

Appendix 5

Environment Agency operational standards

River management

- We will manage water levels so that the river is available for cruising 24hrs a day. (Water level within reach maintained to within +15.24cm to -7.62cm (+6" to -3") of Standard Head Water (SHW) unless in exceptional flow conditions, pending review.)
- We will provide a 24-hr telephone advice line on river conditions and operate a system of navigation warning boards at locks to warn of strong stream conditions.
- We will maintain a fairway between each lock to allow the navigation of craft of the following dimensions:

	Length		Beam		Draught		Air Draught	
	(m)	(ft)	(m)	(ft)	(m)	(ft)	(m)	(ft)
Downstream boundary - Staines Bridge	60.0	197	7.0	23	2.0	7	5.5	18
Staines Bridge - Windsor Bridge	54.0	177	7.0	23	1.7	6	4.3	14
Windsor Bridge - Reading Bridge	37.0	122	5.0	16	1.3	4	3.8	12
Reading Bridge - Folly Bridge	33.5	110	5.0	16	1.2	4	3.7	12
Folly Bridge - Lechlade Roundhouse	30.5	100	4.0	13	0.9	3	2.2	7
Lechlade Roundhouse - Cricklade	Normally suitable for small craft, subject to seasonal conditions							

Please note that the measurements in feet have been rounded and are provided for guidance only

The fairway is a channel, generally down the centre of the river, which, as a minimum, is wide enough for two craft to pass each other. In the middle and lower reaches this is usually not less than the central third of the channel. Further upstream it will be a greater proportion of its width.

- Debris will be removed from weirs and channel so that no more than small quantities of floating debris will be found on the river and through navigation will not be obstructed.
- Shoals encroaching into the fairway will be marked by appropriately coloured buoys.

Locks

- Locks will be staffed in accordance with published hours of duty, with additional summer assistance.
- Teddington Lock will be staffed 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
- In normal circumstances, during published lockkeeper's hours of duty the waiting time to pass through any lock will not exceed 30 minutes.
- Locks between Teddington and Godstow are automated using hydraulic power.
- Clear operating instructions will be provided at all locks to allow manual user operation out of duty hours.
- The opportunity to provide hydraulic operation for users out of hours will be considered when major works are planned at locks.
- Bollards are provided sufficient for the range of craft likely to be using the lock to be held steady during lock operation.
- Grab chains are provided on the walls of the lock to allow craft not able to use bollards (like rowing boats, inflatables and canoes) to be held steady during lock operation and to assist anyone falling in the water. When locks are refurbished the grab chains will be recessed in the lock walls.

- The chamber is provided with stairwells on both sides.
- The cill position, or an indication that mooring should not occur beyond a certain point, is clearly marked on both sides of the lock.
- Each pair of lockgates has a walkway with non-slip surfaces and handrails. Walkway should be accessible to all, or a portable ramp provided to make it so.

Signs at Environment Agency sites

- Signage at the entrance to the site from the land will name the site, give its Grid Reference and/or Post Code, highlight facilities available and hazards to visitors, and give an emergency phone number.
- Any damage or defacement will be removed within 7 days or removal and replacement initiated if appropriate.

Channel direction & warning signs

- At any location where there is doubt as to the location of the navigation channel clearly identifiable channel direction indicators shall be installed and kept free of vegetation and other obstructions.
- Clearly identifiable direction indicators shall be provided at all junctions.
- Adequate signed advance warning of hazards (e.g. low bridges, weirs) shall be provided with clear directions on how to navigate.
- All low bridges to be marked with their normal Standard Head Water aircraft.
- Underwater cables to be clearly signed on either bank.

Major works stoppages

- Major stoppages will be planned and executed in such a way as to minimise the length of time the navigation is closed to traffic.
- They will only take place between the first week of November and the last week of March or the week before Easter, whichever is earlier, unless by agreement with User Group representatives.

Routine planned stoppages

- Users will be given a minimum of 10 days notice before planned stoppages of less than 4 consecutive hours.
- Users will be given a minimum of 10 weeks notice before planned stoppages of more than 4 consecutive hours.

Emergency stoppages

- Response on site within 2 duty hours of notification.
- Repair completed as soon as practical.

Stoppage information

- Programme of major stoppages will be published in late summer for the following winter.
- Early information will be supplied through the Waterways Working Group.
- Update notices will be issued as necessary during the life of the contract to Working Group members, River User Groups, clubs and operators.
- Information on stoppages will be published on the Waterways website (visitthames.com) and placed on blackboards located, as a minimum, outside locks immediately up and down stream of the lock affected. Information will also be circulated to representatives of key stakeholders on the river (e.g. THCA, TBTA, BCU, ARA).

- Up to date information will be placed on the Waterway Information Telephone Line and Agency website.

Event authorisation and management

- We will respond within 10 working days to all applications for consent to hold an event on the Thames.
- Where appropriate we will attend the event to provide advice and assistance and to ensure compliance with any conditions of the consent.

Customer response (at main offices)

- We will answer 90% of telephone calls within 15 seconds during normal working hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).
- Wherever possible, we will respond immediately to enquiries made in person or by phone.
- If you want us to provide a written response but we cannot do this in full within 10 working days due to the type of request, we will let you know, within this time, when you can have the answer you need. This should not be longer than 40 working days from the date of your request.
- In the case of any navigation related incident assessed as being likely to have a major effect on the environment, we will be there within two hours (four hours outside normal hours).
- Whenever we are told about an incident we will make sure that we give feedback to the person who reported it.
- Once we have received an application for a craft registration licence (assuming it is filled in properly and includes all the information that we need, including the fee where appropriate and does not require additional consents), we will start processing it and complete the process within 10 days.
- Should a complaint be made against our staff or the service that we provided, we will acknowledge it as soon as we receive it and send a full response within 10 working days, unless we need to investigate further. (In such a case, we will say when a full reply could be expected.)