



**Rickmansworth Waterways Trust**  
**Learning at the Lock Safety Management**  
**Plan**

**Document Number R03**

**Date Reviewed and Approved by the Trustees – Jan 2024**

## **Learning at the Lock Safety Policy**

We are committed to maintaining a safe environment for the work of our volunteers and staff and the enjoyment of our visitors.

We therefore ensure that our premises, and those of which we have the use, are kept in good order; that our own property (including our boats) is fit for the visits we offer; that the activities we organise are properly supervised by suitable staff or volunteers; and that the risks of those activities are properly assessed and mitigated.

There are particular requirements for the operation of our boats, and we have special instructions for this. They are set out in a further document.

We ensure in particular that our staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of the responsibilities that they have undertaken towards our visitors; and that they are competent to discharge those responsibilities.

We undertake to brief the supervisors of parties (especially schools parties) of visitors on the hazards which exist around our programme (which are mainly related to the canal); and to issue instructions and advice as appropriate to address these hazards.

And we ask our visitors to play their part in respecting the hazards which we point out, and in conducting themselves in accordance with our instructions and advice.

It is not realistic to expect that we will have identified every hazard in detail, and we ask our visitors (especially supervisors of parties) to point out any hazard which they may identify.

It is our policy, and our practice, to insure our third party risks to an appropriate degree.

## **Risk Assessment**

A formal risk assessment for our Education Programmes is attached. In preparing it, we have identified the following principal hazards:

- Deep water in the canal, and especially in the locks.
- Traffic when embarking from transport, when moving along the road and when re-embarking in transport.
- Slips and falls when moving around the area, and especially when embarking in or disembarking from, our boats.
- Crushing injury caused by people (or any limb) being outside the boat when it impacts on the bank or another boat.

There are also hazards from domestic electricity, from illness when on our premises and from fire: these hazards are broadly similar to those experienced at school or in the home.

Although the Learning at the Lock Risk Assessment identifies the children as being the main "persons at risk", the same risks are open to other visitors to the programme, and the mitigations are relevant to them also.

### **Learning at the Lock: Schedule of Activities**

The activities experienced during a visit to Learning at the Lock are these:

- Arrive in Moor Lane by bus. Move to Education Centre.
- Instruction in Education Centre.
- Move to Batchworth Lock.
- Instruction round the lock.
- Move to working boat Roger, including climbing steps down to cabin.
- Visit cabin etc of Roger.
- Move to trip boat Pride of Batchworth.
- Canal trip in Pride of Batchworth.
- Final Session in Education Centre.
- Move to Moor Lane bus for collection.
- Depart, in bus.

The risks arising from these activities, and the mitigations for them, are shown below.

Detailed instructions for the conduct of these activities have been derived from the risk assessment, and are briefed to all participating staff and volunteers. They are available to schools on request.

The most significant hazard is water, which presents a risk when the children are in the trip boat (usually the Pride of Batchworth), especially when passing through Batchworth Lock. Although this is a routine activity and of great interest to most young people, a particular briefing will be given which will emphasise the need for careful supervision of the passengers, and an absolute requirement for all passengers to remain safely inside the boat.

It is clear from the risk assessment that the main control to avoid unsafe situations in Learning at the Lock is **the supervision of the children**, by school staff, RWT staff and RWT volunteers.

#### **Identifying LatL Staff**

In order to make the supervision easier, all our volunteers and staff will be identified by a "Learning at the Lock" name badge which the Trust will provide. It is not our intention to make this a photo-pass at this stage, although this could be done in the future.

**Learning at the Lock - RISK ASSESSMENT and MITIGATION.**

No.	Hazard	Cause of injury	Consequence	Mitigation in place	Assessment	Further Action
1	Water	Falling into canal, especially near locks or from boats. Overcrowding near water's edge	Drowning. Hypothermia, illness (cryptosporidium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness briefing to supervisory staff.</li> <li>Training of LatL staff and volunteers.</li> <li>Firm control by skipper and crew when embarking and underway in boats.</li> <li>Children to wear lifejackets when near water. Adults may also wish to do so (self inflating lifejackets available).</li> <li>Some LatL staff and volunteers trained in recovery from water, and in first-aid resuscitation (response to immersion).</li> </ul>	Risk is low, provided all visitors obey the rules.	<p>Firm supervision and control of children is essential.</p> <p>Consider further staff to receive resuscitation training</p>
2	Moving boats	Crushing, due to collision between boats or contact with fixed canal structure	Serious injury to visitor or staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All passengers must keep limbs within boat at all times, especially when adjacent to other boats, lock walls or fittings, towpath edge or overhanging trees.</li> <li>Careful briefing and supervision by staff.</li> <li>Use qualified and experienced boat steerers to minimise risk of collision or hard impacts.</li> </ul>	Risk is low, provided all visitors obey the rules.	Particular care to ensure supervision, especially in boats
3	Child operating the Lock gate	Falling backwards	Fall injury to child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer to assess capacity of child (age/ strength/ understanding) to pull gate open by grasping handle with both hands</li> <li>Volunteer to consider other impediments e.g. Slippery handle; icy or wet ground before child starts</li> <li>If considered safer volunteer to encourage child to push gate open with back, possibly aiding child to get movement of gate started</li> </ul>	Risk is low, provided all visitors obey the rules	None

No.	Hazard	Cause of injury	Consequence	Mitigation in place	Assessment	Further Action
4	Uneven surfaces, obstructions and unprotected heights.	Falling or Tripping (Slipping a lesser risk) due to poor surfaces, obstructed towpaths (e.g. fishing rods, mooring lines) or walk ways (cables, items left on floor)	Injury to visitor or staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use regularly-maintained access routes and pathways.</li> <li>Avoid trip hazards – good knowledge, supervision and briefing. Belongings to be stowed in designated places.</li> <li>Particular care required around lock (top and gates) and boats.</li> <li>Roger in particular to be positioned so that the step across to the counter for access to the cabin is short, and easily supervised.</li> <li>The step down in to the cabin is quite high. Supervisor must ensure that children are aware of the step down.</li> </ul>	Risk is low – acceptable.	Particular care to ensure supervision, especially on Lock top which cannot be protected, and in Roger's cabin.
5	Cyclists, runners or dogs on towpath	Collision between cyclist, walker or dog	Injury, mainly to visitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children on towpath should be wearing lifejackets – bright orange in colour, easily seen.</li> <li>Alertness of supervisor to oncoming cycles – warning to given as required.</li> <li>Sufficient first-aid trained staff to respond if required.</li> </ul>	Risk is low – tolerable	Warning signs – “Children on Towpath”
6	Illness	Pre-existing condition, overcrowding	Injury, mainly to visitor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-existing conditions must be known to school staff, and reported to RWT staff if considered relevant.</li> <li>RWT staff to be aware of possibility of unexplained illness in visitors, and be ready to respond if required.</li> </ul>	Risk is low - tolerable	None
7	Fire	Source of ignition in contact with flammable materials	Serious injury to visitor or staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid any open flame or other source of ignition in any part of the programme.</li> <li>First-aid FF appliances to be readily available.</li> <li>Ability to raise alarm and to initiate evacuation confirmed at start of each visit.</li> <li>Fire risk assessment is in place and reviewed regularly,</li> </ul>	Risk is very low - Acceptable	None
8	Vehicles (when leaving and returning to bus)	Traffic in road during unloading or loading of bus.	Serious injury to visitor or staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-briefing of school staff before arrival.</li> <li>Buses to disembark in Moor Lane side road, clear of traffic.</li> <li>Careful supervision during loading and unloading.</li> <li>Receiving staff or volunteers to wear hi-vis jackets.</li> <li>Children to be marshalled carefully when moving along pavement to and from the bus.</li> </ul>	Risk is moderate - Tolerable	None

No.	Hazard	Cause of injury	Consequence	Mitigation in place	Assessment	Further Action
9	Electricity	1. Mains supply to Education Centre 2. Mains supply in Canal Centre (there is no electricity in <i>Roger</i> , and only 12v DC in <i>Pride of Batchworth</i> and <i>Spirit of Batchworth</i> )	Injury or death to visitor or staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All portable equipment to be PAT tested.</li> <li>• Electrical installations to be compliant with building and other current standards.</li> <li>• Minimise requirement for visitors to be near, or to use, mains supplied equipment.</li> </ul>	Risk is very low - acceptable	Avoid using any electrical equipment when children are present.