

## ADVICE TO PRIVATE BOAT OWNERS CONSIDERING OFFERING THEIR BOAT OUT FOR HIRE

This may sound an attractive proposition for earning some income from your boat. British Waterways' fair trading policy aims to encourage commercial enterprise on its waterways, so in principle has no objection to this practice, providing that the relevant licence is obtained.

A Leisure Business Licence is required for the letting of a boat for hire. The terms of this licence are more onerous than those of a private boat, reflecting the greater public safety risks associated with hiring boats to inexperienced crews. This note summarises BW's additional requirements for self-drive holiday boats.

### 1. Boat Safety Scheme Certification

There are additional BSS requirements (Part 10 hire boats & safety features). See [http://www.boatsafetyscheme.com/site/parttenchecklist\\_147.asp](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.com/site/parttenchecklist_147.asp). For boats with gas systems fitted compliance with the Gas Safety Installation Use and Regulations is a legal requirement and a certificate is required from a CORGI registered gas installer or suitably qualified BSS examiner.

### 2. Provision for servicing the boat

There must be adequate facilities available to service the Boat. 7. These must include:

- (a) car parking for customers
- (b) systems for the disposal of sewage from the boat;
- (c) drinking-water supply to refill the boat;
- (d) covered refuse disposal bins;
- (e) a mooring berth which gives safe entry and exit to and from the boat.

([BW Leisure Business Licence](#), condition no. 7)

### 3. Provisions for handover to boat hirers

Each time you allow any person to use the Boat you must ensure that they are capable of using it safely. To meet this obligation you should:

- (a) provide adequate and appropriate coaching in
  - (i) safe methods of navigating the Waterways including operating locks
  - (ii) the operation and care of the Boat and its equipment (including safety equipment)
- (b) provide on the Boat, and draw attention to:
  - (i) the Boater's Handbook (published by the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities). You are strongly advised to make this or similar material available to users of the Boat before they arrive.
  - (ii) other relevant publications about the local Waterway
  - (iii) emergency contact details
- (c) offer to all passenger and users of the Boat free use of properly maintained buoyancy aids or lifejackets

You are advised to maintain a log of all breakdown or emergency calls. In the event of a serious accident involving one of your hirers, you are likely to be interrogated on your actions by the Health & Safety Executive and/or Coroner

### 4. Insurance

Your boat's insurance policy must include public liability insurance and cover the boat being let out for hire.

**In making an application for a leisure business licence, you are confirming that you meet all of the above requirements.** We may carry out an inspection (at your expense), and will draw your attention to any shortcomings. If you do not put these right, we are likely to terminate your leisure business licence.

The Marine Coastguard Agency is expected to publish a new 'Hire Boat Code' in early summer 2008. This will include further requirements, including testing boat stability.

**You are urged to research other legal/statutory requirements applicable to commercial trading such as HSE, EU Travel Trade Directive, Fire Regulations and VAT.**

We recommend that all boat owners offering their boat for hire should join the Association of Pleasure Craft Operators, the professional trade body supporting and advising members on best practice.