



Boating Customer Charter



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Introduction

Scottish Canals is responsible to the Scottish Government for the management, operation and development of 141 miles of inland waterways across five Scottish canals, The Falkirk Wheel, The Kelpies, river navigation rights, bridges, buildings, locks and 19 water supply reservoirs across Scotland.

We are dedicated to maximising the full and sustainable development of our canal network and assets in a way that positively impacts the widest range of people, whilst ensuring that safety remains to the fore.

We do this by developing and enhancing the role of canals in delivering public benefit, and by showcasing our canals and towpaths, our destinations, and our attractions to the people of Scotland, the UK, and the wider world.

This document includes information about canal operating periods, facilities and general operational standards, and provides information and signposting to other relevant policies, terms & conditions and strategies. The document also details the circumstances where SC may consider a fee reduction or credit may be appropriate.

The document does not replace Scottish Canals' customer experience strategy or supersede any of our existing terms & conditions.

We will revisit and validate the document on a regular basis to ensure it is up to date and relevant and we will make it publicly available on our website.



Operational Contacts

Scottish Canals colleagues in each local canal office can assist with any queries or concerns during normal business hours as outlined below.

Scottish Canals Headquarters

Canal House, Applecross Street
Glasgow G4 9SP

T: 0141 332 6936
(Mon –Fri 9am–5pm)
enquiries@scottishcanals.co.uk

Lowland Canals

(Forth & Clyde Canal, Union Canal)

T: 07810 794 467
(Mon–Fri 9am–5pm)
lowland.canals@scottishcanals.co.uk

Caledonian Canal

Seaport Marina, Muirtown Wharf
Inverness IV3 5LE

T: 01463 725500
(Mon–Fri 9am–5pm)
caledonian@scottishcanals.co.uk

Crinan Canal

Pier Square, Ardrishaig
Argyll PA30 8DZ

T: 01546 603210
(Mon–Fri 9am–5pm)
transitcrinan@scottishcanals.co.uk

Urgent contact: If there is an emergency, an immediate threat to the environment, wildlife or a person please call 0800 072 9900

Customer Service Commitment

Scottish Canals strives to meet the needs of the broad range of customers who live, work, and play on and around our canals.

Whether navigating our waterways, walking, or cycling our towpaths, or interacting with our people, it is vital that Scottish Canals strives to offer every customer the best possible service.

We want to get it right first time, every time for **every customer.**

Where we have not got it right, we are committed to resolution and have processes in place to ensure this happens.

Our People

- Will be welcoming, polite, fair, and respectful
- Will be friendly, helpful, and conscientious
- Will communicate clearly and appropriately
- Will try to resolve customer queries at the earliest opportunity
- Politely acknowledge customers at every opportunity
- Promote the organisation positively to all customers
- Make every effort to understand, and where we can, meet, the customer expectations
- Take ownership of customer enquiries and aim to resolve them quickly



Details of our Customer Complaints procedure can be found on the Scottish Canals website **[HERE](#)**

Closures and Disruptions

The age of the waterways will inevitably mean occasional unforeseen canal closures or interruptions to navigation.

Other than in emergencies or for other unavoidable reasons, such as essential repairs, we will always try to schedule maintenance between November and March in order to minimise inconvenience to our boating customers.

On occasions when due to circumstances beyond our reasonable control, we must close part, or, exceptionally, an entire canal, we will publish details on the **Ongoing Works** page of our website.

We will also publish details of any scheduled works or disruption to navigation on the canal network on Ongoing Works page, ensuring it is regularly updated and accessible to customers, stakeholders, and partners.

- We will publish details of planned canal maintenance, network disruptions and incidents on our website
- We will try to provide a minimum of 28 days' notice of any planned closures or disruptions
- We aim to give at least 14 days, and where practicable 28 days' advance notice of our intention to carry out any building or development work in or around a mooring site

Customers can report a navigation issue using the 'Report A Nav' email address – reportanavissue@scottishcanals.co.uk or directly to any Scottish Canals colleague.

Canal Operating Periods

Each of our canals has its own core operating period.

Details of opening hours and contact information for each of our canals can be found on our website:

- Caledonian Canal – [HERE](#)
- Crinan Canal – [HERE](#)
- Forth and Clyde Canal – [HERE](#)
- Union Canal – [HERE](#)

Navigation & Licence Fees

If you are sailing or cruising on our waterways for less than 1 month, you need to purchase a short-term licence which covers both navigation and use of visitor moorings.

If you want to bring your boat on to any of Scottish Canals' waterways for more than 30 days, you will need to make sure that we have a mooring for you, that your vessel is in good shape (both mechanically and aesthetically) and that you have all relevant insurances and certificates.

Scottish Canals' licence fees are calculated in full recognition that customers will be affected by closures from time to time and that we may have to pause navigation or withdraw a service for a short time, or with minimal notice.

Refunds of licence fees and associated mooring fees, will not usually be made for closures as described in this condition. Notwithstanding the above, Scottish Canals recognises the impact that unplanned closures, service disruptions and related issues can have on our customers, partners and communities and will seek to minimise these disruptions at all times.

Where we do implement a closure out with the above circumstances, our approach to any compensation or similar will be established following consultation with affected parties.

This may include, but is not limited to, applying an appropriate adjustment to the relevant fee if you are prevented from navigation in a locality, or coastal mooring if your access to the sea is affected. If we are required to relocate you to a less expensive mooring, we will credit or refund the difference.

Full details of Scottish Canals licence fee terms and conditions is available on our website at <https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/boating/licenses-moorings>



Aquatic Weed & Invasive Species



Aquatic weed on Scotland's canals can take several forms - from small floating leaves which can interfere with "raw" water cooling systems to long stemmed submerged water plants which tangle around propellers.

On the Lowland Canals, aquatic weed is seasonal and is mechanically harvested from the canal to keep the channel clear.

Scottish Canals will publish the proposed location of weed cutters on our website at <https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/boating/ongoing-works/lowland-canals-navigation-condition>

Please contact our Boat Movement Team or local canal staff to ascertain current conditions.

Boat Movements

24hr advanced booking/winter – 48hr advanced booking

T: 07810 794 467

Invasive Species

Scottish Canals has an active programme of invasive non-native terrestrial plant management and we promote the [Check Clean Dry » NNSS](#) campaign to reduce the risk of spread of aquatic invasive species.

Please report any sightings of invasive non-native species to enquiries@scottishcanals.co.uk with species, location (What 3 Words), date and a photograph

Waterway Operational Standards

Scottish Canals' recently developed operational standards are intended to provide users with clear information relating to our management and operation of the waterways as they relate to navigation and boating.

Scottish Canals will work towards alignment with Association of Inland Navigation Authorities waterway operational standards.

We will publish our progress and performance on an annual basis.

Signage & Navigation

Subject to conditions outwith Scottish Canals' control, when our canals are open, we will maintain adequate water levels to allow transit through the network

Where they are required, water level indicators are clearly visible and legible

Where currents or water levels can be hazardous, water level indicators and warning signs are in place. Both are clearly visible and legible

Approaches to structures, i.e. pontoons, moorings and bends are kept clear of excess vegetation in line with the company's Vegetation Management Policy

Warning signage will be in place to ensure customers are aware of overhead power lines

Safety signs and safety aids will be maintained, visible, clear, and legible to customers

Customers are warned about navigational hazards, such as weirs, in advance of the hazard. The correct navigation channel is signed

Navigational aids, signs, lights, and buoys, where installed are maintained and in full working order

Lighting provided on safety grounds is maintained in full working order

Bridges and Locks
Where offered, pre-booked assisted lock / bridge passages will be attended to within a 30-minute window
Bridges and locks are clearly signed with an identifying number
Appropriate instructions for use and / or safety warnings are displayed at bridges and locks
Waiting points are provided in the approaches to locks and opening bridges
Locks or flights have landings at the top and bottom
Locks are fitted with an appropriate number of ladders
Lock walkways and balance beams used as walkways, have non-slip surfaces and handrails
Balance beams have handles and these are securely fitted
Lock chambers and gates are free of protrusions / indentations that could snag boats. Gates are fendered
Cill positions are clearly marked

Landings and Moorings
All landings and moorings must have an even surface, with a defined edge. Vegetation is managed in line with Scottish Canals' vegetation management policies.
Landings at operating structures have an appropriate number of mooring cleats / rings / bollards

Landings and Moorings

A landing where craft moor prior to operating a structure or wait before using a structure (e.g. tunnel) should have a minimum of 3 bollards (or other mooring device) over a 21.5 metre length on pontoons, or 40m on Caledonian 'large craft jetties'

Landing must be provided upstream and downstream of all operating structures to enable customers to moor safely awaiting operating of the structure by staff or to access customer facilities. In the case of customer operated structures, to allow boaters to safely land, operate structure, and reboard vessel.

Landings should be segregated for leisure and commercial craft where possible

Large craft jetties, where available are subject to availability

Towpath / Access Points

Vegetation along the canals is cut as part of our annual planned maintenance. This work is undertaken to ensure that the waterways remain navigable, and that vegetation does not restrict boat movements or mooring locations.

We make all reasonable efforts to keep canals & towpaths free of litter

Busy dog walking towpaths have dog bins that are regularly emptied

Steps and sloping pathways have no loose treads or risers. Treads and risers have clearly defined leading edges

Where steps and sloping pathways have handrails, these are securely fixed

Reporting Faults and Issues

Scottish Canals provide a range of services for boaters, including water points, refuse disposal, pump outs, toilets and showers.

Customers encountering a problem with any of our facilities or services (i.e. a broken electricity bollard or a blocked shower) should report it as outlined below.

Local colleagues will determine the appropriate next steps to resolve the issue, this may include 'frontline' resolution, i.e. our staff can rectify the fault, or passing on to external contractors. Customer service colleagues will provide updates to the customer as appropriate.

Stages

- **FRONTLINE** – Fault resolved at 'frontline' stage, i.e. by Scottish Canals colleagues.
- **2ND LINE** – Fault cannot be resolved immediately but requires further investigation
- **3RD LINE** – Fault cannot be resolved at 2nd line and needs external / specialist contractors or skills.

Please note that should we be called out to rectify a fault which is found to be as a result of your actions Scottish Canals reserve the right to charge for our time.



Faults discovered during working hours (Mon-Fri 8.30am-5pm) should be reported to the local office:

Lowland Canals – 07810 794 467 / lowland.canals@scottishcanals.co.uk

Crinan Canal – 01546 603 210 / crinan.canal@scottishcanals.co.uk

Caledonian Canal – 01463 725 500 / caledonian.canal@scottishcanals.co.uk

Out of Hours Faults

- Where faults occur outside business hours or may pose a risk of harm to property the environment or a person, customers should contact our out of hours call handlers on 0800 072 9900
- Details will be recorded passed on to the relevant duty officer / engineer, who will prioritise and respond as necessary
- Please note, that this does not mean that the issue will be resolved by the officer/engineer
- In an emergency – when a life is in danger, a crime is in progress, or a suspect is nearby always dial 999

When reporting any faults or issues, please include as much detail as possible per the example below:

Site Name i.e. Ratho Marina – Customer Facility

Address including postcode – Ratho Marina Newbridge EH28 8JS

What 3 Words Location – Blah Jig Prim

Boat name/ facility name – Old Salty

Description of Issue or Request – No Electricity

Contact (Reporting) Name – John Smith

Access Restrictions – Daytime only

Other info – Urgent request



Maintaining Our Facilities

Waterway Customer Facilities

- We will keep the services and facilities provided by SC in a reasonable state of repair and replace any equipment that has become unusable or is beyond economic repair
- Electricity supply bollards and water points will be regularly serviced and maintained
- Water points, sanitary stations and other facilities are clearly identified and accessible
- Toilets & pump outs, chemical toilet, waste disposal and recycling, showers & washing facilities will be maintained to an appropriate standard

Public Access to Customer Facilities

Scottish Canals' toilets, showers and facility blocks are intended primarily for use by boating customers.

We are pleased to support other customers making journeys along our canals by canoe, boot, or bike by allowing them access to these facilities in return for a small charge towards their upkeep. We are not able to make these facilities available for use by the general public.

Canalside colleagues will always endeavour to make facilities available when asked to do so by members of the public enjoying the canal environment on bike and by boot.

Where a colleague is not available, members of the public can contact the local office for the code or key.

Legislation and Statutes

Scottish Canals is required to comply with a range of statutory duties and legal requirements relating to the built and natural environment, health and safety, human resources, and asset management.

The following legislation, although not exhaustive, reflects the key compliance statutes for Scottish Canals as a Scottish public body:

- The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
- The Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000
- The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010
- The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011
- The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002
- Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003
- Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005
- The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009
- The Reservoirs (Scotland) Act 2011 requires Scottish Canals to implement recommendations made in the interests of safety for its reservoirs which are subject to inspection.
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 protects Scotland's Canals (excepting the Monklands Canal) by classing them as scheduled monuments of national importance.
- The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 protects 22 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on or within 500m of a canal
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Legislative framework

Scottish Canals is the operating name of the British Waterways Board.

The British Waterways Board was established by the Transport Act 1962 to manage and maintain the inland waterways. By virtue of the Scotland Act 1998, responsibility for the inland waterways in Scotland was devolved to the Scottish Parliament and designated as a cross-border public authority under the Scotland Act 1998 (Cross-Border Public Authorities) (Specification) Order 1999.

Statutory Duties

Scottish Canals' core statutory duties are set out in:

Transport Act 1962 – gave statutory responsibility for operating and maintaining the waterways for which the British Waterways Board is the navigation authority.

Transport Act 1968 – made changes to the use of facilities controlled by the state-owned British Waterways. Reflecting the decline in the use of canals and rivers for freight distribution, waterways were divided into three categories:

- Commercial Waterways
- Cruising Waterways
- Remainder Waterways

British Waterways Act 1971 Provisions of Part III Houseboats – Restrictions, Registration & Charges and part of Part IV Registration of Transfers extended to Scotland by s.9 (4) of British Waterways Act 1975

British Waterways Act 1995 – granted powers to enter land and repair or maintain or carry out other operations for the management and regulation of British Waterways Board waterways, extended to Scotland excluding Loch Lochy, Loch Oich, Loch Ness, and Loch Dochfour.

The Business and Governance section of Scottish Canals' website contains a wide range of information relating to the organisation's strategy, policy and operations, including the following key documents:

- Better Lives by Water – 2023-28 Corporate Plan – [HERE](#)
- Licences and Moorings Terms & Condition – [HERE](#)
- Scottish Canals' Asset Management Strategy sets out our plans for managing our investment between 2018 and 2030, directing our limited resources to assets that pose the biggest safety risk to the public and the projects that offer the greatest public value. [HERE](#)
- Scottish Canals Environment and Heritage Policy – [HERE](#)
- Scottish Canals Evasion Policy and Procedure – [HERE](#)



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