



Code of Conduct

for fishing and anchoring safely with Basslink

Basslink connects Tasmania and Victoria across Bass Strait via two high voltage and one telecommunications cable combined in a very heavy bundle with a 290 kilometre long subsea section. It is critical infrastructure for the Tasmanian economy and it is an essential service for the energy security of Victoria. Basslink is owned and operated by APA.

This voluntary Code of Conduct is important to your safety as a fisherman or recreational sailor and as well as the economic wellbeing of the general community.

The Code was developed by the owners of Basslink, in consultation with fishing industry bodies and state and Commonwealth government agencies during the project's approval phase.

All parties were unanimous that a voluntary Code of Conduct for fishing was a better outcome than an official exclusion zone around Basslink. Nevertheless, mariners are advised to be extremely cautious within 500 metres of the cable route. All other marine working/construction activities must maintain a 500metre exclusion zone unless they have obtained prior APA authorisation.

Similar Codes of Conduct have operated successfully in other heavily fished areas of the world with the support of the local industry.

Please take time to read this Code carefully.

The key messages are:

- Keep safe
- Know where the cables are
- Avoid the cables
- Do not allow anchors to drag near the cables
- Don't try to lift the cables – they are far too heavy, and you risk capsizing your vessel.

APA
Australia's energy
infrastructure partner

APA

Australia's energy
infrastructure partner

Code of Conduct

for fishing and anchoring
safely with Basslink



1. Know where the cables are

The cables are laid between McGaurans Beach in Victoria and Four Mile Bluff (east of Low Head at the mouth of the River Tamar) in Tasmania. They run from McGaurans Beach to the west of the Hogan group, and from there almost due south to Tasmania. Basslink is one of many cables in Bass Strait and is marked on marine charts in the standard way.

Highly accurate chart overlays for many types of GPS plotters can be obtained free of charge from APA.

The map on this brochure shows the approximate position of Basslink. Please take the time to study its location and mark up your official charts using the appropriate Notice to Mariners

2. Anchoring

Anchoring in the vicinity of the cables should be avoided unless absolutely essential as this is one of the main causes of damage to cables around the world.

APA are keen to encourage the use of anchors that minimise dragging and reduce the risk of contact with the cables. Of the various types of anchors in use in Bass Strait, the Bruce and Manson Ray designs provide optimum security with high holding capacity and a low penetration profile.

Mariners should ensure that they use a proprietary brand anchor that is the correct size and design. It is imperative that 'home made' anchors are not used, and that adequate chain and warp is laid out for the depth of water.

AMSA's National Code for Commercial Vessels Part C, Section 7, Subsection 7D specifies anchoring equipment for effective at sea mooring. As a further precaution, the anchor drag alarm on your vessel's GPS system should be set.

3. Fishing and sailing

Before setting out, check the position of Basslink in relation to your intended fishing and sailing area. Basslink is buried to minimise the risk of damage from fishing gear and anchors but does not eliminate it.

The seabed is a dynamic environment, and it is possible that buried sections of the cables will become exposed over time, particularly after major storms. Although there are checks made by APA of the status of the cables from time to time, this doesn't mean that all cable exposures will be identified. Mariners are always advised to be extremely cautious if in the vicinity of the cable route.

The [APA website](http://apa.com.au/basslinkmarine) (apa.com.au/basslinkmarine) and Notice to Mariners are sources of information about any exposure of the cables.

4. Shark fishing

When shark fishing and anchoring between hauls assess the risk of your vessel's anchor dragging and deploy a prudent distance from the cables on the lee side according to wind and current.

Basslink can be fished over with shark nets. The nets are to be rigged with Bruce or Manson Ray anchors on the ends and stabilised in between with lead clump anchors. Other stabiliser anchor designs with scrap scallop dredge tooth-bars as flukes should not be used.

5. Fish trawls and scallop dredges

Basslink is buried to reduce the risk of contact with other marine gear, but this does not eliminate risk completely. Although the cable is extremely heavy and subsides into sediment, the extreme nature of the Bass Strait environment and its potential to expose the cables is never ignored. Exposure can increase the risk of entanglement with mobile fishing gear, damage the cables, damage the gear and is a danger to people.

Subsea cable repairs are time consuming, costly, require exclusion zones for repair vessels and can be high profile to the public and media because they affect the essential services of the communities they connect. Mariners should be precautionary and not operate mobile gear in the vicinity of the cables.

The [APA website](http://apa.com.au/basslinkmarine) (apa.com.au/basslinkmarine) and Notice to Mariners are sources of information about any exposure of the cables.

6. Snagged? What Should I do?

In the unlikely event that you become snagged, be prepared. Know beforehand what to do, how to do it and who to inform. Remember, power cables are extremely heavy and can easily capsize a fishing vessel.

If you suspect your vessel has become snagged the following steps should be taken to ensure safety of all involved. Avoid using extreme winch power and never attempt to steam away rapidly to jolt free. Either of these actions will result in increased danger to crew, vessel and cables.

If vertical lifting with normal power does not release the gear or anchor then it must be buoyed, position noted, and anchor left, with APA notified at the earliest moment on its 24 hour emergency number 1800 008 767. There is free replacement of anchors in these circumstances; the claims procedure is listed in section 7 of this brochure.

The discarded anchor assembly will be a navigation hazard so its position should be reported to other mariners in the area, local coast guards, relevant port authorities and fishing co-operatives.



7. How to claim for discarded gear

APA has a free replacement policy to discourage efforts to recover anchors snagged on the cables because of the risk of causing damage to it.

Record as much information as possible about how the incident occurred; it will help speed the process and may help others in the future.

Claim forms can be downloaded from the [APA website](http://apa.com.au/basslinkmarine) (apa.com.au/basslinkmarine). Claims should be submitted within 14 days of the incident.

8. Useful contacts

Emergency
Australian Maritime Safety Authority Search and Rescue
1800 641 792 (24hr Emergency)

Coast Guard Search and Rescue
(03) 9598 7003

Basslink
1800 008 767 (24hr Emergency)



For more information

APA
P 1300 087 621 (general enquiries)
W apa.com.au/basslinkmarine

International Cable Protection Committee
W scpc.org

Oceania Submarine Cable Association
W oscagroup.com





APA
Australia's energy
infrastructure partner