

## Flow conditions

When large yellow CAUTION boards are displayed at locks, all unpowered vessels are advised to moor up until the stream abates. Powered vessels may proceed with caution.

**CAUTION**  
STREAM  
INCREASING

If flow continues to increase, large RED boards are displayed at locks and at some entry points with the words CAUTION – STRONG STREAM. Boaters are strongly advised not to enter the river or navigate in these conditions.

**CAUTION**  
STRONG  
STREAM

Up to date information on stream conditions is available from our Navigation Information line on 0845 988 1188. When prompted press '1' followed by quick dial number 011131 for stream conditions on the River Thames.

**Licences** Visitor licences can be obtained in advance from Environment Agency, PO Box 214, Reading RG1 8HQ or call 0118 953 5650. If you have not purchased a visitor licence in advance, do not worry, you can buy one at your entry point lock. All that is required is payment by cash or cheque only. Please wait at this lock for the keeper to come on duty.

**Information** If you would like to find out more about what to see and do on or near the river, visit our website [www.visitthames.co.uk](http://www.visitthames.co.uk) or call our information line 0845 601 5336.

Our new River Thames 'out and about guides' are full of useful information about the local area to help make your visit to the Thames more enjoyable.

These will be available from Autumn 2003 from lock keepers or by calling 0845 601 5336.

We hope that you find these tips useful and enjoy all that the Thames has to offer.

### Visiting the tideway?

Plan ahead – Telephone 020 8940 8723  
for up to date tide times and transit information  
a few days before.

## Access to information for all

We want to make sure that everyone has access to this document, so it will be available in the following formats.

■ Audio cassette ■ Larger print ■ Braille

This document can also be translated into most languages in any of the above formats, as well as print. If English is not your first language and you need a translation, please contact our customer services team.

Tel: 0845 601 5336 Fax: 0118 957 4165

**REGIONAL OFFICE**  
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— Area Administration Boundaries  
— Regional Boundary  
★ Area Office  
★ Regional Headquarters

**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY  
GENERAL ENQUIRY LINE**

**0845 9 333 111**

**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY  
FLOODLINE**

**0845 988 1188**

**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY  
EMERGENCY HOTLINE**

**0800 80 70 60**

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)



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EA-Thames Box 7



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[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/navigations](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/navigations)

*The Environment Agency's aim is to manage  
the healthy growth of waterways for leisure,  
business, local communities and wildlife.*



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Our Marinas welcome all visitors to the  
River Thames

R I V E R  
**Thames**  
tips for visiting  
boaters

*the Thames your river for life*



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# Welcome to the River Thames

These are just a few tips to help you enjoy cruising on the Thames, especially if this is your first visit. The Thames is home to a wide variety of water based activities and events and you will meet boats of all shapes and sizes – from tugs towing barges to rowing eights, from passenger steamers to punts. Look out for divers, swimmers, sailing and rowing regattas, and even the World Pooh Sticks Championships!



**General tips** First of all, feel free to ask any of the Waterways staff if you need local information or assistance. They will be pleased to help.

At your earliest chance please read your **River Thames User's Guide**. It is full of useful information and, with the following advice, should ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. These are available from all Waterways staff, by calling **0845 601 5336** or go to [www.vlsitthames.co.uk](http://www.vlsitthames.co.uk)

- You may not be used to flowing water. On a quiet stretch of river, learn what effect it has on your boat and use it to your advantage. Do have an anchor ready for immediate use.
- Boats travelling **downstream** have priority at bridges, narrows and anywhere two boats cannot pass.
- On bends it may be very shallow on the inside so do not cut corners! You may need to slow down or stop to allow another vessel to clear the bend so that you can take a suitable line for the draught of your boat.

**Using Thames locks** Thames locks are different from those on most rivers and canals; they have keepers to do the work for you.

**These simple guidelines will help you pass safely through:**

- Tie up as near to the lock as possible on the layby, moving along in the queue. At busy times, you may need to breast-up to make room for others.
- Always follow the instructions of the lock keeper; there may be boats that you cannot see, about to leave the lock chamber. For safety reasons larger vessels may be called in first; they are not 'queue jumping' – wait until you are called into the lock and then place your craft where instructed.
- Have someone ready with the bow rope and, if enough crew are to hand, the stern rope as well.

**Remember...**

**Stop the boat by reversing the engine, then place the stern and bow ropes around the bollards. Our deepest lock is about a 9 feet drop so you will need ropes twice this length.**



- At the larger locks downstream of Oxford you may be asked to go 'down the middle' or breast-up to other boats. As not all boats are made of steel, this may make others nervous but take your time and move slowly into the required position. Your concern will be appreciated.
- When the boat is stationary, switch off your engine, primarily to improve safety and also to reduce noise and fumes. If you have a 'hot bulb', semi diesel (e.g. bolinder type), or an engine which is difficult to start, tell the keeper before entering the lock. He will arrange to 'lock you through' so that you can keep it running.
- Restart your engine when it is your turn to leave the lock.
- Please do not push the lock gates open with your boat as this may cause damage.
- The lock keeper is not always on duty but instructions for self-operation are displayed. Lock keepers' hours can be found in part 2 of your River Thames User's Guide.

*Travelling after sunset? Full navigation lights are required – not just a tunnel light*

## Mooring up

Moorings can become busy in the summer. Lock keepers are happy to give local advice.

- At busy times please 'breast' or 'raft'-up. Maximise space available for others by mooring to one end of the space available. Then, please extend an invitation to 'breast/raft-up' to skippers of other similar vessels (steel to steel, wood to wood, GRP to GRP). Please agree arrangements for walking across each other's boats.
- At informal moorings, where the depth in the river may fluctuate, tie up with the stern into deep water (without causing an obstruction) so that if the river level drops you have some chance of manoeuvring if the bow is aground. Allow some slack in your ropes at night for the same reason.
- Upstream of Oxford most moorings are rural and free of charge. The Environment Agency also provides free 24 hour sites. In towns and other popular spots a mooring fee may be payable. As some riverbanks are privately owned, please also be prepared to pay a fee if asked. You should be given a receipt.
- At night, for additional security, lower your anchor or a mud weight.



the Thames your river for life

