

# SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL



## Salcombe Harbour Authority

### Wrecks Policy

Version 1.0 February 2026

Salcombe Harbour Authority (SHA) has a primary responsibility to facilitate the safety of navigation within Salcombe Harbour which includes the removal of sunken vessels and other obstructions that are, or may become, an impediment to safe navigation. To this end, it is Board policy that SHA shall:

Be governed by Section 252 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 and The Pier and Harbour (Salcombe) Confirmation Act 1954, Section 43 (Wrecks, Removal of sunk, stranded or abandoned vessels) in the event of a vessel becoming a wreck in or near the approaches to SHA limits that involves the process of wreck removal.

Exercise their wreck marking and removal powers where, in their opinion, a wreck is, or is likely to become, an obstruction or danger to navigation.

Have regard to the environment in the exercise of these powers.

Ensure a risk assessment is undertaken for any wreck in, or near the approaches to SHA. Salcombe Harbour Authority powers to raise, remove, destroy or mark a wreck which is, or is likely to become, a danger to navigation will be exercised having regard to that assessment, with the aim of reducing the risk to as low as reasonably practicable.

Inform the UKHO of wrecks within Harbour limits.

Consider taking possession of, raise, remove or destroy the whole, or any part of the vessel, and any other property to which the power extends.

Risk assess whether a light or buoy is required until the vessel is raised, removed or destroyed; and subject to various restrictions, sell the vessel or part of the vessel so raised or removed and any other property recovered during the exercise of the above powers.

If a vessel is abandoned, or if the owner has made no valid attempt to remove a vessel that has been sunk or stranded, consider acting to raise or remove or destroy the vessel if it is an obstruction or danger to navigation.

Ensure there is a well-documented reason for the Authority to require the removal of the vessel.

Ensure that ownership of the vessel is established beyond any doubt or evidence obtained to show that the vessel has been abandoned.

Ensure notice is given to the owner (if known), or posted on the vessel or in a public place that the Authority intends to take possession of the vessel and raise, remove or destroy it (so that the owner has a reasonable opportunity to remove the vessel himself).

Ensure any sale is well advertised in the local press.

Ensure where the wreck has not sunk, and is still visible, a photographic record of the vessel's condition will be made before any attempt is made to salvage it.

Ensure if the vessel is beyond the salvage or dispersal capabilities of SHA, a reputable salvor or wreck removal contractor will be engaged to carry out the work under a recognised wreck removal contract.

Ensure the contractor has suitable insurance to cover any residual liability.

Ensure any such salvor or wreck removal contractor will be asked to submit a detailed salvage plan covering:

1. the method of raising the vessel including whether explosives are to be used
2. arrangements for limiting environmental damage
3. if pollution does occur, how it will be dealt with
4. agreed delivery location/beaching site/drying berth
5. diving operations connected with the salvage operation, and an assurance that they are to be carried out in accordance with diving regulations
6. a suitable plan for the final disposal of the vessel, whether this involves sale of the entire vessel or part thereof

Advise the MCA if any salvage involves the possibility of marine pollution.

Liaise with the Receiver of the Wreck Department of the MCA as required.

Ensure periodic surveys will be carried out to check the position of dangerous wrecks.

Ensure this Policy will operate within the relevant statutory and regulatory framework relating to wrecks, in force from time to time.

*Nothing in this Policy shall subvert existing Harbour Byelaws, General Directions, regulations or terms and conditions.*