

NATIONAL GUIDE TO DAY BOAT HANDOVER



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How this guide can help you

This “National Guide to Day Boat Handover” has been written to help day boat hire operators promote safe enjoyment of the inland waterways. The guide draws together good practice from operators all over the UK and suggests in general terms what might be done for the benefit of your customers and your business. It is intended to cover all boats which are hired for less than an overnight period.

The guide provides a national view and covers what every operator should include; inevitably there will be local and regional variations due to the differing nature of the waterways.

You may wish to use this guide as part of a “health-check” of your existing handover procedures or to help introduce new procedures.

It is important to understand that the hire operator is responsible for deciding what information, briefing and training they should provide to the hirer and when it should be provided. There are several factors to consider when making this decision. The UK’s Health and Safety regulations, made under criminal law, place obligations on all businesses to take reasonable steps to protect employees and customers. The navigation authorities also place specific requirements on hire boat operators as detailed in the licence conditions. Compliance with the procedures in this Handover Guide can provide documented assurance that these requirements are being met. Finally, customers have expectations and are entitled to protection under consumer law and common law duty of care.

What all this means for you, the operator, is that you are responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure that the right information, briefing and training is provided to the hirer at the right time. You must maintain an audit trail, some sort of log, to prove that you have done what is required. This can prove invaluable later on, in the event that something does go wrong which results in a customer satisfaction issue or an incident involving the boat or the hire party.

However you decide to proceed, an effective boat handover procedure, properly managed, will help to raise customer satisfaction, keep the boat and passengers safe and reduce the number and cost of call-outs due to problems when cruising. The return on investment for you is that happy customers returning from an enjoyable, problem-free boat hire experience will be even more likely to come back for more and recommend you to their friends.

How to set up a quality assured day boat handover procedure

Setting up a quality assured Day Boat Handover procedure is straightforward. You just need to make sure that five essential elements are in place and working satisfactorily:

1. Write terms and conditions

Make sure your Conditions of Hire (terms and conditions) for Day Boats take into account the type(s) of boat and the type(s) of water they will be used on such as river, canal, lake, and broad). If you take bookings in advance, a copy of this information should accompany any confirmations issued.



2. Display the Terms and Conditions

Put up clearly visible signs or notices, as large as reasonably possible, at the point where the hirers book the day boats so they can easily see and read your conditions of hire (terms and conditions). If no booking form is used it is important to record the hirer's agreement to Terms & conditions elsewhere.



3. Write an acceptance certificate

Produce a Day Boat Acceptance Certificate for the instructor/handover staff to use when handing over the boat to the hirer and will ideally have your conditions of hire printed on the reverse. The certificate should set out the topics that will be covered in the handover. The certificate needs to record the number of passengers, and have spaces for the hirer and instructor/staff member to sign as a record that the handover has been done properly and that the terms and conditions are accepted.



4. Brief your staff

Make sure every employee who will be in contact with the hirer is briefed sufficiently well to understand your handover process and carry it out properly.



5. Keep records and carry out checks

Keep records of acceptance certificates so any queries or incidents relating to who-did-what can be resolved.

Conditions of hire for day boats

It is important for day boat operators to set out the terms and conditions under which their boats will be hired out. The terms and conditions may vary from one operator to another according to a number of factors such as location, tidal or non-tidal water, powered or non-powered craft. **The operator must ensure the hirer has the opportunity to read the conditions of hire before taking the boat out. A signature from the hirer or the skipper to say they have done so is essential, particularly when no booking form is used.**

Here are some suggestions to consider for inclusion in the terms and conditions. The list is not exhaustive and some of the items may not be appropriate for your style of hire operation. You may wish to keep track of any updates to the terms and conditions by including a statement such as “These conditions [issue number and date] supersede all previous issues”:

- Binding Conditions
- Company’s right to decline hire
- Hire Charges and security deposit
- Early termination of hire
- Period of hire
- Use of craft
- Incidents /Accidents
- Substitute craft
- Cancellation by hirer
- Cancellation by company
- Delays
- Hirer and passengers property
- Conduct of passengers
- Limitation of company’s liability
- English Law
- Acceptance certificate

Day Boat Acceptance Certificate

The day boat acceptance certificate is a document that the operator should use to record the way the boat has been handed over to the hirer. The hirer should sign the form to say the handover has been completed satisfactorily and to accept responsibility for the safety of the boat and its occupants. The day boat acceptance certificate provides documentary evidence of the handover system that is in place and provides valuable protection to the hirer and operator.

The hirer should read and sign the certificate before taking the boat out. The certificate should be countersigned by the member of staff carrying out the handover. In many cases the hirer will act as the skipper. If someone other than the hirer is going to act as skipper make sure the most appropriate person signs the handover certificate. Be sure to record the skipper's name.

A typical day boat handover certificate might contain some or all of the following headings. The headings you choose to include will be influenced by the type of boat for hire, such as, powered or non-powered, and whether the route to be navigated has locks or bridges. You should think through the routes that a hirer might typically cruise and jot down the features that they might encounter as you think your way along the route.

The sample list of headings that follows is not exhaustive and should be treated as a set of suggestions for consideration by the operator:

Name of boat:

Name of hirer:

Name of skipper:

Contact details (if no separate booking form is used)

Number of passengers

Name of handover staff

Date:

I acknowledge that we accept the conditions of hire and have received instructions for this boat with particular reference to:

- Controls
- Boat handling
 - Steering
 - Manoeuvring
 - Mooring

- Navigation Rules
 - Keep to the right
 - Give way to un-powered craft
 - Obey speed limits

- Safety on board
 - Maximum number of persons
 - People on deck/even weight distribution
 - Falling overboard
 - Life jackets/buoyancy aids
 - Fire extinguishers

- Waterways features
 - Cruising area
 - Locks/weirs
 - Bridges
 - Tides/strong streams

- Personal behaviour
 - Noise
 - Alcohol/Drugs

- Environment
 - Rubbish/litter
 - Reeds/shallow water

At the end of the handover the hirer/skipper and the handover staff should both sign the acceptance certificate as a record of the handover.

Life jackets or buoyancy aids, whichever is appropriate should be offered to all parties and they should be encouraged to ensure the fit of those who have requested them.

Hire parties with special needs

You may be required to provide a boat to a hire party that includes someone with special needs. You should ensure that the hirer accepts responsibility for the care and safety of all the party members.

The National Community Boats Association (NCBA) provide two useful guides – ‘The Lifejacket’, a guide to running a community boat project, and ‘Disabled People Boating? No Problem’ a guide suggesting ways to accommodate people with physical disabilities on boats.

The NCBA also take individual enquiries, and offer specific advice in this area.

National Community Boats Association
British Waterways Clock Tower
Atherstone Road
Hartshill
Warwickshire
CV10 0TB
Tel: 024 7639 7400
Fax: 024 7639 2611
staff@national-cba.co.uk
www.national-cba.co.uk



BMF's external audit service

BMF can help you to validate the boat handover process you have implemented in your company through an external audit. It can provide a certificate of compliance if your handover procedure conforms to the standards set out in this boat handover guide.

The external audit would require the operator to:

- Compile a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that an appropriate handover process is in place: This means collecting together samples of all the company documents used in the boat handover
- Allow BMF to carry out an external audit comprising an initial review of sample paperwork followed by a visit
- Agree to a random spot check by BMF after you have passed the external audit, this means being prepared to accept an unannounced visit by a member of the BMF Training team to verify that you are continuing to maintain the standard

The BMF auditor will complete a standardised checklist to document their findings. A copy of the checklist, signed and dated by both parties, will be provided to the operator concerned as a record of the audit and a second copy will be held on file as 'commercial in confidence' by BMF.

Any operator whose handover process meets the standard in full will be issued with a numbered and dated certificate of conformity published by BMF. The certificate will be valid for three years and will have an expiry date. The certificate will remain the property of BMF and may be withdrawn if the operator's handover procedure falls below the standard.

Any operator whose handover process does not meet the standard in full will be given the opportunity to spend time working on the non-conforming items highlighted in the checklist before applying for re-auditing. BMF reserves the right to apply reasonable time limits to applications for re-auditing and to refuse to accept re-applications if it feels it would be appropriate to do so.

In the event of a dispute an appeal may be made to the BMF's Executive Director.

Useful Addresses

Association of Pleasure Craft Operators

Marine House
Thorpe Lea Road
Egham
Surrey
TW20 8BF
☎ 01327 340174
✉ apco@britishmarine.co.uk
www.britishmarine.co.uk

British Marine Federation

Marine House
Thorpe Lea Road
Egham
Surrey
TW20 8BF
☎ 01784 473377
✉ training@britishmarine.co.uk
www.britishmarine.co.uk

British Waterways

Willow Grange
Church Road
Watford
Hertfordshire
WD1 3QA
☎ 01923 226422
✉ enquiries@britishwaterways.co.uk
www.britishwaterways.co.uk

Broads Authority

Thomas Harvey House
18 Colegate
Norwich
NR3 1BQ
☎ 01603 610734
✉ webenquiries@broads-authority.gov.uk
www.broads-authority.gov.uk

Broads Hire Boat Federation

c/o British Marine Federation
Marine House
Thorpe Lea Road
Egham
Surrey
TW20 8BF
☎ 01485 533280
✉ cdcleisure@aol.com
www.britishmarine.co.uk

Environment Agency

Rio House
Waterside Drive
Aztec West
Almondsbury
Bristol
BS32 4UD
☎ 0845 9333111
✉ Via filling in a form on the website
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Thames Hire Cruiser Federation

c/o British Marine Federation
Marine House
Thorpe Lea Road
Egham
Surrey
TW20 8BF
☎ 020 8979 1997
✉ psia@lineone.net
www.britishmarine.co.uk

AUDIT PACK

FOR

DAY BOAT HANDOVER



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How To Use This Pack

This audit pack has been designed for use in conjunction with the National Guide to Day Boat Handover. It does not stand alone.

Use the self-analysis form contained in this audit pack to “health-check” your company’s day boat handover procedure in comparison with the standard that has been laid down in the guide. Make sure you can collect together the portfolio of supporting evidence listed later in this pack. The external auditor will expect to see this.

Be objective. Use the self-analysis form and the portfolio of evidence to identify any areas that would benefit from further development. Take action to modify your procedures and documentation if necessary. Make sure any modifications are understood and operated effectively by all staff involved. If the person completing the self-analysis form is the owner or manager of the hire base you should consider asking your handover staff to review with you what you have filled in on the form to ensure that you have captured all the evidence that is available in your hire operation.

When you feel your procedure fully meets the standard and all the supporting evidence is available for scrutiny, fill in the booking form contained in this pack and send it to BMF Training at the address printed on the form. You should also include a copy of your self-analysis form and your portfolio of sample documentation.

After receiving the booking form BMF Training will contact you to arrange for an auditor to visit your hire-base and carry out the audit. Any arrangements made by BMF Training will be confirmed in writing.

If you need to contact BMF Training, phone Liv Whetmore on 01784 223631, or send an e-mail to lwhetmore@britishmarine.co.uk, or fax us on 01784 439678.

Fees and Expenses

A fee will be charged for the BMF’s external audit service. BMF members will receive a preferential rate as part of their membership benefits. Operators with multiple sites should discuss their needs with the BMF Director of Training Services to agree a suitable approach.

The fee per single audit visit or re-visit, to one hire base, is £125 +VAT, including all auditor expenses, for BMF members. The fee for non-members is £195 +VAT. Prices subject to change from time to time at the discretion of the BMF. Prices correct at time of going to press.

The audit can be combined with an audit of weekly/weekend Hire boats and the following prices will apply:

BMF Members	£175 + VAT
Non Members	£325 + VAT

Please read this important note: The fees for a re-visit would apply, for example, to instances where the external auditor has been invited to return to the hire base to carry out another audit because the first visit produced a negative result or because the three year accreditation period has expired. Random spot checks will not be charged for.

What the BMF's External Audit Covers

Here is what you can expect from the BMF's external audit. This section sets out the terms and conditions so please read it carefully. The external audit requires the hire boat operator to:

- Complete the self-analysis pro-forma contained in this pack before applying for the audit. This self-administered "health check" will help you to decide whether to proceed right away or whether some development work is required first.
- Compile a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate the quality audit trail. This means proving that the handover process is in place by collecting together samples of all the company documents used to support all parts of the quality audit trail. Blank documents will not be accepted. You will need to present copies of actual records that have been completed by your staff and customers. The self-analysis pro-forma details the minimum requirements for your portfolio.
- Send a copy of your self-analysis pro-forma and the portfolio of sample documentation to BMF for initial review.
- Invite a member of the BMF Training team or their representative to visit your hire base to observe your boat handover at first hand, and to sample the quality audit trail by inspecting relevant records, including a boat manual. These items can be carried out simultaneously.
- Agree to a random spot check by BMF. After you have passed the external audit, this means being prepared to accept an unannounced audit visit by a member of the BMF Training team or their representative.

The BMF Training team member or their representative appointed to carry out your external audit will complete a standardised checklist to document their findings. A copy of the checklist, signed and dated by both parties, will be provided to the operator concerned as a record of the audit and the original will be held on file by BMF. BMF will not disclose any information that it obtains in the course of delivering the audit service to anyone else.

Any operator whose handover process meets the standard in full will be issued with a numbered and dated certificate of conformity published by BMF. The certificate will be valid for three years and will have an expiry date. The certificate will remain the property of BMF and may be withdrawn if the operator's handover procedure falls below the standard. Any operator whose handover process does not meet the standard in full will be given the opportunity to spend time working on the non-conforming items highlighted in the checklist before applying for re-auditing. This will incur another audit fee. BMF reserves the right to apply reasonable time limits to applications for re-auditing and to refuse to accept re-applications if it feels it would be appropriate to do so.

In the event of a dispute an appeal may be made in writing within twenty one days of the audit visit or re-visit to the BMF's Executive Director whose decision will be final and binding.

Self-Analysis Form for Day Boat Handover Procedures

This form is to help you decide if your hire base is ready for an external audit by the BMF. You may like to make photocopies of this form so that the audit pack remains intact for future use. Circle the response “Y” or “N” that applies to each question as appropriate. If there is not enough room here continue on separate sheets and staple them to this form. If you are unsure how to answer refer to the “National Guide to Day Boat Handover” for information.

Name of Hire Base	
Name of Person Completing this Pro-Forma	
Position	
Signature	
Date	

Name of Boat Handover Staff	Boat Knowledge Acceptable?	Style of Explaining Acceptable?	Boat Driving Acceptable?
	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N

If the answer to any of these questions is “NO” you will need to take appropriate action. Refer to the relevant sections in the “National Guide to Day Boat Handover” to see what action to take. Make notes here:

Action Taken	By Whom?	When?	Outcome

Does the route(s) to be cruised from this base include the following features:

Locks	Y / N	Swing Bridges	Y / N	Tunnels	Y / N	Stream Conditions	Y / N
Other – Please explain							

These features are explained to the hirer by the use of:

Live Demonstrations	Y / N	Models	Y / N	Old Lock Gear	Y / N
Other – Please explain					

If you are not able to answer this question refer to the handover guide for suggestions. Make notes here:

Action Taken	By Whom?	When?	Outcome

Are the hirers briefed on:

Their Boat	Y / N	Their Route	Y / N	The Boat Manual	Y / N	Safety Information	Y / N
Other – Please explain							

If the answer to any of these questions is “NO” you will need to take appropriate action. Refer to the relevant sections in the “National Guide to Day Boat Handover” to see what action to take. Make notes here:

Action Taken	By Whom?	When?	Outcome

Is a Boat Acceptance Certificate used with all hire parties starting from this base?

Y / N

If you answered "NO" to this question please explain here what you do instead:

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If appropriate are bookings for this base supplied by a third party:

Booking Agencies	Y / N	Travel Agents	Y / N
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Please indicate what information is provided to the hirer, who supplies it and when it is supplied:

Publication	Supplied by Whom?	When?
British Waterways/Environment Agency Boater's Handbook – Basic Boat-Handling and Safety		
Others – Please specify		

Are hire boats setting out from this base equipped with a boat manual containing operating notes for the boat and safety advice for the hire party?

Y / N

If you answered "NO" to this question please explain here what you do instead:

--

Organised groups and parties that include people with special needs: Is the leader of these types of hire parties asked to sign a written record stating that they are responsible for ensuring that their hire party conforms to the standards laid down by their parent organisation?

Y / N

If you answered “NO” or are not sure how to answer this question refer to the Handover Guide for clarification.

The quality audit trail: Compile a set of sample documents that show the quality audit trail for your boat hire operation. This is your portfolio of evidence that will demonstrate to the auditor how your printed material and record keeping complies with the BMF Handover Procedures. The portfolio contains the following items:

Brochure or Leaflet (if applicable)	Y / N
Hire Terms and Conditions	Y / N
Booking Form	Y / N
Boat Acceptance Certificate	Y / N
Other – Please specify	Y / N
	Y / N

If you answered “NO” to any of the items in the audit trail please explain here what you do instead:

Please note that the Boat Manual may form part of the quality audit trail, however this is not required to be included in the portfolio of evidence sent to BMF prior to your audit. It will be inspected during the audit.

Additional evidence: If you feel there is something worth noting that would help you to establish compliance in the eyes of the auditor please say so here

Booking Form for BMF Day Boat Handover External Audit

Contact Name	
Contact Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Business Name and Address	
Postcode	
Name and address of site to be audited, if different from above	
Contact Name on site to be audited	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	

- BMF Members – I have enclosed a cheque made payable to the British Marine Federation for the sum of £146.88 (£125 +VAT) to cover the full cost of the audit.
- Non Members – I have enclosed a cheque made payable to the British Marine Federation for the sum of £229.13 (£195 +VAT) to cover the full cost of the audit.

Please include the following documentation with your booking form:

- Audit Pack Self Analysis Form
- Brochure or Leaflet (if applicable)
- Hire Terms and Conditions
- Booking Form
- Boat Acceptance Certificate
- Any other relevant documentation

* If any of the documentation above is not applicable at your base, please just send the documentation in use.

I understand that BMF Training will contact me to arrange a suitable date for the audit visit and they will confirm it in writing.

Signature		Date	
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Send the completed form and cheque to:

Liv Whetmore, British Marine Federation, Marine House, Thorpe Lea Road, Egham, Surrey, TW20 8BF