



**Canal &  
River Trust**  
Making life better by water

**Safety Guidance**

# Working on Craft in Dry Docks

## What You Should Know

Guidance for boat owners & contractors wishing to hire Canal & River Trust dry docks



[canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk)

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# Hazard Warnings



Toxic or Very Toxic



Corrosive



Oxidising



Flammable or  
Highly Flammable



Harmful or Irritant



Biological



Hazardous to the  
Environment

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# Introduction

The Canal & River Trust has a number of dry dock facilities around the country that can be hired by boaters/contractors to carry out repairs or maintenance to craft. All of these facilities are classed as workplaces. That means you should take care to minimise the effect your work may have on yourself and on others. This guidance aims to help you make the best use of these facilities and to minimise the risk of an accident occurring whilst using the dry dock. It covers common issues that may be encountered and the procedure to follow to minimise risk. The content is provided as general guidance only; it does not aim to cover all activities or problems that may be encountered by the hirer, only an overview to assist planning.

**Please remember it is the responsibility of every individual carrying out work in the dry dock to assess the risks associated with their activities. As a hirer or user of this dock it is your responsibility to carry out such a risk assessment and to ensure all necessary precautionary measures are in place for your activities.**

## Young people in the work place

To minimise the risk to young people, you should not allow children under 16 to enter the dry dock.

## Before starting work

Before your boat is placed in the dry dock you must provide us with details of the work you plan to carry out and a timetable for its completion.

To make the job easier a simple form is attached to this guidance. You will need a special permit from us before you can carry out certain activities. These are classified as “*controlled work activities*”, they include grit blasting, the removal and application of certain paint systems, welding etc. Please get advice from the local Trust representative on these requirements. If they are not available to help, or if they are unable to help, please contact the local Canal & River Trust office.

## Placement and chocking of craft

When your craft is placed in the dry dock it should be stored with sufficient space to allow adequate room for the proposed works. It should only be chocked using suitable materials, cradles and purpose-made struts to ensure the stability of the craft and the safety of those working in the area. Once safely positioned chocks should not be removed or repositioned.

**Craft on Canal & River Trust directly managed property must not be chocked using old oil drums, scrap timber, bricks and blocks or other such materials. If you fail to comply with this requirement we reserve the right to remove your craft from the dry dock.**

## Insurance

**It is the responsibility of all contractors, owners and their representatives to ensure that sufficient insurance cover is in place to cover loss or damage to the craft and any claims for injury or damage to third parties or their property caused by the works. Public Liability insurance of at least £5 million is essential but increased cover may be required depending upon the nature of the works being carried out.**

# General Guidance on Workplace Safety

## Health welfare and hygiene

To protect yourself and others from illness keep your work area as clean and tidy as possible. Before starting work, find out where any welfare facilities are located. During work take regular breaks from intense or stressful operations. Use barrier creams before starting work and wash your hands and any other exposed areas with clean water before leaving.

**Please note:** Welfare facilities, first aid equipment and cleaning materials will not be provided and therefore, you must provide your own.

## Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any Canal & River Trust workplace. You **must not** smoke in the dry dock area.

## Protective clothing and equipment

When carrying out some work tasks you will need to wear protective clothing or equipment. To ensure it is suitable you must familiarise yourself with the safety requirements of each task and/or seek advice from suppliers.

**Remember that anyone in the area who could be affected by the works must be protected, not just those carrying out the task.**

## Hazardous substances

Hazardous substances should be kept in their original containers. Where this is not possible, you should clearly label the substitute containers. They should never be stored in food or drink containers. When using hazardous substances, ensure you read and understand the instructions and use all appropriate controls to minimise harmful effects. Remember that materials such as anti-fouling paints and gel coat residue are hazardous wastes and should be handled and disposed of accordingly.

For further guidance see HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm>

## Asbestos

Some older craft may have asbestos present in exhaust insulation, thermal insulation or exhaust gaskets. Extreme care should be taken where the presence of asbestos is suspected especially where it may be disturbed during works.

**Removal of asbestos must only be carried out by licensed contractors and must only be removed from craft on our property with written permission.**

For further guidance see HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/index.htm>

## Manual handling – lifting and carrying

Severe injuries can result from poorly planned and executed manual lifting. Before carrying out any manual lifting consider the following:

### When assessing the lift consider:

- Using lifting/carrying aids such as trolleys or sack barrows
- Making the load smaller/lighter to lift
- Changing the system of work to reduce the effort required
- Changing the layout of the area or way of working to improve efficiency

### Before lifting and carrying you should ask yourself:

- Is the lift within my limits?
- Can I avoid lifting where there is a risk of injury?

### Always avoid manual lifting if a mechanical alternative is available.

When Lifting

- Stop and think – plan the lift.
- Ask yourself: Do you need help? If so, seek assistance

For further guidance see HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/faq-manhand.htm>

## Mechanical lifting equipment

If you want to use mechanical lifting equipment its use must be agreed with us to ensure the location is suitable.

All mechanical lifting operations are subject to strict regulation.

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) require all lifts to be planned and executed by competent persons. If you need to utilise mechanical lifting as part of your works it must be thoroughly planned with sufficient notice given for us to consider the safety implications.

It is also important to remember that any lifting equipment used in the workplace must be suitable for the purpose and maintained in good condition.

For further guidance see HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/loLER.htm>

## Slips, trips and falls

Slips, trips and falls are the most common type of accidents in the workplace.

To minimise the risk to you and those working with you or near-by you should consider the potential hazards as part of your risk assessment. The table below is provided to help you.

Once you have identified potential hazards of your operation you must apply good housekeeping to minimise the risk of slips and trips.

For further guidance see HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/index.htm>

## Working alone

If your project involves you working alone please consider the following before starting work:

- Is safe access to and from your boat possible?
- Does the work or the location present an increased risk to you whilst working alone e.g. are you going to carry out

hazardous activities such as welding, removing old paint or using materials that could release gases or produce noxious vapours?

- Can all ladders, trestles, work equipment and materials be handled safely by one person?
- Does someone know where you are in case of accident/emergency?
- Is there an agreed method of communication with others should an accident happen?

## Shared workspace

When working near to others or the public, please ensure that your actions or failings do not affect them.

### Please:

- Carry out a risk assessment of your activities, to identify the hazards of your work and possible effects on others, a simple form is provided for this purpose
- Take all necessary precautions to prevent harmful effects that may result in accidents or ill health. E.g. when you are welding, someone else may be painting or handling flammable materials
- Remember noise & vibration can also constitute a hazard if not managed appropriately

### If in doubt seek advice

## Accident reporting

If you are unfortunate enough to have an accident during your works, no matter how small you must report it to us.

We record all accidents and near misses and use the information to minimise the chance of further incidents.

**Reporting your misfortune could save someone else from injury.**

# Special Guidance for Dry Docks

## On arrival at the dry dock

On arrival at the dry dock the trust representative who meets you will brief you on what you should do in the case of an emergency, what safety equipment is provided, if any, and who to report any problems to. They will ask you to walk round the dry dock to familiarise yourself with:

- Dock edge fencing
- Any information boards
- Official access points and or fire exits
- The location of any firefighting equipment
- The position of other safety equipment such as life buoys or throw lines, emergency stops or isolators

## Access to the dry dock

When entering or leaving the dry dock please only use official access points. These will have been pointed out to you at the hand over stage.

If special access is required please discuss this with the trust representative prior to your booking.

## Perimeter fencing

When you arrive you will note that the dock edges are fenced to restrict access. The trust representative who meets you will brief you on what fencing must remain in place for safety and who to report any problems to.

You will be told what to do if you require additional access to your craft such as by gangways. During your walk round the dock you will be asked to inspect the fencing and to familiarise yourself with the terms used for the fence components.

The type of fencing will vary from dock to dock with chains and metal stanchions the commonest form of protection. The fencing may also be fitted with protective timbers at ground level (toe boards) to stop rubbish or materials falling into the dock.

Where it is necessary to remove fencing or chains i.e. to access a boat from the

land via a gangway or from a platform, the access must have the prior agreement of the trust and must meet dry dock safety standards. This means handrails and toe boards should be fitted on all open sides where there is a risk of persons falling from height or where tools/equipment could fall on anyone working below. When work is not being carried out the fencing must be put back in its original position to provide perimeter protection.

## Working at height

When working close to unfenced edges<sup>1</sup> or where there is a risk of a fall likely to cause personal injury, a safe working platform should be erected and maintained to prevent the fall of workers, materials or equipment. However, if this is not possible, other methods of protection should be used. For example, safety harnesses are commercially available and should be considered where safe working platforms are not feasible. Please remember any person wearing a safety harness must be competent in its use and maintenance. When using ladders to gain access to your craft, they must be secured in place and be at the correct angle, e.g. 1 metre out for every 4 metres of height. Where ladders are used they must be in good condition, suitable for the job and extend at least 1 metre above the deck or platform level.

**<sup>1</sup>This includes any unfenced decks, or top of your boat where work is to be carried out at height.**

For further guidance see HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>

## Fire precautions - Good housekeeping

Many of the activities carried out in the dry dock can increase the risk of fire. To minimise risks please follow this advice:

- Think of ways to minimise the risk of fire when planning your work
- Always replace flammable and highly flammable materials with less flammable substitutes

- Minimise the quantities of combustible, flammable and highly flammable materials such as paper, rags, paints, petrol and thinners. Store them in suitable fire retardant stores or under fire retardant blankets out of direct sunlight
- Remember where flammable vapours exist, electrical equipment including battery operated tools could ignite the vapour
- Remove all flammable waste materials from site at the end of each working day and dispose of it in accordance with manufacturers recommendations. If a fire does start, raise the alarm and get everyone out of the dry dock.

**Do not** try to put the fire out unless you are trained to do so and can manage the risks. Once you are safe ring the emergency services, provide them with the location, the details of fire and any other information that is requested. Please do not re-enter the dry dock until it has been made safe to do so.

For further guidance see HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/fireandexplosion/index.htm>

### Confined spaces

All dry docks within the trust are classified as confined spaces. This means that the dock may be susceptible to a build-up of flammable or noxious gases or a lack of oxygen. In addition, depending on the work to be carried out, the vessel you are working on could also be classified as a confined space and susceptible to these effects.

Under work conditions there is the possibility that anyone in the confined space could be:

- Overcome by gas, fumes, vapours or lack of oxygen
- Drowned by water or free-flowing solids i.e. silt
- Injured due to fire or explosion
- Overcome by high temperature. It is essential that the potential hazards associated with each confined space are fully appreciated, and that the appropriate planning and preparation for the work is undertaken.

In order to prevent accidents, work in confined spaces must be thoroughly planned. You must give us advance notice of all works to be carried out in the dry dock. When we consider your application we may ask you to carry out gas monitoring before and during your works.

**We recognise that you may not be able to assess all the risks of working in confined spaces. If you are unsure you are welcome to ask our advice.**

For further guidance see HSE website: <http://http://www.hse.gov.uk/confinedspace/index.htm>

### Selection of tools & equipment

Dry dock areas have special hazards such as wet or damp atmospheres and slippery surfaces. All tools and equipment should be selected for their suitability for the job in the surroundings they are to be used. Before use check all your tools and equipment to ensure they are in a suitable condition to carry out the task safely.

### Using electricity and electric tools

To minimise the risk to users, we only provide 110volt electricity supplies in our dry docks. If you plan to use electrical equipment powered by a generator only use the 110v supply and equipment with Centre Tapped Earth (CTE).

Even better would be to use battery-powered tools. If your work requires specialist electrical, air or hydraulic equipment, you must get permission to use it from our representative prior to use.

For further guidance see HSE website: <http://http://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/index.htm>

# Special Guidance For Dry Docks

## (Continued)

### Welding and cutting

Welding and cutting are two of the most hazardous procedures carried out in dry docks and should only be undertaken by competent, experienced people who can complete the work safely.

You will require permission from us before carrying out welding or cutting.

### Before using welding equipment check:

- There is adequate ventilation to prevent unnecessary inhalation of fumes or build-up of gas
- The equipment to be used is in good order
- Fumes from your generator do not accumulate in the work area
- Ensure you wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

### In addition

- Use suitable screens when arc welding so that passers-by and others using the area do not suffer a welding flash (arc eye)

### When gas welding, ensure:

- There are no leaks from pipes, regulators, gas or oxygen cylinders
- Flashback arresters are fitted to the equipment
- Gas bottles are used upright
- Regulators are in good condition, set correctly and turned off when not in use

### Do Not

- Subject cylinders to mechanical damage, falls or unnecessary or excessive heating
- Allow regulator valves or fittings to be damaged, if damage occurs remove the equipment from use
- Roll cylinders on the ground whilst transporting
- Vent the dry dock with oxygen, as oxygen enrichment is extremely hazardous

### Do

- Transport cylinders in a secured upright position on an appropriate trolley
- Store acetylene cylinders in an upright position.

For further guidance see HSE website:  
<http://http://www.hse.gov.uk/welding/index.htm>

# How to Book the Dry Dock

## You can either:

- a) Download an application pack or
- b) Complete the application online for Wigan and Ellesmere Dry Docks

Once submitted we will use the information you provide to assess whether it is appropriate for us to grant you permission to carry out the requested work. After reviewing the information we may require further details from you. We may also suggest certain controls that must be put in place to minimise risks which have been identified. If we grant you permission, you must comply with all our reasonable requests and instructions. If you do not, you we reserve the right to stop all work and cancel your booking.

Please note bookings must be made 7 days prior to proposed entry into the dock and that fees are applicable.

**Only one craft is permitted into the dock at any time Under no circumstances should the removal of asbestos be undertaken whilst in the dry dock.**

**Smoking is not permitted in the dry dock or whilst on or in the craft in the dry dock.**

It is your responsibility to ensure that you can travel to and from the dock at all times, including during the stoppage season.

A minimum of £5 million public liability insurance is essential for the duration of docking.

If you have any questions please contact us on 0303 040 40 40.

Please note: if the Trust has any concerns with your booking it will contact you, but reserves the right to cancel the booking at any time.

## Summary

**Please remember a few simple rules.**

### Beware of:

- Unprotected edges and falls from height
- Slip, trip and fall hazards

### Ensure

- Only recommended points of access are used
- Only 110V electrical appliances and supply is used. If possible replace them with battery powered or air tools
- You are aware of all welfare facilities
- All emergency and accident/incident reporting procedures are explained and adhered to
- Personal protective equipment is used at all times
- All work equipment is fit for use
- When lifting, correct manual lifting techniques are used
- You are familiar with the position of any safety equipment and signage i.e. fire fighting equipment, buoyancy aids, emergency stops and isolators

**Please remember:  
Planning prevents accidents!**