

Volunteer lock keeper information sheet

What you'll help us to achieve

You will help people to enjoy, explore & value the waterway

You can positively influence people's engagement with your local waterway.

Your involvement will help to preserve & improve the fabric of our centuries-old waterways for future generations

You will personally benefit from be working outdoors, staying fit & meeting new people

You can gain new skills and/or maintain skills you already have

Tasks & responsibilities

Welcome and assist all visitors

Assist boaters at locks if your offer of help is welcomed (follow local ways of working)

Welcome and engage all visitors, including boaters and other canal users – i.e. providing information & assistance

Encourage water conservation – i.e. check sluices are closed and lock sharing is encouraged (if applicable to your site)

Undertake light maintenance tasks such as painting and edging around the locks (if required locally)

Report any significant changes or issues to an appropriate member of staff

Being an ambassador for the Trust and promoting our brand

Time commitment

Ideally, we ask our volunteer lock keepers to give at least 1 day per week. However, there is some flexibility depending on location.

Skills needed

You need to be happy working outdoors and enjoy working with the public. You will be trained in the operation of locks, however some previous knowledge can be helpful.

Who you'll be working with

Most sites involve working in pairs although there is some lone working.

You will be assigned a Task Manager, an employee of the Trust, who has overall responsibility for you while you're volunteering as a lock keeper for the Trust. Your Task Manager may delegate management responsibility to other members of the team for specific tasks or at certain locations so that you have someone readily available.

In some areas Lead Volunteers take on elements of management responsibility for other volunteers.

Training

Induction

Introduction to the work of the Canal & River Trust

The importance of the lock keeper role in raising the Trust's profile & public awareness

Diversity & Inclusion (30mins) – Trust-ED

Safeguarding Explained (10mins)

Customer Service Success (10mins) – Trust-ED

Safety and guidance films (35mins)

Slips, Trips & Falls Safety Information (10mins)

On-site training

The importance of getting acknowledgement and permission from the boat's skipper before assisting

How the lock/flight works including demonstrations of safe operation

Have a go at Lock Keeping under instruction

Emergency procedures

Buddying up with existing volunteers to crew boats through

Classroom based training covering water safety & first aid basics

Assessment

Once training has been completed and you feel ready and competent to work without direct supervision, you will be assessed as a Lock Keeper by one of our trained CAATS Assessors (Competency and Assessment Training Scheme).

The VLK season

A typical season for a VLK runs from April – October. In most locations the role will cease in the Autumn due to the decline in traffic and seasonal works programme restricting boat movements. In some busy areas volunteers will have the option to continue volunteering throughout the Winter months or offered alternative activities such as practical maintenance. We have a wide range of other volunteering opportunities that you may like to get involved with.

Schedule from recruitment & training to the end of the season.

February	Invites to Meet and Greet sessions are sent out to applicants.
Mid Feb – Mid March	Task Managers meet with new volunteers to complete the recruitment process, complete induction & book initial training sessions.
March – April	New lock keepers undertake training, then start the role.
July	Mid season socials held.
October	End of volunteer lock keeping season, celebrations held.