



# THE MARINA

## AT DANA POINT

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**NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2026**

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### Greetings from the Marina at Dana Point!

The 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Dana Point Festival of Whales is shaping up to be the best one yet! Make plans to be in Dana Point Harbor March 6-8, 2026 to experience all the festival fun. The weekend kicks off on Friday evening, March 6<sup>th</sup> at the Ocean Institute with the Welcoming of the Whales. This is a captivating event featuring a sunset ceremony with the Acjachemen Nation and Dana Point Surf Club paddle out followed by a festive reception. The Festival of Whales Carnival kicks off on Friday night at Lantern Bay Park starting at 5 PM. The carnival offers a ton of family fun and delight with rides, fair food, classic games, live music and a beer garden. The City of Dana Point is running trolley service with stops throughout the harbor and a convenient drop-off directly at the carnival.



The Magical Migration Parade returns this year on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM. The parade will stage in the village parking lot (surface lot near The Brig) and the route will run in reverse this year meaning that it will start on Casitas Place, head west on Dana Point Harbor Drive (in the eastbound lane) to Island Way, over the bridge, right on Dana Drive and disband in the parking lot near Dana Point Yacht Club. With that, there will be road closures in Dana Point Harbor that will affect access to boater lots in the east cove, west island and east island. Please be mindful of the following road closure events on Saturday, March 7, 2026:

- Eastbound Dana Point Harbor Drive closed from West Basin boater lot (access to the lot is not affected) to Golden Lantern beginning at 7 AM.
- West bound Dana Point Harbor Drive remains open the entire time (vehicles may exit the harbor via Cove Road).
- Left turn only exit from Casitas Pl onto Dana Point Harbor Drive beginning at 7 AM (anyone exiting Boater Lot 2 on Casitas Pl will be required to take a left turn at the light and exit the harbor via Cove Road).

- Island Way and Dana Drive closed at 9 AM (access on and off the island will not be available beginning at 9 AM...no access to boater lots in east or west island during this time).
- Casitas PI closed at 9 AM (no access to or from Boater Lot 2).
- Harbor Village Parking Lot closed at 5 AM for parade staging.

Road closures are officially posted through 12:00 PM, but the goal is to reopen by 11:30 AM, with priority being Island Way and Dana Drive.

If you plan to visit the harbor on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, please plan to arrive before 9 AM to avoid the closures. Once you are in, you will want to stay put until the closures are lifted.

If you find yourself in the harbor on Saturday morning, March 7<sup>th</sup> but have other plans for the day, you will want to leave before 9 AM to avoid being stuck due to these closures. These are hard closures with no exceptions.

Again, the west basin cove boater lot is safe from impact. Boater parking in the parking structure and the wharf are also safe from impact. Please use these lots if you need to enter or exit the harbor between 9 AM and 12 PM on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to the Welcoming, the Carnival and the Parade, there are so many fun events and activities happening throughout the weekend including the Clam Chowder Cookoff, Cardboard Dinghy Dash, Modern Makers Mart, the Antique & Classic Boat Show, exclusive event merchandise, and the Concert on the Water at Baby Beach featuring Jimmy's Buffet and Gilligan's Island! Please visit [www.festivalofwhales.com](http://www.festivalofwhales.com) for the full schedule of events.

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## Marina Office



We are excited to see an abundance of sunshine and calm seas in the forecast! With recent stretches of heavy rain and gusty winds, we encourage all marina tenants to check on their boats after significant weather events.

A quick visit can go a long way in preventing small issues from becoming bigger problems. Here are a few things to look for:

- **Dock Lines & Fenders** – Make sure lines are secure, properly tensioned, and not chafing. Adjust fenders as needed.
- **Bilge & Drainage** – Confirm your bilge pump is functioning properly and that scuppers and drains are clear of debris.
- **Shore Power Connections** – Check that cords are secure and connections remain dry and in good condition.
- **Canvas & Covers** – Inspect for pooling water, loose snaps, or wind damage.

We had staff out on the docks checking on boats during the storm and everything seems to be okay, but we do encourage you to stop by and check on your boat if you haven't already done so.

Our office team is here to answer questions or assist with anything related to the marina, your slip account, slip selection or other marina related items. Please stop by anytime, send an [EMAIL](#), or reach out to us by phone at (949) 496-6137.

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## On the Docks



There's nothing quite like the buzz along the docks this time of year! With longer days and golden sunsets reflecting off the water, our marina is alive with activity, laughter, and the steady hum of engines heading out for adventure. We love to see it!

We regularly walk the docks to check on a variety of things, including rule violations. As a general rule, the slip is meant to be occupied by a single vessel of appropriate size. We also allow for a dinghy to be with the vessel provided both the vessel and dinghy fit within the permitted LOA that the boat slip allows. Of course, if there is a dinghy with the boat, the billable LOA will include the measured length of the vessel and dinghy including all extensions and attachments. As we perform our regular dock inspections, we will continue to re-measure vessels that have added a dinghy and the monthly billing will change to reflect the new LOA. If the dinghy and vessel together exceed the maximum allowable LOA of the slip size, you will be asked to remove the dinghy.

Additionally, platforms, lifts or liners are not permitted in the boat slip. This includes small floating docks, Air Docks (those in old slips may remain until we reach the section for demo), dinghy docks, kayak platforms, etc. If any of these items are found in new slips, you will be asked to remove them.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation in keeping your slip area tidy and docks clear. We're grateful for the strong sense of community and pride that makes our docks feel like home. If you have photos or stories you'd like featured in next month's newsletter, send them our way. Maybe you had an amazing wildlife sighting. Perhaps you had a big catch or experienced a fantastic day on the docks with slip neighbors. Whatever the occasion...we love celebrating life on the water with you.

See you on the docks!

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## Marina Revitalization

Phase 11 demolition is complete and the new docks are coming in! Phase 11 is in the east basin island and includes G34, Dock of the **Royal** Lantern, G35, Dock of the **Magenta** Lantern, G36, Dock of the **Aqua** Lantern, and G37, Dock of the **Sand** Lantern. Slip selection for slips coming into Phase 11 is underway and the phase is expected to open for occupancy on May 1, 2026!



Phase 12 will start in early May 2026. Phase 12 includes east basin island docks D, E and F. We will begin issuing temporary relocations to tenants occupying slips in east basin island, docks D, E & F

in mid-March 2026 with the goal to have all vessels relocated by April 30, 2026. Temporary relocation letters are sent via email and regular US Mail.

If you are still in an old slip, it is time to start thinking about getting ready to transition into a new slip. All boats going into a new slip are required to participate in a seaworthy evaluation, a ground fault leakage test and complete a courtesy Vessel Safety Check by the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. Please contact the marina office anytime if you would like to schedule the seaworthy evaluation and ground fault leakage test. This is done by appointment and requires the vessel to travel to a specific new slip location within the marina. We are often asked what the seaworthy evaluation entails. Our maintenance manager will observe your arrival to the location and assist with securing your vessel to the dock. He will check your controls, steering and other components of the vessel to confirm it has working steering, controls and gauges. He will then proceed with an assessment of the vessel that will include the vessel's waste system, engine compartment, safety equipment, and overall condition. He will also make sure the boat displays current registration stickers.

If you do not feel that your boat will qualify to be in a new slip because it is not seaworthy, now is the time to take action. By the end of 2026, all of the 30' and under slips in the marina will be new slips and there will no longer be old slips available in these slip size categories. If your boat is not going to pass the seaworthy evaluation, you will want to repair it, make plans to sell it, move it or dispose of it within the next couple of months to avoid being stuck with a boat and no place to put it. Please contact the marina office if you have any questions or need contact information for donation or disposal companies, (949) 496-6137.

The Commercial Core Phase 3 revitalization is underway! Demolition of old restaurant and retail buildings is ongoing and great progress has been made. The phase is expected to complete within two years. Any new restaurants and retail operations coming into the future Dana Point Harbor will be announced as negotiations are finalized.



It is an exciting time in Dana Point Harbor! Someday it will be a distant memory. As we are enjoying our beautiful revitalized harbor with family, we'll tell stories and reflect on what it was, what it is and where we were when we witnessed the renderings come to life before our eyes.

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## **USCG Auxiliary Dana Point**

### **Upcoming Boater Education Courses**



#### **SUDDENLY IN COMMAND**

When: Wednesday March 11, 2026. 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Where: Dana Point Community Center. 34052 Del Obispo, Dana Point 92629

Cost: \$25

This class will prepare you to take control of a vessel in the event the operator is incapacitated and is unable to command the boat. The class covers many of the most critical tools to get you back to the dock safely. It is designed for people with little or no experience in operating a power vessel or sailboat, although more experienced operators are welcome.

Contact Eric Gritzmacher at: [ericgritz@gmail.com](mailto:ericgritz@gmail.com) or text or call: (949) 632-2378

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## **HOW TO USE A VHF MARINE RADIO**

**WHEN: Wednesday March 25 2026. 7:00pm to 8:45pm**

The VHF radio is one of the most important safety devices you have on a boat especially when you are in an emergency situation. This class will teach you how to operate a radio, make emergency calls, contact other vessels, get Coast Guard updates, use the MAYDAY “red button”, AIS, and other features of a Marine VHF radio.

**Cost: \$20**

**Where:** Dana Point Community Center. 34052 Del Obispo St., Dana Point CA, 92629

To register contact Eric Gritzmacher at: [ericgritz@gmail.com](mailto:ericgritz@gmail.com) or (949)632-2378.

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## **BOAT AMERICA**

**1 day – 8-hour class. March 28th, 8:30am to 5:30pm**

Anyone operating a motorized vessel in California waters must now have a Boater Operator card issued by the State of California. This class will meet the State requirement.

The class will cover what you need to know about operating a boat safely. Subjects include Rules, navigation, Coast Guard requirements, risk management, aids to navigation, registering your boat and many other subjects to help you be a better, safer boater

**Cost: \$40**

**Where:** Dana Point Community Center. 34052 Del Obispo St., Dana Point CA, 92629

To register contact Eric Gritzmacher at: [ericgritz@gmail.com](mailto:ericgritz@gmail.com) or (949)632-2378

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## **BOATING CLEAN & GREEN**

Stand up to Trash is hosting a Beach Cleanup and Lunch & Learn in connection with the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Dana Point Festival of Whales and YOU are invited to participate!

Enjoy a fun-filled day on the water, along shore and in the surrounding areas on Sunday, March 8, 2026 at 9:00 AM with a Beach Cleanup starting at the RH Dana Statue on the island followed

by a Lunch & Learn at the Ocean Institute featuring UCI Professor Jessica Pratt, PHD and her Global Sustainability Capstone Student Presentations. Click [HERE](#) for more information or to register.



**Thank you for doing your part to keep our marina clean and our waters healthy!**

As always, please contact the marina office directly if you have questions, concerns, or see something in need of our attention. You can reach me via [email](#) for a quick response, or you can call the marina office at (949) 496-6137.

Happy Boating,

Kelly Rinderknecht