

Guidance for Boaters during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Government have announced that they will update guidance on permitted outdoor activities again. As of 4th July 2020 there will be no specific restriction on any form of boating or paddle sport activity – however there is increased emphasis on ensuring all participants adhere to current Covid 19 safety advice.

This means that you may use privately owned powered vessel on the Canal, including overnight stays, as long as you are compliant with all licensing requirements of the Basingstoke Canal. (see our website www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk – ‘On the water’) and follow government guidance.

General advice

If anyone becomes unwell with a new continuous cough or high temperature or a loss of, or change in their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia) they should:

- **not** travel to the Canal or use any boats, instead they should stay at home and follow government guidance for self-isolating / NHS track and trace.
- whilst on board a boat on the Canal, go home immediately and follow government guidance for self-isolating / NHS track and trace. You should also inform the BCA Office as soon as possible where you have left your boat and why.

Good personal hygiene is to be followed at all times to include regular handwashing - 20 seconds with soap and water where possible, and anti-bacterial gel (minimum 60% alcohol) where clean water is unavailable.

The Canal Visitor Centre at Mytchett, public toilets, campsite, and play area will re-open from 4th July

All Boaters

- When not on board the boat please follow social distancing guidelines.
- Do not picnic or set up tables & chairs on the towpath or in busy areas.
- Take your own refreshment supplies on board for the duration of your stay to avoid or reduce stops at shops on route.
- No mooring up right next to other boats. Allow a generous distance between moored boats and avoid close interaction with other boaters.
- Do not share a vehicle or boat with anyone from outside your household/bubble.

- Where shared surfaces need to be used, boaters should exercise good personal hygiene.
- Avoid mooring/stopping by busy areas of towpath.

Powered Boats

- Owners of **private boats** registered with the BCA can make visits to their moored boat or launch a **trail boat** and cruise the Canal as normal taking account of the latest guidance and information below. This now includes overnight stays, in accordance with the boating rules for the Canal.
- All registered **trail boats** need to obtain their day licence in advance as normal; the Canal Centre will be open at weekends from 4 July. If you have not used a trail boat on the Canal before you will need to register your details with us before you can obtain your day licence please contact the Canal Centre office for more details.
- From 4 July commercial **self-drive day and holiday hire boats** are now allowed to operate as long as groups using the boats are from the same household/ bubble - *please check government guidance for more information on "bubbles"*. All such commercial operations are subject to the operator supplying a risk assessment compliant with Government guidance to the BCA for approval.
- Also from 4 July commercial **skipped public trip boats** *may* also restart if they are able to comply with the latest Covid 19 advice for businesses. Operators of public trip vessels on the Canal may only restart their operations once a Risk Assessment and Safe Method of Working has been approved by the BCA. Any such operators should contact the BCA to discuss their plans.
- The BCA will not be restarting its own "*Rosebud*" trip boat operations at the Canal Centre at the present time.
- **Visiting boats** from other waterways may now come onto the Canal as per normal terms and conditions up to a maximum 1 month.
- Please contact the Canal Centre office on 01252 370073 or email info@basingstoke-canal.co.uk to discuss all powered boat licensing issues.

Powered boaters are advised to avoid where possible touching popular surfaces such as:

- Water points & associated padlocks and taps
- Slipway barriers and associated padlocks
- Car park height barriers and associated padlocks
- Rubbish disposal areas and associated padlocks or keypads
- Mooring posts

- Picnic tables
 - Elsan disposal point
 - Boat pump-out
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- All rubbish for disposal should where possible be taken home for disposal. If using boaters' bins, please double bag all rubbish before depositing.
 - Do not share windlasses/lock keys with other boaters.
 - When handling ropes and mooring up, boaters advised to exercise good personal hygiene as ropes and consequently mooring bollards are a shared surface.
 - If you wish to use lock flights please book in with the Canal Centre office as per normal procedure. Ash lock is open as usual.
 - When using locks only one boat at a time to use the lock.
 - The pump-out facility at the Canal Centre is now available to use as normal. Please purchase a token from the Canal Centre.
 - The elsan disposal points at Bridge Barn and the Canal Centre are now both available for use.
 - Boats where possible should be filled up with water at home before you set off to reduce use of water points.
 - Thoroughly check your boat's electrical and mechanical systems before setting off to reduce the possibility of breakdown and the need for external assistance.

Unpowered Boats

- You may participate in water-based activities as an individual, household group, or up to a maximum of 6 people from different households who are socially distancing (i.e. you should keep 2 metres apart). For example, it would not be possible to form a 'double' canoe or kayak or rowing boat with someone from outside your household because it would be impossible when doing so to follow social distancing guidelines.
- Unpowered boaters are advised to avoid where possible touching popular shared surfaces such as:
 - Canoe launching steps
 - BW Padlocks
 - Height barriers

- Slipway barriers
- You can paddle on the Canal if you hold a valid BCA licence or British Canoeing Membership (please carry your card).
- Paddle in line with your skill level. It is never advisable to paddle on your own for personal safety. We strongly advise wearing of personal buoyancy aids.
- Equipment should be wiped down prior to use and on return home.
- Do not share equipment with anyone from outside your household/bubble.
- Do not share a vehicle with anyone from outside your household/bubble.
- Be mindful when unloading boats from vehicles to allow adequate space between vehicles to maintain social distancing.

All daily and weekly unpowered boat licences to be purchased via online shop

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/shop/product.php?productid=17330&cat=339&page=1>

Or from our website at

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/basingstokecanal/onthewater>

Annual licences can be purchased from the online shop, or you can join British Canoeing.

For regular updates on the canal please follow our facebook page
@basingstokecanal or on Twitter @TheBCATeam