

## ENJOYING CRISSY FIELD KITEBOARDING



### Welcome to Crissy Field!

Crissy Field is a world-class sailing, windsurfing and kitesurfing area for experienced riders. Gusty winds and strong currents can make kiting here both challenging and dangerous. The wind is often side-offshore and the launch can be tricky, with winds fluky/light on the inside. A full wetsuit year-round is a must.

*Thank you for familiarizing yourself with Crissy kiting protocols so that we can all be safe and have a great time. At Crissy we count on each other to be responsible and support one-another. If unsure of something, ask for assistance or advice from other riders; your actions are important to everyone, especially if they have to put themselves at risk to rescue you or help retrieve your gear!*

### Expert-Level Site

- Crissy Field is not a place to simply ride back and forth on cruise control. Any weaknesses in your kiteboard skills will quickly become apparent.
- **Required skills for Crissy:**
  - Excellent upwind riding and jibing ability
  - Ability to keep control of the kite in light and gusty wind
  - Knowledge of ebb, flood, and counter-currents
  - Be a strong swimmer
  - Self-rescue techniques are critical at Crissy; please practice self-rescue at a safer location

### Sharing the Beach

- **Beach Goers** – We share the parking, promenade, and beach with families, tourists, and dog-walkers. ***They always have the right of way.***
- **Windsurfers** – Are well-established at Crissy. Kiteboarders generally launch upwind of the windsurfers and head out past Anita Rock. Avoid kiting on the inside to give windsurfers room.

### Kite Etiquette

- Set up and launch west of the bathroom. This gives you more room to avoid the rocks at the east end, the blue handicap beach access ramp, and families/other beach-goers.
- The more crowded the beach, the further west you should go to avoid other beach users.
- Put sand on your kite to avoid a runaway kite.
- Launch your kite towards the water.
- Once launched, move to the water quickly, keep your kite ***low and go.***
- Quickly roll up your lines when you come in.
- **DON'T** teach on the beach.
- **DON'T** fly trainer kites in crowded areas.
- **DON'T** jump on the beach.
- **DON'T** stand on the beach with your kite in the air.
- **DON'T** walk with your kite in the air in the parking lot, promenade, or picnic area.

### While On the Bay

- **The Inside** – From the beach to Anita Rock. Generally lighter wind and not great kiting unless it's a strong NW day. You can usually swim in from Anita Rock. Avoid kiting on the inside – get out past Anita rock for better wind and to keep the inside area open for others going in and out.
- **Anita Rock to the Channel** – The span where the wind picks up and fills in. You are closer to the swimmable zone yet not in the channel.
- **Shipping Channel** – You probably want to spend the least time here, and be very alert!
- **Presidio Shoal** – On the inside, upwind of Anita Rock. Holey and light, kites often drop here.

- **Fort Point/South Tower** – The topography and the Fort there make for a wind shadow that moves around the tower base, which can drop your kite. Give the South Tower a wide berth.
- **North Tower** – Smooth butter just outside. Not ideal on NW + ebb because Marin headlands create a wind shadow.
- **Last Chance Beach** – Or the stairs before the St Francis Yacht Club, both downwind of Crissy, are usually an easy shot if you miss Anita Rock or even swim from inside Anita Rock.

### **Contacting the Coast Guard**

- **To request on-water assistance by VHF radio**, use **Channel 16** to report an incident to the Coast Guard or to request on-water assistance
- **To request on-water assistance by phone**, call **(415) 399-3451**, the Coast Guard Sector San Francisco Command Center, which manages on-water emergencies area-wide.
- If you lose gear, report it to Coast Guard Station Golden Gate at (415) 331-8247 to avoid a search-and-rescue operation.

### **Safety/Self-Rescue/Rescue Tips**

- **Buddy System** – Use the buddy system and stay within sight of the pack.
- **Personal Safety Equipment** – Consider carrying a VHF radio, a strobe light, and a whistle.
- **Mark Your Gear** – with your name and phone number.
- **Taco Pronto** – Know how to taco/self-rescue; never jettison your gear and swim for it.
- **Keep Kite Inflated Until Rescued** – It increases your visibility and provides flotation. Always keep your kite inflated until you are rescued by a boat. Consider wearing a lifejacket for extra flotation.
- **Carry Extra Kite Leash** – Handy to attach to the board in a rescue situation.
- **Swimming with Kite** – If the wind shifts offshore, flip kite on its back and clip your leash to the pump attachment point, so you can swim parallel to the wind and current.
- **Inside Anita** – If you drop your kite inside the Anita Rock marker, swim for it.
- **Fort Point** – Fort Point (South Tower) is not a rescue option, unless you're familiar with it and the tide is low with the small clearing visible between the rocks.
- **Boat Rescue Protocol** – If the Coast Guard, Fire Department (jet skis) or a Police boat come to your aid, **do not refuse the ride**. When the boat is beside you, roll up your lines if you have not already done so. Only deflate your kite once confirmed they are taking you on board. Pop your leading edge exhaust valve, then close it back up so that water will not get in; then roll up the kite. You can leave struts inflated.

### **Local Knowledge That Can Save Your Session & Keep You Safe**

- **Board Selection** – Try to ensure you have enough flotation and surface area to run upwind efficiently and to avoid using a larger kite than necessary. Surf/directional boards, race boards and foil boards are usually preferred and the general recommendation is to only use a twin-tip board when the wind is filled in and it is ebbing.
- **Kite Size** – Average kite size (for men) is 9m. If you need a bigger kite, you may also want a bigger board. The wind is sometimes very light on the inside but very windy further out from the beach. Pick your kite size for the condition in the windy area.
- **Currents/Tides** – The current usually changes first on the inside near the beach and then spreads across the bay. Stay aware of the changing currents in relation to where you are sailing on the bay, and remember that the current will be different at the launch when it is time to go in, compared to when you started. Best/safest sailing is when it is slack tide going into an ebb.
  - Check the tide charts on [ikitesurf.com](http://ikitesurf.com), NOAA, on a Smartphone APP (e.g., Aye Tides) or at [http://wolfweb.unr.edu/homepage/edc/tides/2015/sfbe\\_fr15.html](http://wolfweb.unr.edu/homepage/edc/tides/2015/sfbe_fr15.html)
- **Light Wind On The Inside** – Wind conditions on the inside – from the launch to Anita Rock – can be light, swirly, fluky and gusty, and will likely change from the beginning to the end of your session. It is a rare day when it is steady and filled in to the beach.
  - If you drop your kite, your chance of a re-launch on the inside is slim. Keep your kite in the air by keeping it moving! Fly the kite aggressively, and to avoid back-stalling the kite, make sure it is **depowered**.
  - If it's light on the inside, take a few tacks out and recon the wind line to find a way back home.

- **Returning to the Launch – *Situational awareness*** is critical, as conditions change minute-to-minute at Crissy. Wind tends to drop off (and change direction) towards the end of the day. Always be thinking about how you are going to get back to the beach.
  - Knowledge of the currents is critical. On good days, coming in high (upwind of Anita Rock) is fine; on most days ripping across the wind may be best, but sometimes going low is the only (and counter-intuitive) option.
  - Watch the wind sock at the restrooms and keep an eye on the wind line. Watch for kites down near the beach. Watch for other kiteboarders and windsurfers rushing back to the beach. Commit to yourself when you will make a decision to head back to beach, and keep it!
- **Flood Tide Tips** – If the tide is flooding into the Gate and you are on your first reach out-and-back, and you cannot stay upwind of Anita Rock, think about calling it a day or waiting for the tide to change (unless you have a foil board or race board).
  - If you miss Crissy, the St Francis Yacht Club steps and Last Chance Beach on your way in, stay out away from the piers downwind at Fort Mason; instead, wave down a boat or call the Coast Guard for help. The current is twice as fast there and you do not want to get sucked under the piers.
- **WSW Wind Direction + Flood – be aware and take care.** A flood current combined with an adverse southwest wind component can make it challenging to get back to the beach. Sometimes the best call is to aim for the St Francis Yacht Club steps or Last Chance Beach. However, if you are underpowered on a flood and end up near the east end of the launch, the southwest wind can blow you off shore and you likely won't make it in. If your kite is down and you are being pulled offshore, immediately wrap up your lines, clip off your kite upside down, and swim for the beach going with and perpendicular to the current. Do not waste your energy swimming against the current.
- **Late-Season Wind Pattern** – Around mid-August, the wind pattern begins to change. The wind gets smooth late in the season, but the wind line moves abruptly offshore without warning.
  - The bubble or light wind by the beach increases, it is more likely to be side-offshore by the launch, and the wind has a tendency to shut off abruptly by the shore while you are on the other side of the bay.
  - Historically, late in the season, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. tends to be the most reliable wind.
  - Even though it is light at the beach, it can be extremely windy once you hit the wind-line.
  - If unable to make it to the wind-line and you are floating on the inside with your kite in the water, swim as fast as possible to shore. Carry a second leash to clip to your board, so that you can concentrate on your kite.
  - If you make it to the wind line, keep looking back and kiting over to see how to get back to the beach and determine whether coming in upwind or downwind is your best option.
  - Self-rescue options: If any onshore wind, taco position; if offshore wind and your kite is pulling you away from shore, flip the kite upside down behind you, clip off to the pump lanyard or bridle, get on your board and swim for it.
  - **DO NOT DEFLATE YOUR KITE – YOU BECOME ALMOST INVISIBLE.**

### **Commercial Ship Traffic**

- **Right-of-Way** – Always give commercial traffic the right-of-way. This means not crossing their bow, or kiting between a tug and its barge under tow. USCG Rule 9 places the obligation on us, the small vessel operator, to avoid impeding the large vessel. (<http://www.uscg.mil/d11/vtssf/rule9.asp>)
- **Be Alert and Anticipate** – Allow more than enough time and space for a large vessel to see that you are moving out of their path. Make early and clear movements for them to confidently note your intentions.
- **Monitor** – VHF Channel 14, which commercial vessels use to communicate with Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). If you are in the water with broken gear and a ship is bearing down, contact the ship's Master on the bridge of the vessel via Channel 14 as early as possible.

### **San Francisco Boardsailing Association (SFBA)**

- **SFBA** – Was originally formed to protect access to Crissy Field. Since its founding in 1985, SFBA has focused on protecting and enhancing access to windsurfing and kiteboarding areas, and promoting safety for our members. These two missions are inextricably linked, because public perception of hazards from unsafe sailing behaviors represents one of the greatest threats to maintaining public access.
- **To Contribute** – Help SFBA help you! Go to **"SFBA.org"** to join or contribute and sign up for the eNews!



