



Guidance for Boaters and Canal Users during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Government have announced that we will enter a second “lockdown” period on Thursday 5 November 2020 for at least 4 weeks to combat the growing numbers of Covid 19 infections. Whilst not quite the same as the first lockdown in March/April this will still restrict normal activities on the Canal, as people are largely asked to stay at home.

From Thursday 5 November you may not use a privately owned powered boat on the Canal, including for any overnight stays, unless it is your primary residence. You will also not be able to travel to visit or maintain your boat.

You can still canoe or kayak on the Canal as part of your daily outdoor exercise. You can also fish on the Canal as angling is also classed as outdoor recreation, although there should be no night fishing.

You can walk and cycle on the towpath, please respect other people’s space and keep as much distance as possible. Cyclists should pay extra care to other users and slow their pace as the towpaths are expected to be very busy especially at weekends.

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.

Visitor Facilities

The Canal Visitor Centre at Mytchett will be closed but you can still call our team on the general phone number 01252 370073 or contact us via email info@basingstoke-canal.co.uk or via our social media platforms. We will be using our Facebook page @basingstokecanal for posting regular updates.

The Canal towpath, car parks, Canal Centre grounds and play area will remain open for daily exercise. The public toilets at the Canal Centre will be open during the day.

Construction works to maintain and improve the Canal will be continuing – please watch our Facebook page for details of closures or restrictions on the towpath during works.

We have been informed that the Canal Café at Mytchett will be closed for the duration of the lockdown.

Boaters facilities at Bridge Barn, Canal Centre and Colt Hill will remain open for the small number of live-aboard vessels currently on the water.

Powered boats

Privately owned boats

- You should not be using the water with a powered boat at this time – as in the previous lockdown powered boating is not considered a permitted recreational activity.
- You must not stay on your boat overnight, unless it is your primary residence.
- We have sought guidance from DEFRA on whether you can travel to winterize or maintain a privately owned boat – and have been informed this is not permitted, as it is considered non-essential travel.
- The small number of live-aboard boaters visiting the waterway during lockdown may move from a mooring agreed with the BCA to access boater's welfare, grocery shops or boatyard facilities and return, but they should not cruise the waterway for other purposes.

Commercial powered boats

- Owners of commercial (self-drive hire / passenger boats) may move their boats for work purposes (e.g.; to carryout maintenance).
- No passenger trips or self-drive hires are permitted.

Unpowered Boats

General information for unpowered boaters

You may only participate in water-based activities as an individual or as a household group. 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
- Waterway Padlocks (aka BW or BWB padlocks)
- Height barriers
- Slipway barriers
- You can paddle on the Canal if you hold a valid BCA licence or British Canoeing 'on the water' 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.

Organised groups

- There should be no organised groups or tuition sessions at this time.

Licensing for unpowered boats

All boats including canoes, kayaks, paddleboards and rowing boats on the Canal must have a licence to use the Canal. For further info on licensing see our website at:

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

- BCA daily, weekly and annual unpowered boat licences can be purchased via our online shop: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/shop/product.php?productid=17330&cat=339&page=1>
- Joining *British Canoeing* as an 'on the water' member gives you free access to the Canal – please carry your membership card you may be asked to prove you are a current member. One card is required per canoe / kayak / paddleboard. Rowing boats, skiffs, punts, etc are not covered by British Canoeing Membership scheme – you will need a BCA licence for these.

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