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CAPTAIN'S HANDBOOK

We are pleased to present the latest edition of our Captain's Handbook.

In it you will find ideas for preparing your cruise, details of the services we offer and vital information on how your boat works.

The section dedicated to boat handling has been extended to include even more hints on safe boating. The Captain's Handbook is the product of lengthy experience so take the time to go through it and if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact your departure base.

Other information specific to your cruising region is now available on our website; the address is on the cover. So read on and happy boating!

I. Before your Departure



1. Preparing your Holiday

What you should bring

The most important items to bring with you are comfortable non-slip shoes and waterproof clothing. Other useful items include sun glasses, a hat and a torch. A good pair of gardening gloves is useful for protection when you are handling the mooring lines.

What you can order in advance

Navigation guides

An enjoyable cruise is a well-prepared cruise. For this, we recommend that you purchase in advance a navigation guide for your cruising region.

These guides, with accurate maps are an indispensable aid. Not only will you find the waterway shown in detail, but also advice on places to visit and a list of the best restaurants. Everything is there, from mooring places, water points, to the small village bakery.

Your groceries

If you wish you can order your groceries in advance and they will be delivered to your boat on your departure day. For further details and an order form, visit our website.

2. On Arrival at the Departure Base

Welcome

To find a plan showing how to reach your departure base and to obtain the office opening hours for each base you should consult our website. If you think you will arrive outside office opening hours, advise the base manager or your booking agent. He will give you instructions about going aboard.

Hand over

Your boat will be ready between 16.00 and 18.00 (in Ireland 16.00 to 20.00). Please do not go aboard before being invited to do so at Reception so as not to delay our maintenance staff. Our team will do their best to make your boat available as early as possible.

The security deposit /damage waiver

Your boat is fully insured, but you will be responsible for any damage to the boat itself or to any third party up to the amount of the security deposit.

If you prefer, you can opt for the damage waiver which will cover you for any accidental damage. It will not cover the loss of bicycles, dinghies and deck gear such as chairs, tables and parasols or for any negligence or wilful loss or damage.

Consumable costs

Fuel consumed will be charged at the end of your cruise according to the reading on the boat's hour meter. Whether you choose the damage waiver or the security deposit, we will request a deposit for fuel. Your payment must be made in the currency of the country, by cheque, by traveller's cheque or by credit/debitcard.

Travellers' cheques and Eurocard are not accepted in Ireland.

Bicycles

Bicycles are available for hire at your departure base or can be reserved in advance.

Please do check that they are locked to the boat at all times. This will prevent anyone from "borrowing them" or their being swept off by a low branch. In case of loss, an amount of 200 € will be reclaimed per bicycle.

Parking facilities

In France and in Germany, you will be able to leave your vehicle in an enclosed parking area. At some places we can also propose covered parking lots. None of our parking areas are guarded.

In Ireland the cars are parked on open and unguarded parking areas.

The company declines any responsibility in the event of damage to or theft of your vehicle. Parking is at your own risk.

One-way cruises

If you have chosen a one-way cruise, you must contact your departure base 48 hours before you are due to take over your boat; this in order to confirm the direction of your cruise.

According to the region chosen, you will be able to ask for your vehicle or your crew to be transferred from one base to another. Consult our website to check the service available in your chosen area.

In the event of a vehicle transfer, the drivers, who are company employees, will take all necessary care but cannot be held responsible if an accident occurs. In this case the vehicle's own insurance will be called upon. When the vehicle is handed over, you will be asked to show an insurance certificate.

Messages

We advise you to leave your mobile telephone number at the base. This will enable us to contact you if needed. In Ireland, there is a mobile telephone supplied with your boat.



II. During your Cruise



1. Assistance

Instructions

Once your luggage is on board and your car parked for the week, it is time to receive your instructions which will make you a competent captain. One of our staff will come on board to show you how everything works. Listen carefully and do not hesitate to ask him questions.

If it is your first cruise, he will accompany you for a short time and teach you the basic manoeuvres. He may also accompany you through the first lock.

Technical assistance

If you should require technical assistance during your cruise, you can contact your departure base 7 days a week from 8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. (9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Ireland) and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.. When calling you must give your name, the name of your boat, your exact location, if possible your mobile number and the nature of your problem. A technician will assist you as soon as possible. If it is outside office hours, leave a message on the answer phone.

Technical assistance is free except if the incident is a result of your negligence.

Emergencies

You will find with the ship's papers the numbers to contact in the event of an emergency. To contact the local rescue services, no matter which country you may be in, you can dial 112 from your mobile phone.

2. What you will Find Aboard

Inventory

Navigation equipment: anchor, mooring lines, life buoy, life jackets (to obtain extra life jackets for your children enquire at the departure base).

Cleaning equipment: bucket, dust pan and brush, mop (you will find a small bottle of washing up liquid aboard but the other cleaning products are not supplied).

Kitchen ware: all the crockery and cutlery you will need is on board, even wine glasses.

Bed linen: towels sheets, pillow slips, duvets and duvet covers are supplied. To see the precise inventory for the boat you have chosen, consult our website.



Domestic equipment on the boat

Drinking water

The water tanks have a capacity of between 500 and 1 000 litres. This is sufficient for two to three days. We therefore recommend you fill up the tank at every opportunity (water points are indicated in the cruising guide). The water filler cap, which is round and blue, is situated on the deck on one side of your boat. A water key is on board, which will open the filler cap, and there is a 20 metre hose on board.

▲ Be careful not to fill the water tank with fuel by mistake.

An electrical pump distributes the water to the different taps. This needs to be switched on beforehand, on the control panel or where shown to you by your instructor. Your pump will then start up automatically every time you turn on a tap, and will stop when you turn it off.

Be careful, if you empty the tank completely the pump will not stop and the impeller will then be damaged. If your tank empties, switch the pump off. Also switch it off overnight and when you leave the boat. If you should run out of water, you will have to remove air locks from the system after refilling the tank. To do this: switch the pump on, turn all the taps on, then turn them off one after the other as the water starts running freely.

Hot water

Hot water is produced by a calorifier. This is heated by the engine and needs to run for about 1 hour to provide hot water. The water will remain hot for up to 8 hours after you stop the engine.

The shower

As you take your shower, waste water collects in a tray underneath the duck boards. Most do not empty themselves automatically and you will need to press the switch on the wall of the shower compartment. Remember to drain the shower tray and remove any impurities that could obstruct the filter.

▲ The capacity of the water tanks on your boat is limited. Make sure you use as little water as possible each time you turn on the taps or take a shower.

Toilets

Marine toilets have delicate mechanisms and are easily blocked. To avoid any inconvenience, do not put anything other than toilet paper into the toilet. Also, try not to use too much toilet paper at a time. You must also flush thoroughly.

There are four different types of toilets:

Flap type WC. Simply depress the foot pedal to open the flap in the bowl and operate the hand pump to flush as necessary.

Hand pump marine toilet. Switch the small handle at the top of the pump towards the bowl and pump until the water is clean, then switch it away from the bowl and pump again to empty.

Toilet with foot pedal valve. Press the pedal at the bottom of the bowl while pumping to bring clean water, then release the pedal and pump to empty.





Electric saniflow toilets. Push the button several times. Be careful, these models do not cope with excess amounts of paper.

Waste water

In Germany, Scotland and Great Britain, our boats have holding tanks which recover the waste water from the kitchen, showers and toilets. These must be emptied every two to three days. Your departure base will give you all the necessary information as to the location of pump out stations.

Each boat has a warning light which will tell you when the tank is nearly full. As soon as it comes alight, go to the nearest pump out station and empty your tank. Once the lamp is alight, there is very little room left in the tank. Do not use the shower or the toilets until the tank has been emptied.

The bilge pump

Every boat takes in a little water, for example via the stern gland. A pump placed near the stern turns on automatically if the level of water increases too much. It is controlled by a two-position switch : manual and automatic. Keep it on automatic, but, to check that the pump is working, turn it to manual from time to time. You will then hear its motor turning and see water being thrown out of the stern or side

Electrical equipment

Electricity on board is provided by 12 volt batteries, recharged by the engine. One battery is for starting only, the other ones are for the domestic equipment on board. To ensure that the batteries remain properly charged it is essential that the engine runs three to four hours each day (a little more for a boat equipped with an electric fridge or air conditioning). All boats are equipped with a 12 volt cigar-lighter type-plug. You can connect your adaptor lead for a mobile phone or any other low power equipment with the appropriate connection.

There are also 220 volt plugs for the connection of electric razors. You can plug in a mobile telephone charger or any other low power appliance but nothing else. In particular, don't use them for hair dryers or irons.

▲ Remember that the capacity of the batteries is limited and try to keep your consumption to a minimum. Avoid leaving lights switched on unnecessarily, etc.

Battery cut off switches

A large red switch allows isolation of the batteries (in case of fire for example). In all other cases, do not touch it. If on the other hand an electrical breakdown occurs, check that the switch has not been put to "off" by mistake.

Fuses and circuit breaker

Two big red switches enable the batteries to be isolated (for example, in the event of a fire). In normal circumstances, don't touch them. If you

have a general power failure on board, you should first check that they have not been switched off by mistake.

Refrigerator

Your boat is equipped, according to its size, with one or two refrigerators. Do not expect them to perform with the same efficiency as a household fridge. It is advisable not to overload them and to avoid opening the door unnecessarily.

A helpful hint: if your boat has two fridges, keep one for food and the other for drinks. Do not put bottles in the door compartments, they will keep the door open and let the cold out.

Gas refrigerators function by means of a gas fed flame, and you can check to make sure it is alight through the small inspection porthole situated in the back of the fridge compartment at the bottom left hand side. If the flame is no longer alight, proceed as follows:

1. Check that the bottle of gas is full and the valve and cut off tap in the pipe is open.
2. Place the thermostat on the maximum position.
3. Press the security button and keep it pressed in whilst you click the ignition button several times.
4. After ignition, keep the security button pressed for 20 seconds.

Electric refrigerators are fed by the domestic batteries. When the power supply goes below 11 volts they cut off automatically so as not to damage the batteries. You need then to recharge them by starting the engine.

Here is some useful advice:

- As soon as the refrigerator and its contents are at an acceptable temperature, reduce the thermostat to 2.
- Avoid opening the door unnecessarily, especially when the small red lamp is alight or flashes (a sign that the battery is too low).
- for fully automatic refrigerators, do not adjust the programme. If the lights come on, ask for instructions from your departure base.

Heating

Gas heating systems function as follows:

- open the gas tap;
- press the security button and hold a match to the appropriate area whilst keeping the button pressed for 10 seconds.

▲ **Beware, all gas appliances functioning in closed environments consume oxygen. Never leave a gas appliance alight when going to bed. Always ventilate the area via a window or some other opening.**

Hot air heaters use the same diesel as the boat's engine, but the heat is spread by an electric fan system and will therefore consume energy. Never leave the heater on unnecessarily or during the night.

To start the system proceed as follows:

- turn the switch to the position "Heat" or "Start" ;





– the system will take about 5 to 10 minutes to preheat, so do not worry if you feel no heat straight away.

If the system malfunctions, switch it off, start the boat's engine, which will give you more electrical energy, then re-start the heater.

▲ **If you leave your boat, turn off the heating.**

Fuel

Your tank will be filled before your departure, and this is normally sufficient for one week. For longer cruises, your instructor will indicate where you can refuel.

As with a car, the consumption is related to your speed. By avoiding over acceleration, you will use less fuel, cause less pollution and will be travelling at much the same speed.

Gas

Your boat is fed by two gas bottles of 13 kilograms generally located in an external area of the boat. These two bottles are already connected, which avoids you having to manhandle them. If you should run out of gas, close the empty bottle and open the full one. On some boats, you will have to turn the knob on the regulator so that the arrow points towards the working bottle.

▲ **Never let gas escape inside the boat. Heavier than air, it accumulates in the bilges and becomes particularly dangerous. If you suspect a leak, close the two gas bottles, turn all electrical appliances off (fridge, water pump, bilge pump, etc.) and do not let anyone smoke. Open all doors, windows, hatches, etc. to ventilate the boat, and call for technical assistance.**

Security equipment

Fire extinguishers

Your boat is equipped with at least one fire extinguisher. To avoid having to use it, respect the following guidelines :

Never leave a flame unattended.

Ensure that no curtain or any other inflammable material is near the cooker.

In case of fire:

- turn the gas off;
- use the fire-extinguisher if the size of the fire requires this.

For proper use of a fire extinguisher:

- unhook it from its support;
- remove the security pin;
- aim the extinguisher at the base of the flame;
- press the lever and control the pressure with your thumb.

Fire blankets

The fire blanket can be used to put out clothes which are on fire or if the frying pan catches alight. For any other type of fire a fire extinguisher is more effective.

Take time to read the instructions delivered with this equipment prior to a potential emergency.

Life jackets

There is no shame in wearing a life jacket especially if you are not a confident swimmer. Each boat has the requisite number of life jackets on board, and each base has a range of children's sizes. Do encourage children to wear them even if only during lock manoeuvres.

3. How your Boat Works

The controls

The dashboards of our boats are very similar to those of a car but the control levers are different.

The control lever engages the propeller to move the boat forwards or backwards and to accelerate. This same lever, by putting into neutral, also allows the engine to run and be revved without engaging the propeller (and so without the boat moving), which is useful for starting and heating the engine, or recharging the batteries.

The dual controls that some boats are equipped with require a very simple action to transfer from one steering position to the other:

- Ensure that the two throttle levers (external and internal) are precisely in neutral.
- Turn the transfer handle a quarter of a turn.

▲ **Never force this system: if it does not work, this is because one of the levers is not exactly in neutral.**

▲ **Never change your position without also transferring the control, as above.**

To start the engine

Firstly disengage drive by pulling out the neutral button. Then push the throttle-lever forward about half-way.

Turn the ignition key on and clockwise to the preheat position and keep it here for 20 seconds.

Then turn the key to the next position (and push in) to start engine. Once it starts, throttle back straight away so as not to race the engine.

Check that the rev-counter is functioning to ensure that the key is in the correct running position.

Come back into neutral. To engage drive the neutralising button must now be pushed in, and then you are ready to cast off.

▲ **Before leaving the quay, make sure that the control levers respond.**

To stop the engine

Apart from rare exceptions, the starting key is not used to stop the engine. You must proceed as follows:

- **Electric stop:** press the button marked "Stop", then turn the key to the off position.
- **Manual stop:** pull out the stop handle, turn the key to the off position then push back the stop handle (if you do not do this you will be unable to restart the engine).





The alarm

Every boat has a visual and audio alarm. If the latter sounds this can indicate that the oil pressure is too low or that the engine is overheating. If the alarm comes on stop immediately and call the base. Do not continue or you could seriously damage the engine.

The propeller

In order to function properly, a propeller needs to be in perfect condition. The biggest risk of damage is whilst coming alongside. To prevent this, avoid engaging it when the stern of the boat is not in deep water. If you see a branch or any other object and it is not too late to avoid it, go into neutral.

The propeller can collect weeds, plastic bags or various other objects such as a mooring rope left trailing behind. If this happens the boat will slow down and the engine will vibrate. You can try to clear the propeller by alternatively passing from forward gear to backward gear a few times. If this does not work, the problem is more serious and you should call your departure base for instructions.

The bow thruster

Some of our boats are equipped with bow thrusters, a propeller placed crosswise at the bows allowing easier sideways movement of the boat whilst manoeuvring.

Do not use it when coming alongside if the bow is very close to the riverbed or bank.

Do not use it if the boat is actually moving forwards or backwards – only when the boat has stopped.

▲ The bow thruster must not be used for more than 5 seconds at a time. It is only there to briefly assist manoeuvres and is not designed to be played with.

4. Breakdowns and Remedies

If something does not work on board, do not hesitate to call our technicians. However, the following is a list of the most frequent problems and the appropriate remedies.

- **The engine will not start:**
 - Flat battery.
 - Battery cut-off switch in off position.
- **The Engine turns but will not start:**
 - Insufficient pre-heating.
 - Engine stop handle has not been pushed back in.
- **After starting the engine the alternator warning light stays on:**
 - Accelerate and the light should go out
- **The engine is overheating:**
 - Blocked filter.
- **Lack of water in heat exchanger:**
 - The fan belt broken, call the base.

- **Some of the electrics don't work:**
 - Check fuses or circuit breakers.
 - **None of the electric systems work:**
 - The house battery is flat.
 - The battery cut-off switch is in the off position.
 - **The water level in the bilge is higher than it should be:**
 - Check that the bilge pump is working properly by turning it on manually. If the boat continues to fill with water, call the base.
- ▲ Before any verification or intervention, put the controls in the neutral position and take out the ignition key.

5. Return to the Base

On the last day of your cruise, you must hand the boat back by 9 a.m. at the latest. If you wish to leave the boat early in the morning, you should come to the reception office the previous evening before 6 p.m.. We will complete the formalities and you will be free to leave when you wish.

We would remind you that under the conditions of hire, the Company reserves the right to recover any expenses which it incurs as a result of late return or non-return of the boat. This will include an abandonment fee of 500 € for any boat not returned to the agreed place or at the agreed time.

The boat must be given back in a clean state. You must remove rubbish bags, wash and put away the dishes, etc. If this has not been done, the Company reserves the right to bill you for an amount between 50 € and 100 € per hour, depending on the type of boat and the state in which it is left.



III. Boat Handling



IN THE NEXT FEW PAGES we will give you some hints on boat handling and, in particular, how to negotiate a lock. Most of these hints will be repeated when you do your lesson at the beginning of your cruise. Do not hesitate to ask questions. A good boatman is one who appreciates the limits of his knowledge. He is always ready and willing to learn.

If you have never handled a boat before, you will be tempted to compare it with your car. There are some similarities but the differences are very important.

– To start with, a boat is poised on a liquid element, pushed by the current and the wind. Make sure you are aware of the effect they will have on you before setting out. If you are steering from inside, put your head outside and try to judge how the wind will effect your movement. To estimate the strength of the current, a simple method is to go into forward gear and find out the power needed to keep the boat in a stationary position.

– A boat is much heavier than a car (most of our boats weigh at least 7 tons), so it can do as much damage at a much slower speed. Take your time and carry out all manoeuvres slowly and deliberately. If you have the chance, watch a barge skipper handling his barge. He will not be hurried and the manoeuvres take place slowly, calmly and with a minimum of fuss.

– A car requires one driver who normally needs no help from his passengers. A boat requires a skipper and a crew. Before setting out, the captain should allocate tasks to everyone on board. For all manoeuvres, there should be one crewman on the bow, one at the stern and the skipper should remain at all times at the helm. In locks another crew member will be put ashore to help the lock keeper.

– A boat can be steered when it has steerage way, i.e. when it has attained a certain speed or when water is being thrust against the rudder. Response to the rudder is therefore more pronounced when you are accelerating so it is wise to keep a little in reserve at all times.

– A boat has no brakes and you will reverse the motor to slow down or stop but you should avoid going backwards as much as possible. When reversing a boat in shallow waters you are likely to damage the rudder or the propeller and you have limited control over the direction the boat is taking.

– Finally, boats and cars have one thing in common. To drive a car when you have had a little too much to drink is dangerous. In the same way, a boat in the hands of a drunken skipper can cause a lot of damage. So if your midday meal has been a little too festive, take a nap and set out later.

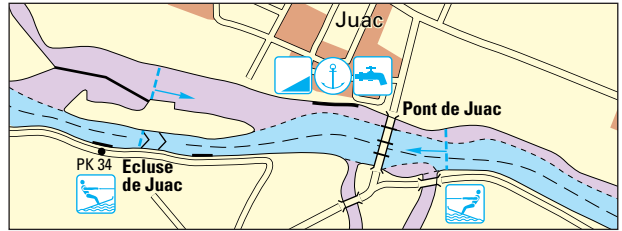


1. Before Leaving the Quay

Plan your day's cruising

Plan your day's cruising by referring to your navigation guide. The kilometre points will enable you to calculate the distances and a table at the beginning of the guide will give you cruising times between the main towns.

A little hint, allow for a maximum of 4 to 5 hours cruising each day; you will find that this is quite sufficient.



Start the motor

Before leaving your mooring, proceed as follows:

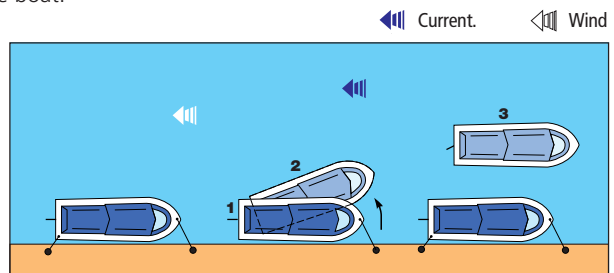
- Check that the throttle lever is in neutral and that the button for engaging the propeller is not out.
- If your boat has dual steering positions, ensure that the one you envisage using is the one selected.
- Start the engine.
- Ensure that all the gauges on the dashboard function normally and that the cooling water is flowing properly from the rear exhaust.
- Make sure that everyone is safely on board
- Allocate a position on the deck to each crew member.
- Ask your crew to let go the moorings and bring the lines on board.

2. Under Way

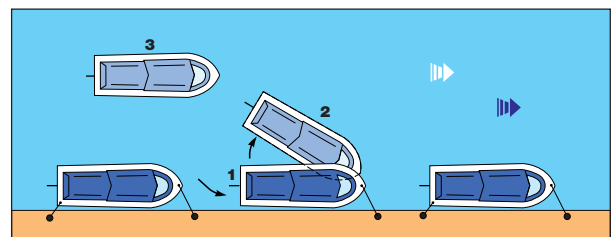
Leaving the quay

Firstly observe the wind and current conditions. See if the strongest of the two comes from the front or the rear of the boat.

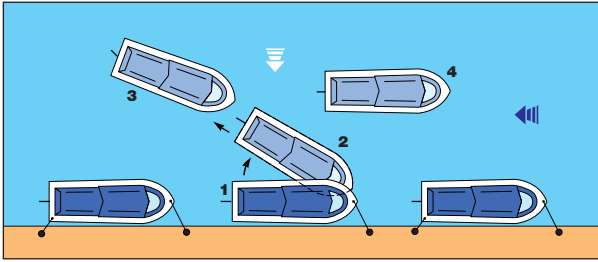
If the boat is moored facing the wind or the current, cast off the stern line first, then push the bow towards the middle of the river. Engage forward gear.



If the stern of the boat is being held by the wind or current, the manoeuvre is slightly more delicate: cast off by beginning with the bow. Push the stern away from the bank to free it. Move to the middle of the river in reverse gear before changing to forward gear.



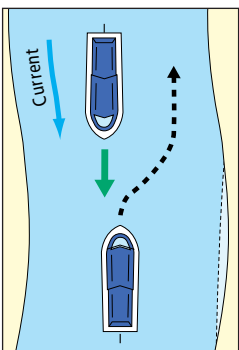
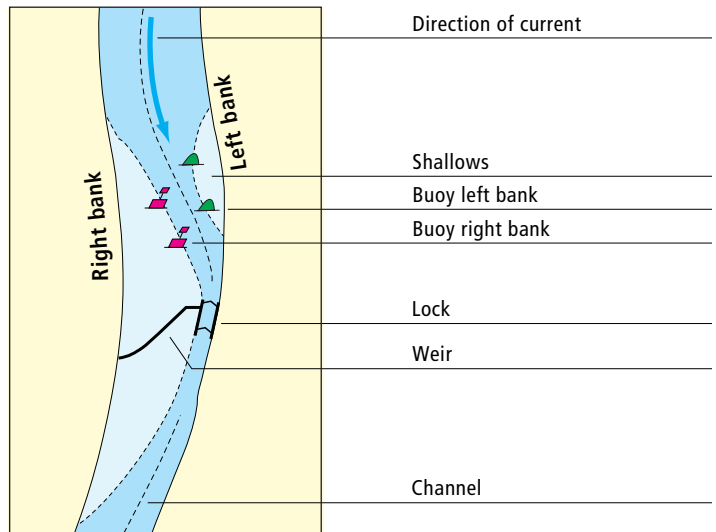
 Current
  Wind



If the boat is stuck to the quay because of very strong wind, use the following method: undo the stern line and engage forward gear. Whilst manoeuvring the bow remains moored, but ready to be cast off. The helmsman turns the wheel sharply towards the quay while accelerating a little. When the stern has moved out from the quay, one of the crew members casts off the bow line as the helmsman moves to the middle of the river in reverse gear.

The navigable channel

On a river and sometimes on a canal, the navigable channel is indicated by coloured buoys. The rule is simple: a boat going upstream should leave the red buoys on its left and the green (or black) buoys on its right. A boat going downstream (i.e. going down towards the sea or going down a set of locks), should leave the green (or black) buoys on its left and the red buoys on its right.



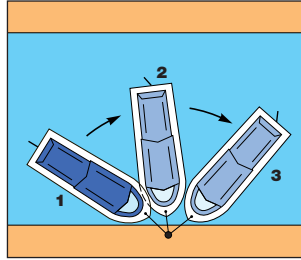
The rules of the road

Whether you are on a canal or a river, a boat going downstream or towards the sea always has priority over a boat going upstream.

How to turn around

Choose an area sufficiently wide. Slow down whilst keeping in forward gear. Turn the wheel and accelerate sharply to swing the stern around. Before reaching the opposite bank, stop the boat by going into reverse. The boat will continue to pivot with the momentum. When it stops turning, give another forward thrust etc. until the manoeuvre is completed.

In a very narrow section of water, there is another simple method you can use. Slowly approach a clear section of the bank and put a member of the crew ashore with the forward mooring line. With the bow moored, move forward slowly whilst steering into the bank. The stern will come slowly away from the bank, turn sufficiently to enable you to move off in the other direction.



Mooring

Choose your mooring place to avoid being too close to locks, bridges, etc..

When approaching the bank, check that the chosen area does not conceal any hidden danger such as a tree stump, a large submerged rock or stone or anything else that could damage the hull.

On a river, make sure that there is sufficient water under the boat in case the level goes down over night. Also ensure that the mooring lines are not too tight. If you have any doubt, moor your bow to the bank and stretch a rope from the stern to the bow on the far side of the boat to keep the stern away from the bank.

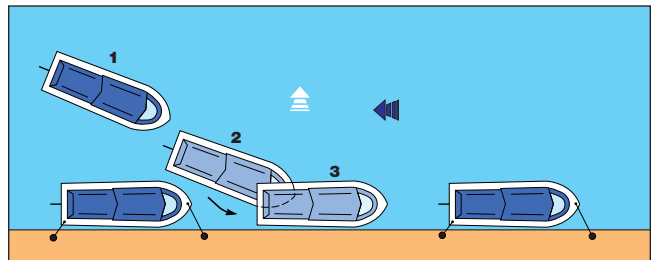
Don't spoil your holidays with a silly accident. Most accidents occur when a boat is being moored or in a lock. Here are some rules to follow:

- never let children put their feet or hands out of the boat while approaching a quay;
- in case of false manoeuvre, do not try to limit the damage by pushing the boat out with your hands or feet;
- check the nature of the ground before jumping ashore;
- never moor with your lines across a towpath. Anyone passing could injure themselves badly.

Mooring parallel to the quay

To moor alongside the quay, place one crew member at each mooring line, forward and aft. Approach slowly into the wind or current, the boat should form an angle of around 45° with the bank. When you two to three metres from the bank, slow down by going into reverse. As soon as the bow touches the bank, a crew member should jump ashore and attach the bow. The stern can then be pulled in by hand.

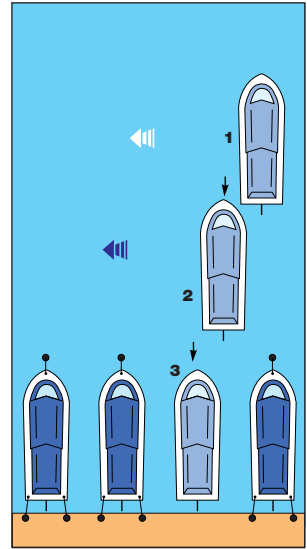
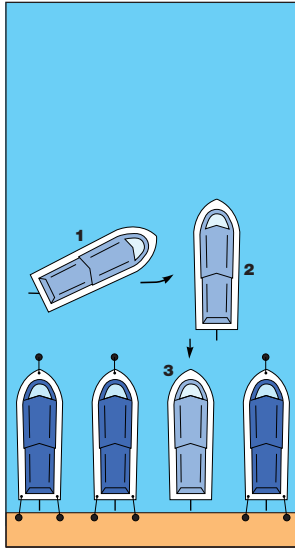
◀ Current ◀ Wind



Mooring stern to the quay

In many ports, you will be obliged to moor your boat "stern on". This manoeuvre can be particularly difficult, especially if there is a strong wind or current. It is important to come in forward, as close as possible to the place you wish to moor. Turn around making sure you allow for wind or

current, and finish in reverse gear. Before starting this manoeuvre, ensure that the depth of water is sufficient at the quay.



Mooring lines

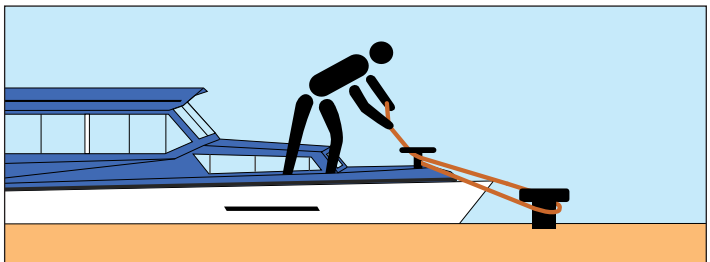
On board your boat you will find three mooring lines each about 15 metres long. Take good care of them and they will serve you well, neglect them or misuse them and they can be dangerous.

Never leave the cords trailing in the water, even if they float, ropes can be drawn into the propeller.

When they are not in use, coil your ropes neatly and leave them ready to be thrown. This is most important. Tangled ropes can cause accidents. Remove any knots before they become too tight to untie. Knots can prevent lines running freely at an inconvenient moment.

Use your mooring lines to help manoeuvre

When the wind or current are very strong, it can be wise to put a crew member ashore and use a mooring line to help in a difficult manoeuvre. Pass your line around the cleat on the boat as well as the bollard when locking through.



Floods

Navigation on rivers and sometimes even on canals can be affected by flooding. In this case the staff of your departure base would do their best to inform you as soon as possible. If, however, you see that the river has suddenly risen, that the current is very strong and that the water is full of sediment, check your moorings, stay tied up and contact your departure base.

If you want to know about navigation conditions before departure, do not hesitate to contact the base concerned. If navigation is impossible, we will offer you an alternative.

Running aground

If you have gone aground, firstly open one of the floor hatches and check that the boat is not taking in water. Use the boat hook to check around the perimeter of the boat to see what it is that has stopped you.

If you are aground on mud or sand, try to free yourself by going in reverse, positioning the heaviest crew member at the bow. If this does not work stop trying and contact the base.

If the riverbed is rocky or you detect any other hard obstacles, do not attempt anything simply contact your departure base.

Never try to be towed by another boat without the advice of one of our mechanics.

If after there is some damage and your boat begins to take in water, go towards the nearest bank, try to reduce the leak with towels, pillows or cloths (anything will do) and call us. Remember that the bucket on the boat is compulsory and can, in this case, be very useful as a bailer.

In the event of negligence leading to a grounding you may be charged the costs of refloating to the maximum of your deposit.

What to do if someone falls in the water

If a member of the crew falls in the water, put the engine into neutral to avoid any serious injury from the propeller. When at a safe distance, turn the boat around and go slowly back towards the person. Never reverse towards them. Put the engine into neutral as you approach them. If the person is sufficiently close to the boat, throw them the life belt or any other floating object. If the bank is near, it may be easier for them to climb onto the bank first rather than directly on to the boat.

The anchor

Your boat is equipped with an anchor and 15 metres of chain. It is not frequently used in inland waterways navigation but can be life saving if, for example, your motor stops as you approach a weir. Learn to make use of your anchor, it may be vital.

The boat hook

When pushing your boat away from a quay with a boat hook, make sure you do not place it in front of your body or in front of the boat's windows. In both cases the result can be dramatic. Do not use the boat hook while the boat is at cruising speed.



Some useful knots

All marine knots have their uses, but at least three are indispensable.

The cleat knot: make a figure of eight around the cleat and on the last turn reverse the loop placing the free end underneath so it tightens against itself.

The clove hitch: this knot is particularly useful to moor to a tree or any other kind of post. It is two reversed half-hitches. Its hold is extremely strong.

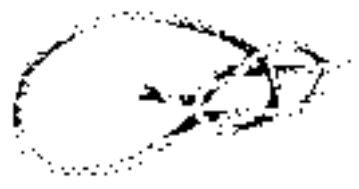
The bow line: this knot is used to make a loop in the end of a rope without splicing. It is a useful knot but needs some practise.



Cleat knot



Clove hitch



Bow line

3. Waterways Structures

Weirs

Some locks are situated very close to weirs and it is important to keep well away from them. Make sure as you approach these locks that you go directly to the mooring area with mooring lines ready. Check that your anchor is also ready to be used if necessary.

Never use your dinghy or swim near a weir.

Certain vertical weirs are particularly dangerous as the back current will draw small craft or swimmers towards the wall. Even a very low wall can be lethal. Keep well away and do not bathe near one of these constructions.

Bridges

Often only one arch of the bridge is suitable to pass through. Follow the signs scrupulously and check the map before proceeding.

Always pass through the centre of the arch as the pylons are usually wider under the water.

When passing under a low bridge, make sure that no part of the boat (upper rails, parasols, etc.) or any crew member is likely to be hit.

▲ The skipper should warn his crew members when approaching a low bridge.

Locks

According to different regions, locks can be manually operated or electrically operated or automatic, but the principle remains the same:



a lock is either filled or emptied, to allow a boat to pass from one level to the next.

Here are some helpful hints to ensure that locking through will be an enjoyable and safe experience:

– **When approaching a lock**, start by ensuring that no boats are already in the chamber. If this is the case, stay well clear to leave the boats coming out sufficient room to manoeuvre.

Before going into the lock put a member of your crew ashore; he will take the lines and may help the lock-keeper to open and close the gates and the sluice gates. Be careful, young children should not handle the sluice gates as they can be very dangerous.

If there are several boats waiting, each one should enter in the order in which it arrived. Do not jump the queue if there are boats waiting for a lock to be prepared.

– Leave the engine running slowly in the lock and the skipper should stay at or near the helm.

Put bow and stern lines around a ring or bollard but do not make fast. As the chamber fills or empties, a crew member at the stern and another at the bow should let out or pull in the lines.

▲ **Never make fast in a descending lock.**

In general, stay at a distance from the lock gates: too close to the upstream gates in a descending lock, and your rudder could sit on the sill. In an ascending lock, the bow could get caught in the upstream gate... with disastrous consequences!

Keep a close eye on your boat as it moves up or down. In some locks, the rubber protection and fenders could be caught in the wall structure so make sure there is enough space to avoid this.

If you are towing a dinghy, make sure of its position during the whole manoeuvre.

Manually operated locks

Sluice gates, which enable the chamber to be filled or emptied, are opened or closed by means of a handle.

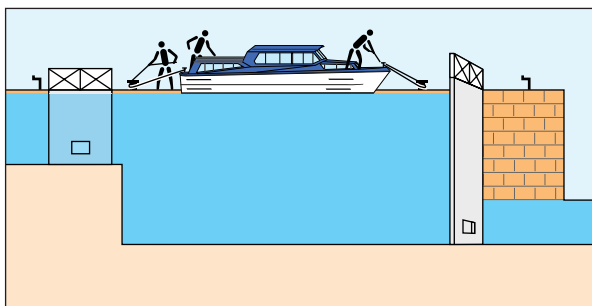
▲ **Make sure when you are opening a sluice gate that the non-return ratchet is in place.** If a lock handle escapes from your hand when going down, do not try to stop it. Its power is sufficient to break your arms.

Ensure that no one is trying to open the lock gates when the sluices are not totally closed or the current will close them very violently.

Never try to force the mechanism of the doors: if they are reluctant to open, it is probably because the level has not yet been perfectly established.

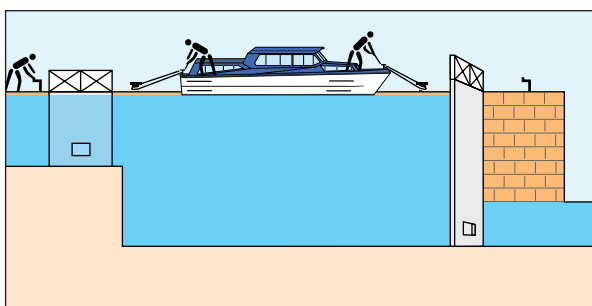
Like everybody, the lock-keeper has to keep to a work schedule. For example, he is allowed to close a few minutes before his lunch time if he thinks that your passage would make him late. Be patient and avoid disturbing him outside working hours. Most of all do not try to handle the lock by yourself.





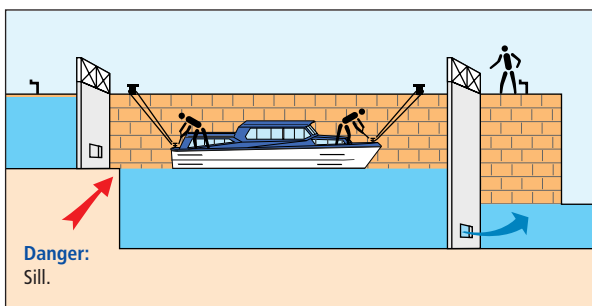
Going down.

Enter slowly. Stop your boat and moor fore and aft, passing the mooring lines around the lock bollard and back to the boat so that they can be recovered easily when you leave.

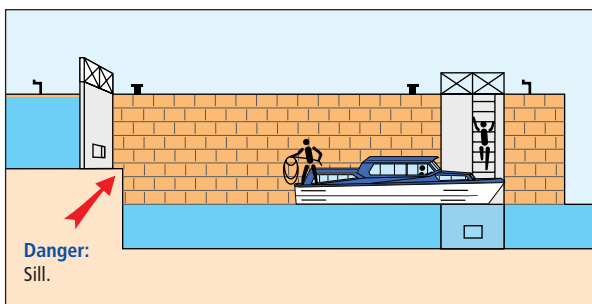


One crew member closes one gate on the upstream side and opens a sluice gate on the downstream side.

If you are only two, the stern line can be handed from the lock.



As the boat goes down, one person on each line holds the boat tight against the lock wall.



Once the lock is empty, one crew member helps by opening one lock gate, climbs aboard and the boat is driven slowly out of the lock.

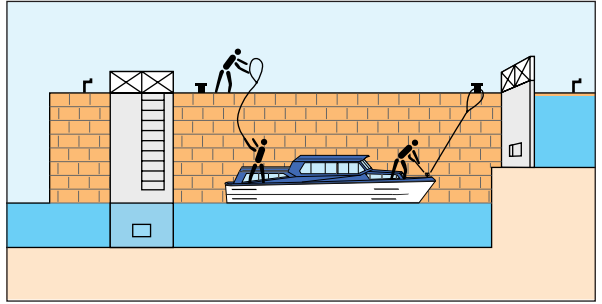
Going up.

One crew member goes ashore either on the bank before the lock.

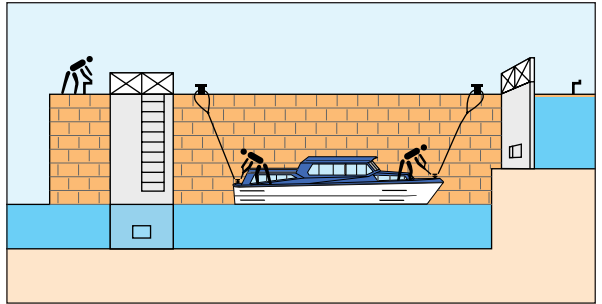
Enter slowly and stop on the opposite side to the lock-keeper.

Moor fore and aft by placing the loops over the bollards.

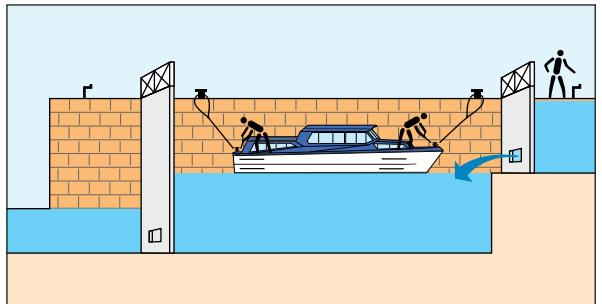
If there are only two of you, the stern line can be handled from the lock.



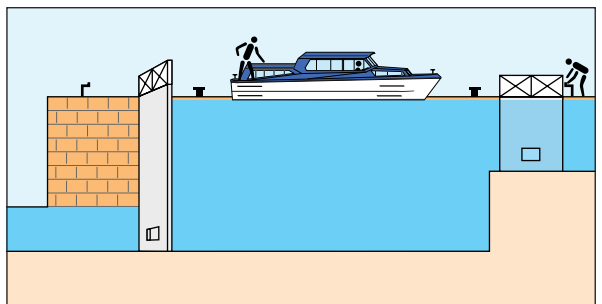
The crew member closes one gate, the lock-keeper closes the other.



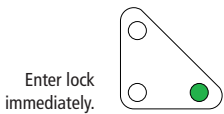
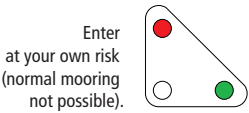
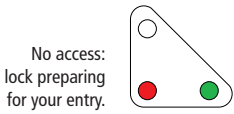
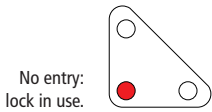
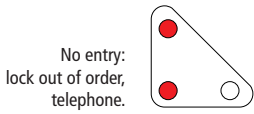
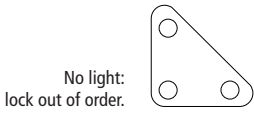
The crewman helps the lock-keeper open the sluice gates. The driver handles the bow line holding the boat tight into the lock wall. Another crew member handles the stern line.



When the lock is full, the lock-keeper opens one gate. The crew opens other gate and goes aboard. The boat is driven slowly out of the lock.



Lock Signals



Electric locks

The principle is the same but these locks automatically detect the presence of a boat and prepare themselves accordingly. There are several different detection methods:

- **A pole placed on a suspended cable above a canal:**
 - slow down just before the pole.
 - turn right a quarter of a turn.
 - wait at a distance until the lights indicate that the lock is ready.

- **An automatic detector placed on the bank:**
 - these systems are designed to recognise the passage of big barges. In order to allow it to detect your smaller boat, you have to pass the detector very slowly.

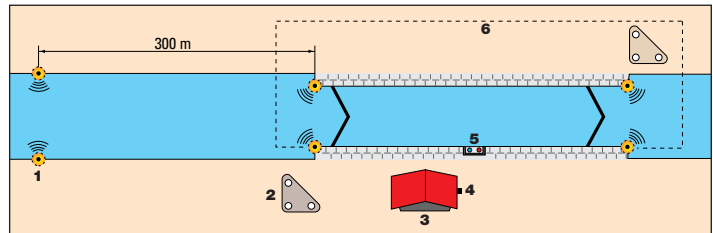
Do not action any of these systems if you do not intend to pass through the lock.

When the light changes to green and the doors open, enter the lock. Draw alongside and position your lines correctly before operating the blue lever, which starts the process. Everything will happen automatically.

In case of emergency, the red lever allows you to stop the cycle.

When the doors open, go out slowly. The detector if in a chain of lock will prepare the next lock for you.

In case of breakdown, use the intercom placed on the platform of the lock to warn the service attendant.



Automatic locks.

1. Advance radar detection. 2. Traffic lights. 3. Control cabin. 4. Intercom. 5. Blue pull wire (lift), red pull wire (pull down in case of accident or false manoeuvre). 6. Lock entrance detector: radar, pole, loop, or photoelectric.

Flights of locks

In certain areas locks are organised in chains. This means that when you go through one lock, the next one is being automatically prepared for you. For obvious reasons, warn the appropriate service if you have to stop in the middle of one of them.

Tunnels

The tunnels do not present any particular problem but you must respect the following rules:

- it is forbidden to moor in the tunnels or in the approach cutting. Once you are under way, do not stop;
- put on your navigation lights as you go through;

- put out your gas cooker and any other flame as you go through. Smoke in the confined space of a tunnel can be very dangerous;
- in the event of a breakdown or other incident, you can walk out of the tunnel using the footway.
- note the available height and stay in the middle of the boat as you go through.

Sharing the waterways

During your cruise, you will share the waterways with many other users. These may include commercial barges, fishermen, sailors, bathers and riverside land owners. There is room for everyone as long as you observe the basic rules of courtesy:

- keep your distance from fishermen and slow down when approaching them;
- always pass slowly and at a distance from moored boats;
- some banks are private so do not stop and go ashore just anywhere;
- respect speed limits. To ensure you are not going too fast, glance at your wake, your wash must not be breaking against the bank;
- do not push ahead of a commercial barge if by doing so you will delay it at the next lock. Remember the barge skipper is working and his time is precious;
- occasionally on rivers you will go past youngsters in canoes, sailing boats and rowing skiffs. Stay well clear of them as they are often quite inexperienced.

Signs and signals

If you are sometimes tempted to sound your horn to greet another boat, remember that on a navigable waterway, specific horn signals exist so that you can announce your intentions. You will find these signals on the back cover; learn to use them as they may be useful in the event of a difficult manoeuvre or limited visibility.

On the back cover you will also find all the warning signs most frequently seen on inland waterways. Signs indicating restrictions or obligations are in red and black on a white background. Signs giving information are generally blue or green. Locks and bridges have their own special signs and lights.

Visit our website

For more information you can visit our website; the address is on the front cover. Here you will find:

- helpful information about your departure base: how to find it and available services;
- a description of cruises available from the departure base;
- travel information specific to your destination country;
- a form to fill in to advise of your arrival time and other details;
- an inventory of equipment on board your boat;
- an order form for groceries.





