

Southwest Herts Narrowboat Project

Pre- Trip Safety Briefing.

N.B. This briefing outline is provided as guidance. It is the responsibility of each group leader to make their own safety assessment (having regard to the ages, abilities and circumstances of their group) and brief the group accordingly.

N.B. Regulations require that all persons on board should be briefed on the stowage and use of buoyancy aids, lifebuoys and rescue lines, as well as the location of emergency exits and the identity of the nominated first aider.

The person in charge and one other adult must be aware of:

- 1. The procedures for recovering a person from the water.*
- 2. The position and use of fire fighting equipment*
- 3. Methods of starting stopping and controlling the main engine.*

Danger of Falling Overboard

Use of life jackets (Project Policy Lifejackets to be worn by all children and non-swimmers, when outside the well of the boat). Non slip shoes should be worn at all times.

When on gunwales (edges of the boat) at least one hand should always be holding the rail (beware gaps in rails by side doors.)

When on roof - three points of the body should always be in contact with roof.

When on steering platform, stand in front of the tiller.

The life ring should always be on the roof within reach of the helmsman.

Crew should familiarise themselves with the working of rescue lines.

Danger of Crushing

In no circumstance should anyone try to fend off the boat with their hands or feet or with a pole.

When leaving the boat, wait till the boat touches the bank or mooring then step off. Do not jump while there is a gap.

Do not stand on the gunwales (sides of the boat) while in locks or going through narrow bridges.

Beware low bridges, especially when on the roof. (Warning of low bridges should always be given by the helm)

Danger of Slipping or Tripping

Loose objects should not be left lying on the decks, roof or cabin floor

Beware of ropes and other equipment that need to be on the roof.

Danger from Gas and Fire

The gas locker should always be unlocked for instant access to valves.

On smelling gas, notify leader, close all gas valves and ventilate cabin. Light no flames.

No smoking is allowed anywhere on board the boat at any time.

Locks

Locks present special dangers and will be the subject of a separate safety briefing at the first lock

Safety at Locks (Briefing for all while tied up by first lock)

Locks are the potentially the most dangerous place on the canal for boaters. They are also where boat damage usually occurs. Constant vigilance is required by all.

All steerers and leaders should familiarise themselves with the relevant section of The Boater's Handbook (In cabin)

Dangers to people - Falling in

Locks are deep so there is real danger of drowning. There is also the danger of a long fall onto the concrete cill.

As well of the danger of drowning anyone who falls into a lock faces three additional dangers.

1. Being sucked into sluices> Immediately Close all sluices (drop paddles)
2. Danger from the propeller> Immediately Stop engine
3. Danger of crushing from the boat> Immediately Protect from crushing

Care should be taken when crossing the lock gates. The lock gates should not be moved with people on them.

Danger from working gear.

Beware of loose clothing or long hair that may catch in the mechanism.

Ensure the ratchet is engaged before raising the paddle and after lowering it.

Never leave the windlass (lock key) on the spindle.

When lowering the paddle take the weight on the lock key before removing the ratchet.

When moving the lock gate, wherever possible lean back on the gate and push with the legs to avoid damage to the back.

Dangers to the boat

Always ensure that the paddles are down at the far end before opening any sluices.

When locking down, always keep the boat at the front of the lock to avoid the back hanging on the cill. Should the back hang on the cill, close all paddles to stabilise the situation and then refill the lock to float the boat off. *(The boat has been damaged several times in this way. If the boat hangs up and the situation is not rectified quickly there is a danger of sinking)*

If the boat is in danger of drifting back into cill or lock gates, lay tiller over to one side to avoid rudder damage and being knocked overboard by swinging tiller..

When locking up, always ensure that ground paddles are opened before gate paddles. Do not raise the gate paddles until the gate sluices are covered. *(Danger of water filling the boat)*