



CRIME ON THE CUT

YOUR GUIDE TO SAFER CRUISING

January 2002

NABO receives regular reports from boaters concerning incidents of criminal activity and intimidation as they cruise along the canals and rivers.

Whilst not wishing to over-play the threat, NABO considers it very important to alert boat owners to the potential dangers - and more importantly, how to protect your boat and crew if you are unfortunate enough to encounter problems.

PROTECT YOUR BOAT

Consider the following:-

- Make sure that your boat is adequately insured with Comprehensive insurance cover.
- Keep a record of serial numbers of all equipment on the boat.
- Mark equipment with your postcode to help with recovery of stolen property.
- Consider covering your windows with sheets of plywood hung from the roof.
- Keep curtains drawn and keep valuables out of sight.
- Keep front cabin doors and roof hatches locked when cruising.
- Fit bars / padlocks across external doors. But make you sure you can escape quickly in case of emergency.
- Fit good locks to all cabin doors.
- Fit an anti-intruder alarm for when your boat is unoccupied. But bear in mind that any dogs left on board may be annoyed if the alarm sounds.
- Make all doors lockable and fit bolts to the inside to enable you to lock yourself inside in safety, especially at night.
- Try to tie up to rings which enable you to lead your ropes back on board where they can be fastened.
- Use a chain and padlock when mooring in high-risk areas - you will not want to be cast adrift at night!
- Have a fierce-looking dog on board.
- Local Boatwatch schemes - ask your waterway manager or local police
- Use the Boatmark scheme to register your boat in case it is stolen.

KNOW YOUR LOCATION

Carry an Ordnance Survey map for the area in which you are cruising. Learn how to give a National Grid Reference for your position. EASTING first, followed by NORTHING - the printed kilometre figures along the edges of the map together with an estimate of additional tenths will pinpoint your position to within 100 metres. All emergency services recognise NGR references and this will enable them to find you.

Alternatively, if you possess a GPS (Global Positioning System) this will give your position to a high degree of accuracy (they are not just for finding your position at sea!)

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT TO CARRY

- Mobile telephone
- Camera ñ digital or with film in it!
- Note book to record details of time, location, descriptions of persons, etc
- Current copy of NABO News - for Council member contact telephone numbers
- NABO / BCNS West Midlands Police Canal Boundary Map ñ see the NABO website.

AVOIDING THE DANGERS

- Keep a good lookout for groups of youngsters standing on bridges, etc.
- Time your journey to avoid school holidays and out-of-school hours.
- Travel in company with other boats - there is safety in numbers.
- Be wary of urban sections of canals where vandalism is a problem. BW provides assisted passages through some problem areas such as Liverpool and other troublesome urban locations.
- Moor near other occupied boats.

INFORM

- The waterway authority - British Waterways, Environment Agency, etc. for the canal or river on which you cruise.
- The local police - easier said than done if you cannot find the local police station or the telephone number.

Dial 999 immediately if you or your boat are being attacked or you fear for your personal safety.

- NABO - if you don't tell us about your own experiences we are unable to convey your concerns and the extent of any problems to the authorities.

SEEKING REDRESS

Always report crimes against your person or your boat promptly to the police. And insist on obtaining a crime reference number for the incident.

Damage to your boat can be claimed off your insurance company.

If you suffer personal injury through the deliberate criminal act of another person it may be possible to make a claim for compensation via the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. No conviction is needed but you must report the incident to the police.

If you are the victim of a crime whilst on a waterway or property controlled by a navigation authority it may be possible to claim compensation on the grounds of their failure to take reasonable steps to ensure your safety. We await such a claim against BW with interest!

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Dial 999 or 112

Dial Freephone Canals 0800 47 999 47 (or Canalphone 01384 215785 from a mobile)

BW Abergavenny	01873 830328	BW Bilston	01902 409010
BW Bradford	01274 611303	BW Braunston	01788 890666
BW Burnley	01282 456978	BW Castleford	01977 554351
BW Devizes	01380 722859	BW Docklands	020 7517 5550
BW Ellesmere	01691 622549	BW Fradley	01283 790236
BW Gloucester	01452 318000	BW Lapworth	01564 784634
BW Little Venice	020 7286 6101	BW Marple	0161 427 1079
BW Naburn	01904 728229	BW Newark	01604 704481
BW Norbury	01785 284253	BW Sawley	0115 946 1017
BW Tipton	0121 506 1300	BW Tring	01442 825938
BW Wigan	01942 242239		

British Transport Police 0800 40 50 40

Crime Stoppers 0800 555111

Environment Agency 0800 80 70 60

RSPCA (animal welfare) 0870 55 55 999

On the Norfolk & Suffolk Broads:

Norfolk Central Police		01603 768769
Suffolk Central Police		01986 835300
Local Police –	Great Yarmouth	01493 336200
	Lowestoft	01986 835100
	North Walsham	01692 402222
	Norwich	01603 621212

Ambulance Control 01603 424255
Broads River Inspectors 01603 625091

On the tidal River Thames:

Port of London Chief Harbour Master 01474 562268
Harbour Master Upper (above Dagenham) 020 7743 7912
Harbour Master Lower (below Dagenham) 01474 562212
Duty Officer (Woolwich) 020 8855 0315
Duty Port Controller (Gravesend) 01474 560311

Metropolitan Police, River Division
Waterloo Section 020 7321 7278
Wapping Section 020 7488 5291

Coastguard – routine calls
Thames Coastguard 01255 675518
London Coastguard 020 8312 7380

OTHER BODIES TO INVOLVE

If criminal activity becomes a serious problem at particular locations NABO will take the matter up with one or more of the following persons or bodies:-

Local police commanders (Police almanac lists forces, boundaries, etc.)

Railtrack	British Transport Police	Home Office
Members of Parliament	BW Head Office	Environment Agency

Your views matter

Let NABO have your views and suggestions about how members can protect themselves and their boats from criminal activity.

Always inform NABO when you have been a victim of a crime on the cut. There is provision on the NABO website for you to report any incidents for our records.

Have we forgotten anything in these guidance notes? We are waiting to hear from you.