

Navigation Notice

Temporary water conservation measures

River Thames – further restrictions to navigation from Monday 3 August 2026 until further notice.

**St John's Lock to Osney Lock
Goring Lock to Culham Lock
Penton Hook Lock to Shepperton Lock**

Dear stakeholder,

We are writing to let you know that, in addition to current restrictions in place from St John's Lock to Osney Lock, we are introducing further restrictions to navigation from Goring Lock to Culham Lock and Penton Hook Lock to Shepperton Lock from Monday 3 August 2026.

This is due to low river flows across the Thames.

Background

As of Wednesday 29 July, Thames Area of the Environment Agency moved from a period of prolonged dry weather to drought. This reflects increased pressure on water resources and the environment following a prolonged period of dry weather, below average rainfall and high temperatures across the area. In response, we have escalated our incident management arrangements. Water companies in the area have activated their drought plans and anticipate needing to implement further drought management actions to manage their supplies and demand over the coming months. The outlook does not show a strong indication for significant rainfall in the coming weeks.

What this means for navigation

We have been monitoring the situation closely and preparing our plans to manage any risks to navigation. Due to low river flows across the Thames, we will be introducing further temporary navigation restrictions between Goring Lock and Culham Lock and between Penton Hook Lock and Shepperton Lock from Monday 3 August 2026.

We need to introduce these measures to conserve water within the river system, protect navigation levels and support water abstraction for public water supply.

While restrictions are currently either ongoing or being introduced at the above lock sites, we will continue to monitor conditions across the Thames. If the current period of drought and low river flows continues, it may become necessary to introduce similar water conservation measures in other parts of the river, particularly in reaches that support public water supply abstraction. Any future restrictions will be based on local conditions and operational requirements. We will communicate changes to staff, stakeholders and river users as soon as possible.

Restrictions to navigation

The following restrictions have been in place between St John's Lock and Osney Lock from 9:30am Saturday 25 July.

From **Monday 3 August**, the following restrictions will also be put in place from Goring Lock to Culham Lock and Penton Hook Lock to Shepperton Lock:

- lock passage will be restricted to one upstream and one downstream movement every 30 minutes during [Lock and Weir Keeper hours](#).
- Lock and Weir Keepers will coordinate vessel movements and pack locks wherever possible to maximise the number of craft passing through each lock cycle and minimise water loss.
- overnight lock closures will be introduced to allow affected reaches to recover and recharge. Lock gates will be closed from 6pm until 9.30am.
- we advise boaters to plan their journeys carefully and ensure suitable overnight moorings can be reached before lock closure times.
- boaters may use lock lay-bys for mooring during overnight closure periods, free of charge.

We will review these arrangements regularly and may amend them in response to river conditions and water resource requirements. We will issue further updates as necessary.

Why these measures are necessary

The current period of exceptionally dry weather and high temperatures has increased pressure on available water resources. At the same time, demand for drinking water remains high.

Every lock operation transfers a significant volume of water downstream. Without intervention, river levels could reduce further, affecting both navigation and the availability of water for abstraction. These temporary measures will help retain water within the system, support navigation where possible and safeguard essential drinking water supplies for the communities that rely upon them.

What we are doing to minimise impacts

Our Incident Team, Lock and Weir Keepers, River Control teams and operational partners are already taking a range of measures to conserve water and maintain navigation levels.

This includes careful management of lock operations, maximising lock sharing opportunities, and shutting in or staunching weirs where appropriate to retain water within affected reaches. We are working closely with water resource teams and operational partners to monitor conditions across the river and coordinate our response.

We will maintain regular communication with boating organisations, stakeholders and other river users to ensure those affected are kept informed of any changes to navigation arrangements.

How you can help

We recognise these restrictions may affect journey times and navigation plans. However, they are necessary to help protect essential water resources during the current dry weather conditions.

We encourage all boaters to plan their journeys ahead of time in line with these restrictions. You can help us achieve this by sharing our message with your organisations.

This information will be published as river restriction notices on our guidance page [River Thames: restrictions and closures - GOV.UK](#). To ensure you are updated with the latest prolonged dry weather guidance, please select 'Get emails about this page'.

We thank all boaters and river users for their patience, cooperation and understanding while these measures are in place.

For more information on the current drought please see our Engagement page [Dry Weather Information 2025-26 | Engage Environment Agency](#).

Further updates will be issued as conditions are reviewed. This will also be shared on our social media [Facebook](#).