f26cf6bf5634b76292b08d741352364%7Cd272712e54ee458485b3934c194eeb6d%7C0%7C0%7C637049568794370264&sdata=YffSye5iwS4HRcIxDbcqqZj6Dds4lcshpU3%2FerJOuA0%3D&reserved=0)

It is not the responsibility of the USCG, the RBRA Harbormaster or local law enforcement to secure your vessel, improve your vessel or otherwise maintain your vessel. Please take the time to educate yourself so that you can avoid endangering yourself, those you love, your neighbors and public service providers.

**Retrieving vessels**

RBRA is not responsible for vessels or dinghies that have drifted, dragged, run aground or sunk; the agency may tow and impound such vessels as a health and safety measure for persons, property, and/or the environment. Vessel owners who wish to retrieve their vessel must reimburse the agency for the agency’s costs to secure, tow, impound and/or store the vessel. Vessels that are marine debris will not be allowed back in Richardson’s Bay.

**Location**

Vessels must be located outside of all small boat channels and outside the Richardson Bay Audubon Sanctuary. Please be aware that depths in the bay get progressively shallower beyond Daymarker #4, averaging 4 feet or less at mean lower low water (MLLW). To protect eelgrass habitat, anchor away from eelgrass beds and exercise caution against dragging of your keel.