

Boat safety information



Wessex Water
YTL GROUP

FOR YOU. FOR LIFE.

Boat safety information



General

- We recommend all boat users undertake RYA Powerboat Level 2 training at a Recognised Training Centre.
- Take a fully charged mobile phone with you, and make sure you can get to it in an emergency.
- Try to fish on a buddy system, either with another angler in the same boat or remain close to other anglers so that you can ask for help if required.
- If you are not familiar with boats, engines or do not feel capable of safely operating the boat in the prevailing conditions then do not go out onto the water.

Accessing boats

- Lifejackets can be collected from the fishing lodge and should be worn at all times on boats as well on the pontoon. Instructions on how to check and wear these are on display.
- A maximum of three people may use a boat, but only two may fish at any time.
- Boats are to be collected and returned from the pontoon. They are attached at the bow using a snap shackle and chain - simply unclip the boat when you are ready to go and leave the chain attached to the pontoon.
- Boarding and loading the boat will be easier and safer if it is brought alongside the pontoon edge. Try to load equipment and people equally along the centre line of the boat and keep floor space tidy to reduce the risk of tripping.
- Please take care when moving around the pontoon and do not leave equipment lying around where it may cause a trip hazard. Should someone

fall from the pontoon there is a life ring that can be used to help them back to a ladder or slipway to exit the water.

- Check your boat has the relevant equipment and that it is in safe working condition. All boats should be equipped with: anchor, bilge pump, bailer and oars. Additionally, boats with engines should have: engine (securely mounted and locked on transom), external fuel tank, fire extinguisher.

Starting the engine - step-by-step:

- 1 Check the engine is down - there is a release catch on the left-hand side of the engine which allows it to be dropped. Keep fingers clear!
- 2 Check the fuel selector (the small switch on right hand side of engine) is on 'external tank'.
- 3 Check that there is an external tank connected and that the air vent is open.
- 4 Attach the killcord to the engine and around the driver's leg.
- 5 Move the gear selection lever to the neutral position.
- 6 Check the throttle is on the start position.
- 7 Take the starter cord in your dominant hand, check behind you and then pull in a smooth but firm motion to start the engine.
- 8 When the engine starts, a red light will appear on the front, it may take a few moments to warm up and run smoothly - the choke is automatic.
- 9 Check that there is a tell-tail, or stream of coolant water, coming from the back of the engine. If not, then stop the engine immediately.

- 10 Carefully, at low revs, check all gears engage and that the tiller gives a full range of movement for steering.

Basic controls

- Sit on the opposite side of the engine to the tiller and use your nearest hand to steer and control the throttle.
- Your other hand can come across the top to control the gear selector, enabling you to keep one hand steering and controlling throttle at all times.
- To move forwards, drop the revs right down to idle and move the gear selector forwards into 'F'.
- The boat will begin to move forwards slowly when in gear - twist the throttle gently to accelerate.
- To slow down, point the boat into the wind and select neutral. You can gently use reverse to slow the boat, but if applied aggressively the propeller will cavitate and do very little to slow you down.
- The engine will provide little steering effect unless it is in gear. For maximum control, move forward slowly and use neutral to drift, applying short bursts of forward gear while steering and return to neutral.

Speed

- Boat speed is to be kept to a minimum at all times. Motoring fast is more dangerous, likely to lead to a collision and disturbs nearby fish.
- Approach pontoons slowly (ideally pointing into the wind) and allow for space to turn away and try again should your approach not go to plan.
- Be considerate of wake, particularly around people wading as they can become swamped by only a wave only a few centimetres high.

Mooring and anchoring:

- Boats must be taken from and returned to the pontoon only.
- You may return to the pontoon at any time throughout the day to take a rest or access facilities.
- Please do not moor to any buoys unless they have been clearly made available for boat anglers.
- Please do not use any other berths or pontoons other than those provided by Wessex Water Fisheries (e.g. not those of a sailing / canoe club).
- Each boat is fitted with an anchor and sufficient line to anchor around the majority of the reservoir, however it may not be long enough to anchor in the deepest parts when the water level is high. Always check your anchor is holding by taking transits.
- To drop and anchor, come to a stop (or drift slowly backwards) slightly up-wind of your target location. Check the anchor is attached to the line and boat, then deploy the anchor itself first lowering by the rope hand over hand until the line goes slack. Pay out additional line, ideally four to five times to the depth of the water for maximum hold.
- Do not anchor near aeration lines, dams, pipes, mooring buoys, race marks, pontoons or booms as you may become entangled. Only anchor in clear water and where the boat may swing on its anchor without colliding with anything.
- If an anchor does become stuck, disconnect it from the front of the boat and leave it in situ marked by the donut float. Please report this to us, including the approximate location, and we will recover it later.

Key hazards

- Avoid standing and moving around the boat as much as possible and sit down when fishing or underway to avoid falling overboard.
- The propeller is very dangerous, so do not put your hands over the back of the boat while the engine is running. Similarly, if someone or something is in the water around your boat, turn the engine off.
- There are a number of operational structures in our reservoirs such as dams, causeways and pipes. Maintain a safe distance of at least 30 metres from these structures.
- The draw-off points on the dams have a large red boom surrounding it, this is for your safety, and you must not go inside the boom for any reason.

- Please respect other water users and keep clear of other slipways, pontoons or authorised launch areas.
- Maintain a safe distance from other boats at all times to avoid collisions and give way to sailing boats and kayaks - ideally you should pass safely behind them.
- Local hazards which may emerge as water levels drop will be marked on the site map - please refer to this before setting out.
- Smoking or vaping is not permitted on any boat as our engines are fitted with external, vented fuel tanks. A 1kg powder fire extinguisher is on every boat with an engine.

Dealing with incidents

In the event of an emergency, where there is an immediate threat to life, call 999.

If you need help, but there is no immediate threat to life, call the local fishing lodge or Wessex Water on 0345 600 4 600.

You can also ask help from other anglers or visitors. The best way to do this is to wave both arms above your head (or wave an oar) and shout loudly for 'help'. If you experience a problem or identify a fault, please report this to us either directly to a ranger or using the incident reporting pad at the permit desk and dropping it through the returns box.

Fouled propeller

- Keep all ropes, lines and tackles tidy and inboard of the boat.

- If the propeller becomes fouled, the engine will cut out when in gear.
- Check the engine is off and in neutral before lifting the engine so that you can inspect.
- Try to unwind the entangled object by passing it around the propeller.
- Do not cut the line against the engine with a knife - if you cannot remove it by hand then row back to the pontoon and seek assistance from a ranger.

Running aground

- Please avoid shallow areas and aim to keep the boat in at least one metre of water at all times.
- Should you run aground, turn the engine off to prevent damage.
- Try to lift the engine into its 'up'



position so that it does not catch on the bottom.

- Staying on-board, use an oar to push the boat off the ground - you may need to move weight in the boat towards the deeper water.

Breaking down

- All boats have anchors, so if you are drifting uncontrollably or towards a hazard, use the anchor to bring the boat to a secure position while you call for assistance or prepare to row back to the pontoon.
- Boats with engines are also equipped with oars as an alternative means of propulsion, use these to make your way back to the pontoon.
- Report the problem to us.

Person overboard

- Slow the boat down and maintain sight of the person in the water.
- Slowly, turn the boat in a wide circle so that you approach the person from downwind.
- By using a combination of neutral and forwards gear, slowly approach the person so that you stop the front of the boat next to them.
- When you reach them, or if you are going to keep going past them, turn off the engine.
- Recover the person into the boat, you may need to physically help them in at the lowest point or use the engine leg as a step.
- Return to the lodge immediately to dry off and warm up.

Sinking

- Ensure you are not snagged or caught on anything.
- If a small leak appears, try to prevent it from worsening by plugging it with

a piece of clothing or other suitable material.

- For major leaks, try to make way towards the nearest beach / bank immediately so that you can get to dry land.
- If there are two or more people on-board, try to bail the boat as you go.
- Be aware that waterlogged boats become unstable, avoid moving around the boat too much or turning sharply.

Capsize

- Ensure you are not entangled in any ropes, rigging or fixtures and are therefore free from the boat.
- Stay with the boat, ideally holding onto a mooring line or painter at the bow of the boat.
- If you are able to make your way to a nearby bank then do so, but it is difficult to swim in clothes and a lifejacket, stay with the boat and call for help.
- Do not under any circumstances go under an upturned boat.

Fire

- Smoking or vaping is not permitted on any boat. Our outboards are fitted with vented external fuel tanks and all sources of ignition should not be used on-board.
- If you suspect an engine is overheating or it starts smoking, turn it off immediately and row back to the pontoon.
- There is a 1kg powder extinguisher mounted near the back seat of the boat.
- If a fire does start, consider if it is possible to suppress or extinguish it while you make your way to the nearest bank.

Reporting of incidents

- Should you have an accident, discover a fault or anything else that you feel we should know about, please advise a Ranger on site.
- If a Ranger is not available, there is a simple reporting sheet available in

the fishing lodge - please complete a report and post it through the returns box. It is essential that you include as much information as possible including your name and contact details so that we can follow up if required.

Wheelyboats

You can only book a wheelyboat through a ranger for an agreed time.

The handover of a wheelyboat must take place in person with a Ranger and a signed declaration is required on all bookings.

All crew will receive suitable training, particularly with regards to location and operation of safety equipment, the welfare of vulnerable passengers on board, the operation of the ramp and the outboard motor.

The ability, experience and fitness of the crew and passengers will be taken into consideration before any journey. If there is any doubt or concern over the crew's ability to safely use the boat in the prevailing conditions, the hire will be terminated, and a full refund will be provided to the hirer.

Maximum load

Five people (including wheelchairs and any person responsible for care of another) to a maximum of 450kg.

Additional equipment (including engine, battery and fuel) to a maximum of 260kg. Heavy equipment is to be stowed along the centreline of the boat.

When loading the boat, passengers should move towards the back of the boat first and ensure the boat is balanced about the centre line. Heavier items or wheelchairs should sit on the centre line.



The result should be a balanced boat across the centre line and slight bow up trim to improve handling and prevent water ingress through the bow door when underway.

Bow door

Ensure that the bow door is fully resting on the ground/slipway/pontoon and no pressure is being exerted on the winch rope during boarding and disembarking.

Do not force the bow door open but let it down slowly with the winch under its own weight. Forcing the bow door may spin the winch handle rapidly causing injury. When closing the door, engage the winch's anti-reverse ratchet.

Correct closure of the bow door is essential otherwise loss of stability and buoyancy could occur.

The bow door should remain closed whenever the boat is away from the shore.

The winch holding the bow door is not for the transport of persons and the bow door must therefore never be stood, sat, leaned on or otherwise put pressure on except when it is fully supported by the ground, slipway, pontoon or other similar structure during boarding or disembarking.

Do not overtighten the winch - the pulling forces exerted may damage the

bow door, the threshold or the winch post. Tighten enough just to close the bow door.

Paddles

Two paddles should be carried on the wheelyboat at all times. These are for emergency use only in the event of engine failure but will only realistically propel the boat very slowly and over a short distance. Anyone using a paddle must keep within the boat and not sit on the deck or handrail.

Angling

The wheelyboat will drift more quickly than a standard angling boat due to its size and shape. A para-drogue is recommended to slow the drift down. The angle and direction of drift can be altered depending where on the gunwale of the drogue is fixed.

To keep the boat square on to the breeze at anchor, one 2kg FHD type anchor with a two metre chain is recommended at each end of the boat.

Safety

Lifejackets, as opposed to buoyancy aids, should be worn at all times by everyone on board. Wessex Water Crewfit 180N auto inflate lifejackets will be inspected and issued to all users.

A klaxon or horn should always be carried as should a bailer.

There should always be a communication link with the shore, such as a mobile phone or VHF radio. If there is no phone signal, then a radio will be issued to the hirer and a second radio held by the Ranger on site.

Where a petrol outboard is used a fire extinguisher must be carried.

For general comfort and safety, ensure a level trim side-to-side and bow-up trim fore and aft.

Do not sit on the handrails.

Passengers should remain seated at all times, suitable seating will be provided and secured appropriately to prevent unplanned movement or falls.

In the event of anyone falling overboard, they should be helped back into the boat over the gunwale, never via the bow door.

Do not trail ropes or lines.

The driver must give consideration to the wind, water and weather conditions rather than simply complying with the requirements of the boat's design category. The wheelyboat is very stable but the physical and emotional comfort of the people on board must be taken into account. This applies to how the boat is driven, e.g. speed and tightness of turns.

Wheelchair brakes should normally be sufficient to hold a wheelchair in position and the handrails provide the wheelchair user with secure handholds.

Anchoring, mooring and towing

In the event of the craft needing to be anchored, moored, or towed, the lines should be attached to the handrails forward.

Reporting of incidents

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