

Boater Liaison Program – Responses from Harbor Management

In the latest round of our [Boater Liaison Program](#), we again collected issues raised by our Dana Point boating community and presented them as your advocates to harbor management. We continue to be impressed and grateful for the quality and thoughtfulness of the issues raised by our boaters, which is testimony to the interest and engagement of our boating community in their harbor. As in past rounds, we reviewed every submission, categorized and summarized each issue, then presented them in a report to Orange County Dana Point Harbor and their contracted marina operators (TBW, Dana Point Marina Company and VMP/Embarcadero), as well as the Dana Point Harbor Patrol. In our collaborative session with harbor management stakeholders, we presented Dana Point Boaters' position on each issue, and harbor management responded with theirs. In some cases we found ourselves in agreement, resulting in new policies or changes to existing policy. Some issues required negotiation and compromise. And on issues where there was no movement, it became a matter of asking the Harbor Department to fully articulate their position so our boaters fully understand it.

We wish to again express our gratitude to Orange County Dana Point Harbor, Dana Point Marina Company, TBW, Vintage Marina Partners (VMP/Embarcadero) and Dana Point Harbor Patrol (OCSD) for collaborating with the Dana Point Boaters Association on this important boater advocacy program. While we are not perfectly aligned on every issue, we can report that they truly took this process seriously and offered their thoughtful consideration and response to each issue.

When there are issues that you would like us to raise with harbor management, please let us know by visiting our [Boater Liaison Program website](#). With our recent publication of the [Harbor Revitalization Plan building permit application](#), and other important developments around our Dana Point Harbor, we're sure you must have questions, suggestions or issues to raise with Harbor Management. Let us be your voice.

So then, what follows are a summary of each issue presented to harbor management, our DPBA position on the issue, and harbor management's written response:

1. Waitlist Management / Slip Transfers

Issue: A question was raised by an existing Dana Point Harbor slip tenant about how slip transfer requests are processed; specifically, is priority given to existing tenants over non-tenants on the waitlist for transfers to preferable slips?

DPBA Position: DPBA believes that priority should be given to existing tenants for transfer to preferable like-sized slips. For example, a tenant in a 40-foot slip who prefers an alternate 40-foot slip should be offered relocation when an alternate slip becomes available before the slip is offered to a non-tenant boater on the waitlist. The existing formal waitlist process should be enhanced to allow boaters who already have slips to request reassignment.

Harbor Dept. Response: The transfer process is a bit more complex than it may appear. Slip transfers are directly tied to vacancies and turnover – and everyone knows the larger the slips, the slower the process due to infrequent slip turnover. Without slip turnover, relocations are not possible unless this is accomplished by a same-sized slip swap with a willing same-sized slip licensee. We have met and discussed this issue with our marina operators and have instituted new policies to highly prioritize our method for the benefit of the existing slip renters.

2. Slip Rules / Slip Overhang Enforcement

Issue: Concerns were raised by slip tenants revealing a perception of uneven slip overhang rules enforcement. Specifically, some boaters have complained that neighboring boats (or their tenders) exceed the 3' overhang allowance, complicating navigation. Meanwhile other boaters have expressed a perception of excessive enforcement.

DPBA Position: The East and West Marinas have for years allowed a 3' slip overhang which allows boats (or their tenders) to exceed the overall slip length by three feet. DPBA believes a clear, written policy must be available and widely communicated to all boat slip tenants. Then evenly enforced in all instances where the policy is violated in a way that interferes with safe navigation.

Harbor Dept. Response: Safe ingress and egress of boats to and from their slips is the first priority in dealing with slip overhang in the Harbor. Marina managers ask each customer to verify the vessel's overall length prior to signing the Boat Slip License Agreement, at which time it will be confirmed by marina staff. A 3' overhang is allowed on all slip sizes with the exception of 22' pitchfork slips in the west basin (they extend into a fairway), side-ties and end-ties. This particular policy that the boater is questioning was established and has been enforced well before the establishment of OC Dana Point Harbor (Department). It is not uncommon for a boater to add equipment after obtaining a slip which may modify their overhang. While marina staff tries to monitor boat overhang and ensure public safety rules are met, any suspected violations or requests for a measurement can be directed to the east or west marina office.

3. Anchoring Rules Outside Harbor

Issue: A question was raised about where and when anchoring is allowed outside the harbor entrance and adjacent to Doheny Beach, especially considering the expansion of the 5mph/wakeless zone.

DPBA Position: DPBA believes that short-term anchoring should be allowed in the lee of the east breakwater, except where it may interfere with safe navigation to and from the harbor entrance. Anchoring policy should be publicly vetted and officially announced (widely) to Dana Point boaters; then consistently enforced.

Harbor Dept. Response: In discussion with Harbor Patrol, we have been advised that Patrol Boats will approach vessels anchoring within 500 yards of the buoys and educate them on the anchoring rules and ask that they move outside the no-anchoring zone. Any further potential actions by Harbor Patrol are discretionary to them.

4. Dinghy/PWC Storage Rules and Rates

Issue: Concerns and questions were raised by multiple boaters about inconsistent dinghy/PWC storage rules and rates, both on dry racks and on the water. There is a perception that policies and rates are different between the east and west marinas, and concerns about recent rate increases.

DPBA Position: DPBA believes that a uniform policy and rate structure should apply to all harbor marinas that allows for practical and affordable dinghy/PWC storage. OC Dana Point Harbor should continue the practice of allowing on-the-water dinghy storage in adjacent vacant boat slips for a nominal fee.

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Harbor Dept. Response: The primary reason for the recent small boat storage fee increases was to equalize the fees charged by the different Harbor Operators for this service. Each Marina Operator now manages their respective facility in accordance with County guidelines administered by OC Dana Point Harbor.

While previously there had been varying storage policies and practices among the marinas, for reasons of consistency, one policy has now been implemented. Due to the current vacancies in slips 26' and less, both East and West Basin Marinas are allowing for slip renters to store their dinghies in vacant slips at a monthly cost of \$50. The use of a vacant slip for a dinghy/tender was a boater suggestion that was implemented, and is a shared space with two dinghies per available vacant slip. It should be noted that slip licensees sign an agreement that if Marina Management needs the slip for a regular slip assignment, they will be provided a 30-day notice to relinquish the slip. This obviously is a program that is dependent on Harbor vacancies. Therefore, as occupancy increases, this program will eventually be eliminated. For additional information on the Dingy/Tender Storage Space program boater may contact their marina manager.

5. 5mph/Wakeless Rule Signage

Issue: Concerns continue to be raised by multiple boaters about frequent violations of the 5mph/wakeless rule in our harbor. Requests have been made to improve enforcement (raised in an earlier round of the Boater Liaison Program) and to improve signage to include the word "wakeless".

DPBA Position: DPBA is confident that all Dana Point boaters are aware of the 5mph/wakeless rules; violators are either willfully disregarding the rule, or inattentive to their vessel's speed. However, clear signage will aid in reminding visitors as well as violators of this important rule. Improved signage would be welcomed. And remember: 5mph equals 4.3 knots.

Harbor Dept. Response: This issue is very important to OC Dana Point Harbor for the simple reason of keeping everyone safe. If a vessel is truly observing the posted 5 MPH speed limit, there should be little to no wake. We believe that there is adequate 5 MPH signage at the Harbor Entrance and inside the Harbor, and routine maintenance periodically refreshing the existing 5 MPH signage will continue. If boaters find an area that would benefit from an additional sign, please advise us and we will review this with Harbor Patrol. Harbor Patrol has increased their efforts regarding speed limit enforcement based on OCCO **Sec. 2-2-43. Speed limit:** No owner, operator or person in command of any vessel, except a public officer in the performance of his/her duty, shall operate it or permit it to be operated in any portion of any harbor at a rate of speed in excess of five (5) miles per hour, or at any speed which creates a wake that may cause damage to moorings of vessels or floating structures except as hereinafter provided.

6. Oil Recycling

Issue: Questions were raised about the Harbor's oil recycling program. Where can oil be recycled and at what cost? Is free oil recycling available at the Embarcadero?

DPBA Position: In the interest of ensuring proper disposal of waste oil, and protecting our environment, DPBA supports free and convenient oil recycling stations for all Dana Point boaters,

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including those boaters whose vessels are stored in the Embarcadero. We recommend the installation of a new recycling center in the Embarcadero during the dry storage and day use revitalization phase.

Harbor Dept. Response: Easy, cost-free recycling of oil is available in both the East and West Basin Marinas. Printed materials are available in the marina offices, signage indicates locations for this service, and any marina or Launch Ramp staff can direct boaters to the oil recycling facilities. Used oil, bilge pads, oil and fuel filters, batteries and automatic transmission fluid is accepted at no charge, and we offer free replacement bilge pads. We have reviewed our current signage and plan to improve the signage at the trash dumpsters where necessary. As for the errant disposal of used oil into the dumpsters, staff is always on the alert for this. The Marina Newsletters provide reminders about the oil and other-recycling opportunities at least twice a year.

7. Launch Ramp Rules

Issue: A suggestion was made to direct jet skis and other smaller vessel launches to the outermost lanes to preserve the larger middle lanes for larger vessels. A concern was expressed that often the jet skis obstruct launching vessels, especially when they are left tied to the docks.

DPBA Position: For the most efficient throughput of an often busy launch ramp, DPBA favors guiding jet skis and other small vessels to the outer lanes which cannot accommodate larger trailered vessels. Ongoing and close attention to overall launch ramp utilization and efficiency is especially necessary during peak launch periods; this should be a top marina operator priority.

Harbor Dept. Response: Jet skis have in the past been directed to the north side of the launch ramp, and there may have once been signage designating that north side as such. The described events are not common occurrences, per Embarcadero Management. Jet skis are currently launching in available lanes on a first-come, first-served basis and are given the same opportunities to launch their craft as other boaters. Launch ramp staff have been directed to take a more active role in managing vessel launching and retrievals on high use days. If issues arise on the launch ramp, on-site staff should be notified immediately.

8. Harbor Maintenance Suggestion

Issue: A suggestion was made by a frequent harbor user that litter seems to accumulate on the walkways under the bridge.

DPBA Position: Clean 'er up.

Harbor Dept. Response: Thank you for bringing this to our attention. This under-bridge area will now receive additional maintenance scrutiny to collect litter accumulating in this area.

9. OC Dana Point Harbor Website Suggestion

Issue: A suggestion was made to include live weather data and harbor camera on the OC DPH website.

DPBA Position: Great idea. Go for it.

Harbor Dept. Response: This is a good suggestion and links to those websites containing the desired information have been added to the OC Dana Point Harbor website. This includes a live camera already

in place through Surfline showing Doheny Beach, in addition to a camera that refreshes every 30 seconds showing a view of the Harbor looking east, and weather links are already in operation.

10. Guest Slip Reservation Suggestion

Issue: A suggestion was made to improve the process of reserving and securing a Dana Point Harbor guest slip by implementing an online reservation option, as they have (had) at Two Harbors, Catalina.

DPBA Position: DPBA supports a practical, clear and fair process for reserving guest slips. An online reservation tool is a good idea.

Harbor Dept. Response: Presently guest slips are available by reservation and a boater arriving after-hours can secure a slip and be issued access keys with a simple telephone call. The after-hours telephone number is posted at the dock; the boater will speak with a live person who can assign an available slip and provide access key codes over the phone. The only paperwork necessary from the customer is proof of vessel insurance and registration, and acknowledgment of the guest slip rules (2 pages) – all this can be accomplished the following day during business hours in the Dana Point Marina Company office. Furthermore, marina staff can go to the visiting vessel at the guest dock to complete the paperwork, if necessary. Guest dock information can be also found on the Dana Point Marina Company website where you can also request future availability.

While there was some publicity in 2011 about an online mooring reservations system for the Catalina Isthmus moorings, this does not currently exist. According to the website for the Isthmus, moorings are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis only. To the best of our knowledge an online reservations system for Avalon moorings has never existed, and Avalon moorings are also assigned on a first-come, first-served basis only. The requested web-based reservations system can be explored, evaluated and the prospective costs/benefits weighed.

11. Dock Cart Availability

Issue: Concerns were raised about the frequent unavailability of dock carts. A suggestion was made to improve the marina operators' oversight and management of dock carts to ensure an even distribution of dock carts.

DPBA Position: Dock carts are an invaluable tool. The more the better. And when dock carts accumulate excessively on some docks, we agree with the boater's observation that the marina operators need to take action. We also agree that dock carts should be redistributed as frequently as is necessary to maximize cart availability. Last and not least, we think that our fellow boaters can help and should be encouraged to do so by helping. After all, when one moves a dock cart to another location temporarily, it takes but a very few minutes to return it.

Harbor Dept. Response: Marina staff has already been instructed to monitor dock carts and ensure they are available to boaters in convenient locations. Each dock has 5-7 assigned dock carts available for use by Slip Licensees. We recently implemented an internal dock cart round-up program in an effort to keep the carts at the bottom of each gangway behind the locked gates. Night security staff is also assigned to round up dock carts throughout their shift. We encourage boaters who use the carts to also please leave them at the bottom of the gangway when finished.

12. RV Parking on Dana Harbor Drive

Issue: Concerns were raised by the increasingly frequent accumulation of RVs along Dana Harbor drive, many of them in derelict condition.

DPBA Position: This is not directly a boater issue, but in the interest of maintaining the beautiful harbor environment that we all enjoy, a parking policy should be in place to prevent derelict and transient vehicles from consuming valuable harbor parking.

Harbor Dept. Response: OC Dana Point Harbor staff has been working with OC Public Works traffic engineers to find solutions to this issue. A hearing on this matter with the OC Traffic Committee took place on October 17, 2013. The result of the hearing was a recommendation to the County's Board of Supervisors, and their subsequent approval, to limit parking to four hours on Dana Point Harbor Drive between Ensenada (at the OC Sailing & Events Center) and Casitas Place (on the East side of the Dana Point Marina Inn). The four hour parking limitation has been implemented and we will stay on top of this issue in our efforts to ensure Dana Point Harbor remains a community-friendly facility.

13. Parking Revenue / Where does it go?

Issue: A question was raised about revenues raised by parking fees for Catalina Express passengers (\$12/day). Where does it go?

DPBA Position: Dana Point Harbor was "entrusted" to the County of Orange by the people of the State of California, and is governed by Tidelands Trust regulations, which mandate that all revenue generated within the Harbor must stay in the Harbor. It cannot be diverted to the County general fund or any other purpose not directly in the interest of Dana Point Harbor. Consequently, all parking fees must remain in the Harbor.

Harbor Dept. Response: Like all Harbor revenues, Catalina Express parking fees go to the Dana Point Harbor Tidelands Fund to be utilized for Harbor expenses, and future project(s) within the limitation of the State Tidelands Grant.

14. Dana Outrigger Boat Storage / Harbor Revitalization Plan

Issue: A question was raised about the future of boat storage at the Dana Outrigger facility after the Harbor Revitalization Plan. Where will it go?

DPBA Position: The Dana Outrigger Canoe Club and others that store their vessels adjacent to the Sailing and Events Center are valuable members of the Dana Point Boating Community. Leave them where they be.

Harbor Dept. Response: We intend that human-powered craft storage facilities generally remain in their current locations. There is no plan or current discussion to displace any of the described human-powered craft.

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When you have an issue that you haven't seen addressed yet, let us know by visiting our [Boater Liaison Program website](#). Let us be your voice.

And to keep our voice strong, we need your support. If you can spare one dollar, ten dollars or 100 dollars to the cause, please take a moment to [donate to the DPBA](#). You have our promise and commitment to use every penny on the protection and advancement of affordable recreational boating in Dana Point Harbor.