

COVID-19 – Marine Leisure Activities

Mariners are hereby advised that, further to LNTM 19/2020, we have now received additional guidance and clarification from government that marinas can now be re-opened.

In summary ***“this is primarily a matter for the marina operators to decide but if it can be done safely following social distancing guidelines, then it should be possible.”***

It will be for individual marina/facility owners to consider whether they are able to restart their services whilst ensuring the safety of their staff and users. **Please check with your club or marina before travelling to your boat.**

The guidance also makes it clear that you must stay at your primary residence therefore, overnight stays on your vessel are not permitted.

We understand that Q&A 's from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are expected to be published shortly and that they will contain the following advice:

What water-based activities can I take part in?

- All forms of water sports practiced on open waterways, including sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, rowing, kayaking, surfing, paddle-boarding and the use of privately-owned motorised craft (in line with the guidance issued by the relevant navigation authority) are allowed.
- You may participate in water-based activities as an individual, household group, or as a pair of two people from different households who are socially distancing (i.e. you should keep 2 metres apart). For example, it would not be possible to form a 'double' canoe or kayak or rowing boat with someone from outside your household because it would be impossible when doing so to follow social distancing guidelines.
- As longer trips outdoors generally are allowed from Wednesday 13 May, owners of both private and commercial boats can now make day visits to their moored boats in marinas and elsewhere to ensure they are properly maintained.
- Non-essential travel on waterways by privately-owned boats (both powered and non-powered) may be resumed, subject to guidance permitting it by the relevant navigation authority and compliance with all licensing requirements. Navigation authorities may apply a time-lag before leisure travel on their waterways can resume, to allow their teams to carry out essential safety inspections and maintenance to canal and river channels and structures. For example, for the Environment Agency, private boating may not recommence until June.
- Commercial boating operations will remain closed though may resume when the hospitality sector is anticipating starting to re-open in July.

If angling is being permitted then am I also allowed to go canoeing/paddling?

- Where individuals have either a licence with the navigation authority or a voluntary agreement with riparian landowners in place, then private canoeing/paddling for individuals within a household only is permitted,

subject to being careful and staying away from other users and houseboats. If travel generally no longer has to be essential,

can I go to visit my private boat to sit on it and enjoy the sunshine?

- People are permitted to travel to make day visits to their private boats in marinas and elsewhere to sit in them with their household only, subject to being careful and staying away from other users and houseboats in line with social distancing guidelines.

Can I now go and stay on my boat overnight or for a few days?

- The guidance on staying at your primary residence still applies, so no overnight visits to private boats or for extended stays are permitted.

Can I go on my private boat with someone from a different household if we stay two metres apart?

- On small private boats it would not be possible to be in the same boat with someone from outside of your household because it would be impossible when doing so to follow social distancing guidelines.

- On larger private boats, where possible we recommend that you avoid sharing a boat with a person from a different household. If you do share a boat with someone outside of your household, then where possible, you should stay at least two metres apart – and it should only be with one other person. Cleaning protocols should be put in place to limit coronavirus transmission on boats. It is advised that touch points (e.g. handrails) should be particular areas of focus for increased cleaning. Frequent cleaning of boats, using your usual cleaning products, is advised. As is removing waste and belongings from boats when finishing a day-trip.

If we are allowing people to visit their private boats, am I also allowed to travel on a private boat along waterways for leisure?

- Private boating on waterways may be resumed at this stage only for day visits, subject to guidance and/or any restrictions put in place by the relevant navigation authority. Overnight stays are not permitted.

- Navigation authorities may apply a time-lag before private leisure travel on their waterways can resume, to allow their teams to carry out essential safety inspections and maintenance to canal and river channels and structures. For example, for the Environment Agency, private boating may not recommence until June. Will marinas re-open to allow people to visit their boats and carry out essential maintenance?

- Marinas may re-open to allow people to visit their boats to carry out maintenance, ensuring appropriate measures are in place to follow social distancing guidelines. Am I allowed to walk around marinas, as well as access my boat to sit on?

- This is primarily a matter for the marina operators to decide, but if it can be done safely following social distancing guidelines then it should be possible.

Am I allowed remove my boat from the marina for private boating?

- This is primarily a matter for the marina operators to decide, but if it can be done safely following social distancing guidelines then it should be possible.

- Navigation authorities may apply a time-lag before leisure travel on their waterways can resume, to allow their teams to carry out essential safety inspections and maintenance to canal and river channels and structures. For example, for the Environment Agency, private boating may not recommence until June. What steps should be taken to safely open a marina?

- Refer to government guidance on outdoor sports facilities and maintaining social distancing.

Can members of the same household travel from their house to use a hire boat operation?

- Commercial boating operations will remain closed though may resume when the hospitality sector is anticipating starting to re-open in July.

Are waterways businesses such as tour boats allowed open now under this guidance, or in July onwards under hospitality?

- Commercial boating operations will remain closed though may resume when the hospitality sector is anticipating starting to re-open in July.

Additional guidance from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>

Once again thank you all for your patience. Stay alert and stay safe on the water.

Mariners are reminded that radar, telephone and VHF Channels are recorded.

Captain Brian Murphy
Harbour Master

All Local Notices are available on the PHC website - www.phc.co.uk.