



ASTON MARINA LTD

Boat Hire Handbook & Handover Guidance

Items included in the boat handbook are navigational guidance, safety items, general information and contact details.

Navigational Guidance

Locks

The boat you are using is not designed for passage through locks and as such it should not be used in them for any reason.

Before Setting Off

1. Check that your boat is in good condition.
2. Make sure you and your crew know how to handle the boat – and that you know how to handle it on the waterway you're using
3. Plan your cruise and allow enough time to complete it without rushing
4. And remember – alcohol impairs your judgement and makes accidents more likely

Equipment checklist: Make sure you know where to find these things:

1. Lifejackets or buoyancy aids
2. Key switch
3. Oar
4. Mooring ropes
5. First aid kit
6. Mobile Phone
7. Fire Extinguisher

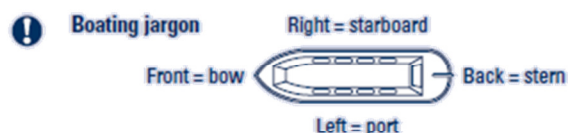
Handling the Boat

1. On all waterways, you drive on the right.
2. Always slow down when passing anglers and other boats.
3. Don't let your boat create a breaking wave or a lowering of the water along the bank just ahead of the boat. These are signs that you should throttle back to prevent damage to the bank and disturbance to moored boats.

Stopping

Because boats don't have brakes, you need to give yourself plenty of time to stop.

1. Ease off the throttle, move into neutral and then use short bursts in reverse gear to slow down and come to a final halt.
2. Remember that it's more difficult to steer when you're in reverse gear.
3. You may need an occasional forward boost to get better control.





Steering

Steering a boat with a **wheel** is like steering a car, but it's more difficult to judge where your wheel should be for going straight ahead. Get to know the feel of the wheel and the rudder position before you set off.

Your boat pivots from a point about halfway along its length. That means you need to watch out for the front and the back.

You can't steer unless your boat is in gear. Remember – no gear, no steer

Setting Off

1. Start the engine
2. Untie the front and back mooring ropes from the jetty, but leave them tied to the boat, coiled and ready for use.
3. Make sure your ropes can't trail in the water and get caught in the propeller.
4. Check the area is clear of boat traffic then push the boat away from the bank or jetty so you can make a clean get away, with your propeller in deep water.
5. In shallow water, push the back of the boat out, and then reverse away until there's room to straighten up.
6. When the boat's straight, go into forward gear and accelerate gently to cruising speed.

Tying Up

1. To keep your boat secure, you need to tie it to the bank with a rope from both the front and the back.
2. Many mooring sites have bollards or rings to tie up to – choose ones a short distance beyond the front and the back of your boat.
3. Run your rope out about 45° from your boat.

Speed Limits

1. The maximum speed on the canal near Aston Marina is 4mph.
2. But if you're making waves or your wash is hitting the bank, you're going too fast – slowdown.
3. Keep your speed down when you're approaching bridges, locks, bends or junctions, and when passing other boats or anglers.

Giving Way

1. If you're approaching a bridge or narrow section, slow down.
2. If a boat is coming in the opposite direction is closer to the bridge, wave them through
3. Keep to the right until they're well clear.
4. If someone's waved you through, signal your acknowledgement.



Going Aground

Every skipper goes aground at some point – it's not a disaster.

1. Don't try to force your way over the obstacle or you'll find yourself even more stuck
2. Use reverse gear to back away into deeper water.
3. If you're firmly stuck, ask some or all of the crew to move to the side of the boat that's still floating (but not to the extent that you'd risk capsizing!).
4. Now push off against a solid object

Mooring

1. Slow down almost to a stop and carry out all your manoeuvres as slowly as possible.
2. Stop short of where you want to moor with your boat straight and in deep water.
3. Move forward very slowly, pointing the front of the boat towards the bank.
4. Then use reverse to stop the boat just before the front hits the bank.
5. Put the engine into neutral. On rivers, you should always moor with the front of your boat facing upstream or into a very strong wind.
6. Your crew should step ashore – not jump.
7. They can either carry the ropes with them – making sure there's plenty of slack and that one end is fixed to the boat – or you can pass them the ropes once they're on land.

Overtaking

You will rarely need to overtake on canals and narrow rivers. Relaxation is the main aim!

1. If you do have to overtake, make sure the other skipper knows what you're intending to do well before you start to manoeuvre - They need time to slow down and to tell you on which side to overtake – usually the left.
2. If you're the one overtaking, it's your responsibility to stay clear of the other boat.
3. Go as slowly as possible to avoid the two boats being drawn together.

Passing Dredgers or Works

You will rarely see dredgers or works but on the off chance slow down.

1. Pass on the side that's showing the green or white light or shape – not the side showing red.
2. You may see both sides marked with red during the day so follow the instructions given by the works crew.



Safety

Falls

If you are going to bump, warn your crew and passengers.

1. Always use the grab rail
2. Keep your boat tidy
3. Don't jump off the boat when mooring
4. Remain seated at all times whilst the boat is in motion

Crushing

1. Keep your body out of the way
2. Keep within the boat – This means not having your legs dangling over the side, your hands over the edge.
3. Don't fend off with your arms, legs or a boat pole – let the fender take the impact
4. Make sure everyone is keeping their eyes out for a collision.

Collisions

Make sure you know the size of your boat and the dimensions of the waterway you're cruising on.

1. Watch out for cross-winds
2. Give a long blast with the horn as you approach blind bridges, bends and
3. Junctions
4. Look out for larger vessels and move readily over to the side of the canal.
5. Watch out for floating tree trunks and other debris.

Falling overboard

Before you do anything else, take a breath and think. Don't panic, don't jump in – and don't let others jump in!

Keep sight of the person in the water at all times!!

In the canal

1. Turn your engine off. **Don't** reverse the boat towards the person in the water - they could be dragged into the propeller.
2. Throw a line or a lifebelt and tell them to try to stand up – if it's a canal they might be able to walk out.
3. Steer the boat slowly to the bank and get one of your passengers to help the person to shore.



In the Marina

1. Throw a lifebuoy or line and steer your boat carefully to approach the person in the water.
2. Keep a constant watch to ensure your propeller is well away from them.
3. Stop the propeller immediately by selecting neutral gear if there's a risk of them getting close to it.
4. Pull them to the side of the boat and help them aboard with a ladder, rope or pole.

Life jackets/buoyancy aids

These are provided and should be worn at all times. They will automatically inflate when they come into contact with water and maintain your head above the waterline. Hire is free.

Fire

Fire extinguishers are provided and should only be used in the case of a real emergency and when the operator confident to do so.

1. Fight the fire if it is safe to do so.
2. In the case of a fire move from the boat ashore as soon as possible.
3. Secure the boat if possible and as well as you can safely.
4. Contact the emergency services as soon as possible via phone or a passerby for example. (Dial 999 from any phone)
5. Maintain a safe distance at all times and contact Aston Marina Ltd on 01785 819702.

Electricity on the Boat

1. Electric boats must be sheltered from wet weather conditions when possible.
2. Do not touch or interfere with the batteries or connection cables.

Loading

1. Loading the vessel should not exceed the recommendations as stated on the identification plate on the rear locker compartment.
2. When boarding the craft spread weight evenly to stop the craft becoming unbalanced and capsizing.



General

Caring For the Environment

Please help to keep the waterways pleasant places for everyone who uses them – and for the wildlife that depends on them.

1. Shut gates behind you
2. Keep to footpaths
3. Don't light fires
4. Respect the wildlife
5. And take your litter away with you

Respecting Other Waterway Users

1. Waterways tend to be quiet, peaceful places and they're for everyone to enjoy – boaters, walkers, anglers, cyclists and others.
2. Roaring engines, loud music and shouting – they can all be a real nuisance to other people and wildlife.
3. Don't put your mooring ropes where people could trip over them.
4. If you're passing an angler, keep to the centre of the channel unless they ask otherwise. Reduce your wash, but keep a steady pace.

Special safety tips

1. Always be aware of what's happening around you – on the boat, in the water and on the banks.
2. Think ahead.
3. Always know where each other are.
4. Never Drop Litter.

Contact Details

Aston Marina

Marina Manager – 01785819702 – 07545005298
Emergency – 999

British Waterways

Customer Service Centre - 01923 201120.
In an emergency, call 0800 47 999 47.
www.britishwaterways.co.uk/safety

Environmental Agency

To report an incident to the Environment Agency - 087 08 506 506.
For Navigation information - www.environment-agency.gov.uk/navigation