

# San Diego Windsurfing Site Guide



**Site Name:** The Hilton

**Location:** East side of Mission Bay in San Diego

**Skill Level Rating:** Beginner and up

**Typical Sailing Conditions:**

*Wind:* 8-12 knots from the W or WSW, typically starting in the late morning and tapering off mid-late afternoon. Winter storms can bring strong south winds, typically preceding the storm and clocking around to the west as the storm passes.

*Water:* Salt water, mid-70 degrees in summer, high 50s in winter. Water quality can be poor due to runoff/sewage spills after heavy rains.

*Boards:* Early planning/giant slalom, 120-140l volume, 9'0" to 9'10" length.

*Sails:* 6.0 to 9.5+

**Water Conditions:** Flat water sailing, minimal chop even in storm winds. Reaches are only about 200 yards because of proximity to Fiesta Island, although if the wind clocks around to the NW the reaches get longer since you can parallel the beach. A few hundred yards south of the Hilton launch is Enchanted Cove (aka Stinky Cove) which sometimes gets a couple of knots more wind, so it's not unusual for people to head downwind to check it out. Slogging back upwind to the Hilton can be a drag, though. Water traffic by Enchanted Cove can get busy due to the proximity of the Boy's Club (lots of canoes, small boats, etc.), as well as increased popularity of kite boarding here.

This is a 5mph boating area, so there isn't much interference by powerboats or personal watercraft, though there is a PWC area just north of the Hilton and PWCs occasionally ignore the 5mph zone.

**Wind Notes:** As with most of the Mission Bay sailing sites, the wind is driven by a standard coastal onshore

flow. However, the occasional storm in late fall/winter/spring can bring good winds from the south that clock around as the storm approaches and then turn to the northwest. Storm winds tend to be gusty, so it's not unusual for people to be slogging around on 7.5 one minute and then barely hanging on to a 5.0 ten minutes later as a squall line comes through.

**Rigging and Launching Notes:** There is a nice grassy rigging area with plenty of room to rig even on the busiest days. The launch itself is a sandy beach, though there is a 2-foot "bluff" to negotiate between the rigging area and the beach. Beware of fin-eating rocks, especially at low tide. Also low tide means dealing with "Mission Bay Muck" and eel grass if you don't beach start close to shore - on a minus tide, it's almost impossible to avoid. The muck is even worse over by Fiesta Island.

**Other Notes:** Public restrooms are located close to the parking area. Be sure to bring the bikes or rollerblades since the Hilton area is right on the Mission Bay Park boardwalk. This is a beautiful area to enjoy even when there's not enough wind to sail. It's also a great place to enjoy a barbecue after a day of sailing.

**Parking and Fees:** The parking lot is directly adjacent to the grass rigging area. During fall, winter and spring parking is almost never a problem. However, during the summer days parking can be limited since Mission Bay is an extremely popular destination. Get there early if you want to spend the day.

Parking is free.

**Directions to Site:** Take Interstate 5 to the East Mission Bay Drive/Clairemont Drive exit. Turn left (west) off the freeway, then make a left turn at the 4-way stop sign by the Visitor's Center. Head south about 1/2 mile and make a right turn into the parking area about 200 yards before the Hilton Hotel. Follow the road around the little lagoon area to the "point" where the next parking lot is and you're there.