



DETAILED INFORMATION

Vehicles and plant on towpaths and other Trust property

Introduction

The towpaths and other property alongside waterways were generally never designed for loads any greater than pedestrians or horses and as such there should be no presumption that any vehicles, items of plant or heavy loads in general can be taken onto or placed on a towpath/canal-side areas. A lack of consideration of the capacity of towpaths can and has had disastrous consequences.

Wherever possible the developer should design the works to avoid plant and heavy equipment on towpaths. **In all cases the developer's assessment of the suitability of the towpath for load bearing must be accepted by the Technical Manager.**

General

The Canal & River Trust has assessed the capacity of many of its towpaths and is able to discuss specific requirements with the developer.

In cases where a towpath has been assessed as suitable for a vehicular load this has generally been calculated having taken into account the 45 degree rule above and so the waterside edge of the vehicle should be set back an appropriate distance from the back of the waterway wall.

In some circumstances we might be able to consider an enabling works proposal from the developer to increase the bearing capacity of the towpath.

Access onto the towpath

The towpath can only be accessed at certain locations. The developer should assess these access points and consider access together with potential conflict with other users of the waterways. The developer should also consider the need to turn vehicles as reversing would create an unnecessary hazard to users and operators.

Services in and over towpaths

There shall be no load applied to utilities (typically Gas, Water, Telecommunication and Power cables), as these are superficially buried in towpaths.

Some utilities may be installed in cable troughs identifiable by the covers made of concrete slats and concrete panels and a relaxation of the prescription will be considered if it is demonstrated that the effect of the load does not exceed the safe carrying capacity of the covers.

Cables are often carried overhead above towpaths and the developers method of working should address this risk and include suitable precautions.



Working on the towpath

The working area, including the area along which access is gained, shall be isolated to separate the works from towpath users. The means of separation shall be identified in the method statements.

Loading and unloading points and parking points should be assessed for suitability and should also be separated from other users.

Vehicles should have fully reversible seats and ideally be tracked. Vehicles should only be reversed with a banksman present.

A means of stopping rolling vehicles such as vehicle barriers should be incorporated into the method of working.

The need to store materials on the towpath should be avoided and permission to do so should not be assumed. Loads shall be spread in all cases as much as is practically possible.

All vehicles and plant used on the towpath must have an open cab or at least two means of escape from the cab.

The effect of vibration caused by the vehicles, plant and machinery needs to be taken into account.

The effects of a change of water level in the watercourse should be considered as this can affect the capacity of a towpath.