



Quality Accredited Boatyard Standard

Aim

To create a fair and modern assessment scheme that ensures quality standards and a safe and legal operating environment for customers.

Rationale

Both VisitEngland (VE) and British Marine need to ensure that each boatyard participating within the assessment scheme is operating in a legal and safe manner, in so far as this can be guaranteed within a quality assessment process. It is proposed, therefore, that a dual assessment strategy be adopted.

1. Quality Accredited Boatyard. (QAB)

In order to participate within the assessment scheme, all boatyards/boat operators must pass and hold a current certificate for this part of the assessment scheme. QAB will include:

- Health and safety issues.
- Legal requirements.
- The Hire Boat Handover scheme.
- Assessment of the website and brochure.
- Arrival and departure procedures.
- Customer service procedures – onshore and when customers are away from the boatyard.
- Boatyard facilities; car parking, reception, toilets, etc.

QAB will not carry a star rating, but will be an accreditation, endorsed by VE and British Marine, that offers reassurances of safe and legal practices together with good customer services. The QAB assessments are to be carried out every three years.

2. Boat Grading

The second part of the assessment process will be the assessment of individual narrowboats and cruisers. This will be a star rating, one to five. A boatyard/operator will only be able to have boats star rated if a valid QAB rating is held. However, a boatyard/operator with a QAB rating may choose not to have boats star rated and might operate their own boat rating scheme. If this is the case the QAB assessment will look at the in-house assessment process to ensure that it is transparent and does not mislead potential customers.

The star rating for boats will have minimal criteria requirements and will be based largely on the quality and condition of the individual boat and also the comfort and ease of use for the maximum number of occupants.

Boat Grading is conducted on an annual basis.

Quality Assessed Boatyard

The QAB assessment will rely on the skills of the assessor to be able to probe, ask supplementary questions, analyse websites and data and collect evidence. Therefore, the question sets provided below will form the basis of the discussions between the assessor and the operator.

The question sets will, however, be clear about what is a requirement of the scheme and needs to be in place and what is regarded as best practice and might become a recommendation in the assessor's report.

Overview of the Boatyard

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| How many boats does the yard hire out for more than one night? | | |
| How many day boats does the yard have for hire? | | |
| What services are provided? Direct bookings Arrival and departure services Car parking Toilet facilities Housekeeping Emergency and maintenance services on the waterway Quayside services; fresh water, etc | | |
| How many staff do you employ? Reception Engineers Housekeeping Etc | | |
| What staff training do you provide? Customer service Accessibility Health & Safety Etc | | |

Health & Safety & Legal

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| Who in the organisation is responsible for ensuring that all of the certification and licences are in place? Are they all held at the boatyard? If not where? <i>A random selection of each of licence and certificate will be viewed.</i> | | |
| Does the Operator have a valid Fire Risk Assessment document? | Requirement | |
| Servicing of fire extinguishers | Requirement | |

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| Do you have a valid boat licence for each hire boat? | Requirement | |
| Do you have a boat safety certificate for each hire boat where required? | Requirement | |
| Do you have a valid Gas Safe certificate for each hire boat with gas appliances? | Requirement | |
| Do you have current public liability and employers liability (where appropriate) insurance? | Requirement | |
| Do you PAT test electrical equipment? | Best Practice | |
| Do you have an Environmental policy? | Best Practice | |
| How do you ensure that every boat is in a safe condition for each hire? | | |
| How do you keep customers to the boatyard away from potentially dangerous areas? | | |
| Where there are tunnels en-routes are life jackets provided? | Best Practice | |

Website and/or Brochure

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| Are any logos and awards displayed correctly? e.g. VisitEngland, QAB & star ratings, British Marine & APCO logos | Requirement | |
| If an in-house quality grading scheme is operated, is it clear to potential customers that it is operated in-house and how a grading is achieved? | | |
| Are boat descriptions and facilities such as sleeping and bathroom arrangements clear on the website and the brochure? | Requirement | |
| Is there a pictorial/layout plan for each boat? | Requirement | |
| Are other onboard arrangements and facilities clearly detailed? Pets welcome Provision of buoyancy aids, towels & bedding, TV, etc | Requirement | |
| Is the type of electricity supply on the boat detailed? Inverter fitted. | Best Practice | |
| Are the terms and conditions of business clearly laid out and easy to understand? Deposit and payment terms Cancellation policy Insurance Breakage policy Etc | Requirement | |
| Is the pricing policy clear and unambiguous? Are special offers clearly detailed? | Requirement | |

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| Are the website search and booking functions easy to use? | | |
| Is customer feedback provided on or via the website? | Best Practice | |
| Boaters Handbook/DVD – is it available on the website or provided via alternative means? | Best Practice | |

Office and Boatyard Procedures

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| On-line Booking System | | |
| Is it easy to contact the yard with questions? | | |
| Are guests able to seek availability and fully complete a booking on-line? | Best Practice | |
| Are guests made aware of the Terms & Conditions at the time of the booking? Deposits Payment dates Cancellation | Requirement | |
| Can guests book via telephone or post? | | |
| Are on-line payments carried out securely? | Requirement | |

Accessibility

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| Are there any accessible features on the website? | Best Practice | |
| Can deaf customers or those with hearing impairment communicate and book either on-line or via email? | | |
| Are some boats a little more accessible than others and is this made clear in the information? | | |
| Are staff trained to assist customers with special needs? | Best Practice | |

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| Arrival Procedures | | |
| What information is sent out to the customers pre-arrival? | Requirement | |
| Is the address of the yard and clear directions to the site provided? Also, public transport links? | Best Practice | |
| If on-site car parking provided, is it clearly signposted, surface in good order, lit and secure? | Best Practice | |
| Is assistance or are trolleys provided to transport luggage to the boat? | Best Practice | |
| Are recycling facilities offered? | Best Practice | |

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| Is there a standard "Welcome" procedure? In addition to Hire Boat Handover. Are staff well presented and welcoming? | | |
| Is there an out of hours "Welcome" procedure? | | |

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| Departure Procedure | | |
| In what condition are customers expected to leave the boats and is this detailed? | Requirement | |
| Are departure times from the boats clearly detailed? | Requirement | |

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| Customer Satisfaction Survey / Complaints Procedure | | |
| Is the complaints procedure clearly detailed and provided to customers via the website and/or in written material? | Best Practice | |
| How are complaints dealt with if they are raised during the holiday? | | |
| How are complaints dealt with if they are raised following the holiday and departure from the boatyard? | | |
| Are complaints monitored and analysed in order to identify weaknesses in procedures or individual boats? | Best Practice | |
| Is a customer satisfaction survey operated? | Requirement | |
| Are all customers invited to make comments? | | |
| How are the results used? | | |
| Is there any evidence of any measurable improvement to any aspect of the business as a result of customer complaints/feedback? | | |

Housekeeping

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| How does the company ensure high standard of housekeeping throughout the fleet? | | |
| Do housekeepers undergo training? | Best Practice (where appropriate) | |
| Are there any supervisory staff? | Best Practice (where appropriate) | |
| Are spot checks undertaken? | Best Practice (where appropriate) | |
| Is the standard of housekeeping included in the customer satisfaction survey? | Best Practice | |

Boat Maintenance

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| How does the company ensure that every boat goes out in good working order every time? | | |
| Is there a maintenance log for each hire boat? | Requirement | |
| Are worksheets generated for mechanical and domestic defects? If yes, how are they generated? | | |
| What is the servicing regime? | | |
| Who is responsible and is the process well managed? | | |
| What is the procedure for responding to breakdowns or emergencies on the water for one of your boats? | | |

In-House Boat Assessments

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| How often is each boat assessed? | | |
| Is each boat measured against a clearly defined set of criteria? | | |
| Does the assessment process take account of quality as well as facilities? | | |
| Is a clear explanation of the assessment scheme provided for customers? | | |
| It is made clear that this is an in-house scheme and is not connected to VE or British Marine? | | |
| If boats are let on behalf of third party owners, is a written report provided to the owner in order to provide quality feedback and improvement points? | | |

Boat Handover

| Customer Log & Information | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Name of Boat | Requirement | |
| Date of Hire | Requirement | |
| Name of Booker | Requirement | |
| Name of Skipper | Requirement | |
| Mobile phone number & car reg | Best practice | |
| Name of all other persons in party | Requirement | |
| Previous Experience of Party | Best Practice | |
| Age of any under 18's | Requirement | |
| Buoyancy Aids issued as appropriate | Requirement | |

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| Name of Handover staff | Requirement | |
| Time of arrival | Best Practice | |
| Time handover started | Requirement | |
| Time handover completed | Requirement | |

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| Handover Staff | | |
| Number of handover staff | | |
| What knowledge & experience does the staff have? | | |
| How are handover staff trained? | | |

| Boat Acceptance Certificate | Y/N | Staff Name | Explanation |
|---|------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Details of the following must be given as part of a detailed handover and recorded | | | |
| Safety on board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People on deck • Falling overboard • Lifejacket/buoyancy aids • Fire extinguishers | | | |
| Boat handling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boat manual • Other waterway users • Steering, stopping and mooring | | | |
| Engine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance • Controls | | | |
| Appliances on board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas • Electric • Toilets | | | |
| Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed limits • Rubbish/litter • Reed/shallow water | | | |
| Contact details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown • Emergency • Accident | | | |
| Waterways features (where appropriate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locks • Fixed and/or swing bridges • Tides | | | |
| Conditions of boat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return time and state of boat | | | |

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| Signatures | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skipper• Handover staff | | | |