

## EVERYONE

### Take care

**Spot the dangers.** For example...

- Not all towpaths give smooth, easy walking or cycling.
- If the water appears frozen, **never** trust the ice to take your weight.
- Watch out for concealed mooring pins or ropes across the path beside moored boats.
- The risks are small, but tell your doctor if you become ill within two weeks of getting canal, river or reservoir water into your mouth or an open wound.
- Be prepared for changes in weather and local water conditions.
- Always keep young children under supervision.
- Swimming is prohibited - it's dangerous.

**Take safety advice.** Watch out for warning signs.

**Children: don't go alone.**

- Go with a friend who can help you if you're in trouble.
- Always make sure an adult knows where you are going and when you will be back.

**BE SAFE- Stay Away From the Edge.**

### Learn what to do in an emergency

- Do not dive into the water.
- Keep calm - think before you act.
- Don't put yourself in danger.
- Raise the alarm
  - Get help on the towpath.
  - Phone the emergency services and follow the advice they give.
- Talk to the person or animal in the water
  - Urge them to swim towards the bank.

## WATERWAYS FOR ALL

We do our best to keep the waterways in good repair. As more and more people discover their charm and tranquillity, there are increased risks of conflict and damage to the environment. So please follow the advice in this leaflet and enjoy your visit to the waterway safely.

For more information, go to [www.britishwaterways.co.uk](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk), call The Customer Service Centre (01923 201120) or contact the local waterway office direct (their details are on the website or in local phone books). Our website includes excellent maps of all our waterways.

**Boat licences:** We need every penny due to us to maintain the waterways. So if you see a boat not showing a current licence disc, please report it to our Licence Evasion Hotline: 01923 201122

**Special events and school visits:** We welcome these. Please talk through your plans with us first.

**Waterways for children:** Surf the waterways? You can, with the WOW website - the best wet net yet - [www.wow4water.net](http://www.wow4water.net).

Grown ups, you can download a useful safety resource for children from [www.wow4water.net/grownups/search.asp](http://www.wow4water.net/grownups/search.asp) (WOW keyword: safety).



British Waterways



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# THE WATERWAYS CODE

LOOK AFTER YOUR WATERWAYS  
CONSIDER OTHERS  
TAKE CARE & STAY SAFE



## EVERYONE

### Look after your waterways and consider others

- Protect the waterway environment
  - Keep noise to a minimum.
  - Don't damage the vegetation or banks.
- Take home **everything** that you brought with you, and leave the site as you found it.
- Never dump rubbish, sewage or oily bilge water into the water or onto the bank.
- Clean up after your dog and keep it under control.
- Don't light fires.
- Things can go wrong on canals. If you see something dangerous such as serious damage to structures or water escaping, call the British Waterways emergency helpline 0800 47 999 47. For other emergencies call 999.
- Report pollution, fly tipping or fish in distress to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60.
- Report birds or animals in distress to the RSPCA on 0990 55 59 99 (24 hrs) or the Scottish SPCA on 0131 33 90 111.



## BOATS WITH ENGINES

Your boat needs a licence, Boat Safety Certificate and insurance.

### Look after your waterways

- Avoid creating a breaking wash and don't run your propeller while moored.
- Help keep the water clean and free from oil, diesel, petrol, detergents and other harmful substances. Follow **Navigate with Nature** advice, call 01784 47 33 77 for a copy.

### Consider others

- Take care to position mooring pins, ropes and cables so they are not a danger to towpath users - if possible, make them conspicuous with a marker or cover.
- Don't obstruct locks, bridges, water points or turning points.
- When passing anglers, unless they politely request otherwise, keep to the centre of the channel, reduce your wash but maintain a steady pace.
- Slow down when passing moored or unpowered boats.
- Please note local signs concerning fishing matches.

### Take care

- You and your crew must understand how to operate your boat and navigate locks, bridges and tunnels. Read the **Boater's Handbook** before setting off.
- Watch your footing to avoid falls.
- Pay attention to avoid collisions.
- Don't use your body to try and stop the boat, you could get crushed.
- Take things easy. Don't strain.
- Understand the risks of fire and explosions on boats.

## CYCLISTS

You need a permit and information telling you which stretches are open to cyclists.

### Look after your waterways

- Avoid cycling where your tyres would damage the path or verges (eg when they are wet or soft).

### Consider others

- Give way to others on the towpath and warn them of your approach. Pedestrians have priority. A polite 'hello' and 'thank you' mean a lot.
- Watch out for anglers' tackle and give them time to move it before you try to pass.
- Dismount under low, narrow or blind bridges.
- Never race one another or perform speed trials.
- We recommend you obtain third party liability insurance and equip your bike with a bell or hooter.

### Take care

- Access paths can be steep and slippery. Join and leave the towpath with care.
- You must get off and push your cycle beneath low or blind bridges, and where the path is very narrow.
- We strongly advise against cycling the towpath after dark, but if you have to, use front and rear lights.
- Thorny hedge trimmings can cause a puncture. We recommend plastic-reinforced tyres.

**Only cycle on stretches where it is permitted. Check with the local waterway office or [www.britishwaterways.co.uk](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk).**

## ANGLERS

Most stretches are leased to angling clubs and many sell day tickets.

### Look after your waterways

- Discarded hooks and lines, bottles and tins can kill or injure wildlife. Gather them up and take them away with you.

### Consider others

- Make sure the towpath is easily passable by keeping your fishing tackle tidy.
- Don't obstruct locks, bridges, designated moorings, water points or turning points.
- Boat crews need access to the bank within 25 metres of locks or moveable bridges so do not fish there.
- Use a pole cup if you need to feed close to boats: don't throw or catapult groundbait onto the decks or against the hulls of boats - it damages paintwork.
- Don't bounce tackle off boats or tap them with pole tips - chipped paint is expensive to repair, and hooks in ropes can be very dangerous.
- Boats are people's homes so please respect their privacy, including those on the opposite bank. Try to fish at least 15 metres away.
- Some boats will not be able to avoid you if you fish on the outside of bends.

### Take care

- Don't fish within 30 metres of overhead power lines. Look out and look up - electricity kills!

## UNPOWERED CRAFT

If you belong to the British Canoe Union, your membership includes the necessary licence. Otherwise contact us for details.

### Consider others

- When passing anglers, unless they politely request otherwise, follow a straight course and keep to the centre of the channel, in single file.
- Don't perform speed events without permission from the local waterway office.

### Take care

- Make sure your craft is suitable for the waterway you are using and that you are competent to use it.
- Larger craft need deeper water and room to manoeuvre so move to the side of the channel where the helmsman can see you.
- Contact the local waterway office or visit our website to check our safety regulations. Unpowered craft are not permitted through many tunnels or on parts of some larger river navigations.
- If you are permitted to use a tunnel, carry a light and whistle to warn other craft of your presence. Travel through in groups of at least three.
- Wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid while afloat.
- Locks, weirs and sluices are dangerous. Don't stay aboard your craft in a filling or emptying lock - carry it around, or if it is too heavy, use lines to keep control.

