

The Ethel Trust

Health and Safety Policy

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Section A – General Statement (reference on this page re employees relates to skippers/crew and volunteers)

It is the policy of the Ethel Trust, so far as is reasonably practicable, to take every possible step to ensure the health, safety and welfare, of all its employees at work. The Trust recognises its responsibilities for all its employees and its duty to do everything reasonably practicable to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment, systems of work, a safe workplace and working environment. The Trust requires all skippers and crew wear compact life jackets provided for their safety whilst on duty on and off board Ethel. This also acts as an example to our clients.

The Trust accepts the responsibility for ensuring that all information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure health and safety at work for all employees will be provided. It is also the Trust's policy to encourage and insist upon the co-operation of all employees through discussion and consultation with them with a view to promoting and developing measures to ensure health and safety at work. All employees will be encouraged to be active in carrying out this policy.

Every employee of the organisation has a clear and undeniable duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself and his/her fellow workers or other persons who may be affected by his/her actions at work. It is the duty of every employee to co-operate with any other employee and the Trust to enable all statutory duties and requirements to be fulfilled in full.

The Trust also accepts the responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of other people who may be affected by its activities, especially the passengers under its care, both whilst on and off the boat.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements which the Trust will make to implement the policy, are set out in later sections. The policy will be kept up to date, particularly as the Trust changes in nature and size, and in line with all current health and safety legislation. To ensure this is done, the policy will be reviewed annually by the Trustees and the appointed Health & Safety Officer.

Signature:



Trustee

Date September 2019

Section B – Health and Safety Responsibilities (reference in this section re employees relates to skippers/crew)

Description of the Trust's activities

The Trust owns and operates a wide-beam canal barge, Ethel, which was purpose-built for day and residential trips with community groups, including physically disabled groups.

Overall responsibility for health and safety rests with the Trustees but they have delegated certain tasks as outlined in this policy.

Employee's Duties

It will be the duty of the employee to carry out activities in the way the current risk assessments outline, as these have been shown to be the best way to control the risk and to comply with safe systems of work and standard operating procedures. Where there is any doubt about his/her ability to work to these agreed methods, work should not commence until the situation has been reported to, and reviewed by the Trustees.

Employees are reminded that they have a responsibility to ensure not only their own health and safety but also that of their colleagues. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, places the following duties and responsibilities on all employees.

- Employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

- It is the duty of employees to co-operate with the Trust to enable necessary duties to be performed safely.
- Employees have a duty not to interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare. It is the policy of the Trust that any employee who breaks this duty will be liable to dismissal without notice.
- Whenever an employee notices a health or safety problem that s/he is not able to put right, s/he must immediately report this to the Trustees.

Section C – General Arrangements (reference in this section re employees relates to skippers/crew)

Whilst in charge of the boat, the Skipper shall be responsible for keeping and ensuring that accurate and comprehensive records are maintained in the Accident Book, and must comply with the procedures for notification laid down in RIDDOR. Skippers, crew members and volunteers must report any injuries to the on-board first aider/skipper who shall assess what treatment (if any) is needed. On board Ethel is an incident report form which **must** be completed if an incident occurs

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

When toxic or unusual substances are introduced, the Health & Safety Officer/Maintenance Co-ordinator must be notified in advance, so that potential hazards may be assessed, controlled and monitored as required under the COSHH Regulations 1999. Any safety information received from suppliers must be acted upon and particular note taken of any specific storage details, expiry dates, spillage procedures, first aid and emergency procedures. In addition, statutory requirements regarding flammable or dangerous substances must be adhered to.

Housekeeping

All employees and volunteers shall be made aware of the necessity for cleanliness regarding their own work area. They are also to be made aware of the best place for waste disposal. Skippers and volunteers must keep gangways and exits clear and be instructed in the safe stacking and storage of goods and equipment.

Protection of Eyes, Ears and Lungs

The Trust shall make available items of personal protective equipment (PPE) where there is a need, at no cost to employees or volunteers. Where supplied these must be maintained in good condition and worn by employees or volunteers whenever working conditions dictate, in accordance with the PPE regulations as currently in force. The equipment must be replaced when worn or unsuitable for the task in hand. It will be the responsibility of the Trustees/Operations Group to issue PPE and check on its suitability and use, however all employees and volunteers are jointly responsible for the use and maintenance of PPE.

Persons not in the Trust's Employment

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, the Trust has responsibilities for all persons not employed by but visiting the Trust's property, and they should be supervised at all times.

Visitors

In respect of visitors, the safety and conduct of any visitor whilst on the Trust's premises shall be the responsibility of the particular member of staff/management who has requested the visit or whom the visitor wishes to see (known as a sponsor).

Visitors must be accompanied or supervised by the sponsor from arrival to departure.

Contractors

In respect of contractors, it is the responsibility of the particular member of staff/management who has requested the visit to ensure that they comply with this policy. Contractors must work safely whilst working for the Trust and shall be made aware of their duty of care to the Trust's employees, volunteers and members of the public.

Passengers

Prior to any trip taking place the Group Contact will be notified to carry out an assessment to ascertain the number of carers required to adequately supervise the health and welfare of the passengers embarking on a trip.

Each organisation wishing to use the barge Ethel will nominate a person to be in charge of the group that actually embarks on a trip. This person will be known as the Group Leader. This information will be recorded on the group booking form that is returned to the Ethel Trust office by the organisation when making a booking.

Procedures to be Undertaken On Board and Prior to Departure

- the group and Group Leader will be instructed on all aspects of safety involved in the trip
- the Group Leader will confirm in writing that the safety talk has been given, that they are aware of its content and that, to the best of their knowledge, it has been understood by all persons present and capable of such understanding. In the case of any person in the group not being able to understand the Group Leader will act on their behalf.
- a copy of the Ethel Trust hire conditions will also be provided for information

- a register of passengers will be completed by the Group Leader and kept in a designated place during the trip. After the trip the list will be kept by the Ethel Trust for information.

On-Shore Activities Involving Passengers

Before any activity involving passengers off the boat is undertaken, a briefing and instructions will be given by the Skipper. This will cover safety when disembarking, conduct during the activity and operation of any mechanical equipment involved in the activity. An assessment of the capability of passengers to perform the activity will also be carried out by the Group Leader and the Skipper.

All 'off boat' activity will be closely supervised by a qualified crew member of the Ethel Trust and carers on a one to one basis.

Children's Involvement in On Board and Shore Based Activities

Children will not be involved in any on board and shore based boating activity unless:

- prior agreement has been reached with the Group Leader
- the activity has been fully explained and understood with an emphasis upon safety
- an assessment of their capabilities has been carried out
- appropriate floatation aids are worn by the person helping and their carer (for shore based activity), the ratio of crew members to juveniles is 1 to 1

All on board and shore based activities will be supervised by a crew member.

The Skipper has the authority to terminate an activity at any time.

Section D - Procedures (reference in this section re employees relates to skippers/crew)

Accidents/Incidents

Accidents requiring first aid treatment, but not causing major injury and not resulting from a notifiable dangerous occurrence, shall be entered into the Accident Book by the First Aider and no further action shall be required.

Accidents causing major injury or involving a notifiable dangerous occurrence shall be reported immediately to the Skipper who will in turn notify the enforcing authority which is the Health and Safety Executive. In addition, the Trustees must be notified without delay and the onboard incident form completed.

Fire Instructions

Employees based at Voluntary Action Sheffield must follow their fire procedures.

On board the Ethel:

1. Shout 'Fire', let everyone know.
2. Ensure the Skipper and crew realise that a fire has occurred. The Skipper should then get the boat to the side of the canal/river so that they are ready for an evacuation.
3. Get everyone out the boat into fresh air (on deck) away from the fire, taking manifest sheet ready for a roll call.
4. Skipper should instruct one person to call fire service giving closest rendezvous point (use information in book on boat).
5. Close boat up (doors).
6. Get everyone off the boat and upwind as far away as possible from the boat.
7. Send someone to meet fire service and direct them to boat.

The current thought on fighting fires is that only people who have been on a fire awareness course and feel confident should attempt to attack the fire. If the fire is any larger than a waste paper bin then do not attempt to tackle it. **Safety While Cruising**

Single-handed cruising is not permitted as navigating locks, swing and lift bridges can be very dangerous.

Employees and volunteers must wear rubber soled (non-slip) shoes, e.g. trainers, pumps or sailing shoes, suitable clothing - preferably Ethel uniform so that passengers can recognise the crew members.

For safety reasons there should be no walking or standing on the gunnels, and no one should open the gates or walk on the roof while the boat is moving.

The Trust requires the wearing of compact life jackets by skippers and crew. Children and vulnerable young adults will be required to wear lifejackets when on deck or helping with locks, bridges etc. Adults will be required to use lifejackets when assisting at locks and bridges, and Group Leaders and carers will be asked to make decisions on behalf of those who are not able to do so for themselves.

Children (under 18s)

The Skipper and crew will ensure that children:

- wear properly fastened lifejackets at all times whilst on deck, or close to the water's edge
- are supervised on a ratio of one crew member and one carer to one child when involved in operating locks and bridges to comply with the risk assessment and insurance company directives.
- are not allowed on the roof
- are not allowed to play near a lock
- are discouraged from running around or jumping over gates
- are under close supervision of the Skipper or a crew member if allowed to steer the boat. They will not be allowed to steer the barge through bridges, tunnels or at other times when deemed unsafe by the skipper or crew member.

Person Overboard

If someone falls overboard, employees and volunteers shall:

- immediately put the engine into neutral to stop the propeller
- throw out a line, or throw a life belt to land a short way in front of the person in the water
- ensure the person overboard is at no risk from the propeller before heading the boat for the bank and attempting the rescue.

On the wider waters of a river, when the above cannot be applied:

- proceed past the person in the water and then turn and come back *very slowly* so that a rope can be passed down
- put the engine into neutral and pull the person to the side of the boat where they can be hauled back on board.

N.B. the person in the water may be at great risk from the propeller, so the propeller should not be turned until it is absolutely certain it is safe to do so.

In a 'person overboard' situation it is necessary to act quickly and without panic. To save valuable time, employees and volunteers shall familiarise themselves with where safety equipment is on board, including an emergency light.

Swimming

Employees and volunteers shall not allow passengers to swim because of unacceptable risks which include: the danger of water-borne diseases, entanglement in weeds or rubbish, being hit by a passing boat, being swept over a weir, or being drawn into a paddle if in a lock. It is also contrary to British Waterways Bye Laws.

Jumping off

Under no circumstances must skippers or crew members jump off Ethel at any time.

Fending off

Employees and volunteers shall not use their legs, feet or hands to stop the boat from hitting the bank, a bridge or another boat.

Floating debris

Employees and volunteers shall watch out for floating debris, in particular tree trunks, which could damage the boat.

Ice

Employees and volunteers shall not cruise through heavy ice, especially when passing moored boats (The pressure created as the ice cracks could easily puncture a fibreglass hull.)

Employees and volunteers shall not walk on ice that has formed on the water.

First Aid

Skippers will hold current Emergency First Aid at Work certificates and a First Aid kit is provided.

Alcohol and Drugs

The Ethel Trust has a responsibility to ensure that all passengers and crew are as safe as possible whilst on board. To this end the consumption of alcohol, or ingestion of non-prescribed drugs, by Skippers and crew, whilst involved in any activity in connection with the progress of a voyage, is not permitted. It is a criminal offence to be in charge of a vessel whilst under the influence of drink or drugs.

Health

The quality of water in British Waterways' reservoirs and waterways is generally good but, unlike tap water, it is untreated and micro-organisms are naturally present.

Although the risk of contracting a water-borne disease is small, employees and volunteers shall ensure that:

- passengers understand that they should only use water for drinking purposes from the filtered supply on board
- passengers are prevented from fully immersing themselves in the water e.g. swimming
- passengers are encouraged to wash their hands after coming into contact with the water directly, or indirectly through ropes, safety rails, steering wheel etc.

Section E – Commitment of the Trust and its Employees and Volunteers (reference in this section re employees relates to skippers/crew)

The Ethel Trust recognises that management has the key role to play in promoting and maintaining improved standards of safety. Employees and volunteers have their own personal responsibility for health and safety, and it is anticipated that they shall give their fullest co-operation, thereby enabling the Trust to fulfil its obligations.

Section F- Safety Features in Place (reference in this section re employees relates to skippers/crew)

The Ethel was purpose-built in 1993 and was specifically designed be able to carry disabled passengers.

A 'Boat Safety Certificate of Compliance', was completed in October 2017. This relates to:

- the safe installation of propane gas appliances and gas bottles
- a survey of all electrical systems and installations, storage tanks and pipe work for diesel fuel for engine propulsion and heating appliances
- a review of firefighting equipment on board and adequate ventilation to passenger compartments.

A full boat survey was carried out in April 2017 and no apparent defects were found.

The vessel is dry docked every two years for an inspection and painting below the water line. Any necessary work is carried out at this time.

The following is a list of safety features which the Trust has in place for groups using the Ethel.

- Alarms are installed to detect Propane gas leaking into the vessel's bilges and also carbon monoxide into the atmosphere.
- Automatic bilge pumps are located throughout the vessel to remove any surplus water that might gather in the bilges.
- A smoke alarm is installed in the main cabin, and fire extinguishers are located throughout the boat. Automatic fire extinguishers are located in the engine room. Annual checks of these appliances are carried out.
- All main windows in the boat are provided with removable glass as a means of escape.
- Guard rails are fitted at the periphery of the front and rear passenger decks.
- Lifebuoys are distributed on all outside decks. Other rescue equipment includes throw lines, lightweight access ramp, ladder and emergency lighting (torches).
- A backup steering system is installed in the event of failure of the primary hydraulic system.
- All members of crew are trained to a minimum standard required by the Trust and the vessel's Skipper is trained to the nationally recognised, National Community Boats Association, 'Certificate in Community Boats Management' (CCBM). This training includes: recovery of persons going overboard, steering and handling the boat, negotiating locks, evacuating the boat in the event of fire and interaction with user groups. All skippers and crew are required to undergo refresher training at least every two years.
- Prospective crew members are required to provide evidence of good character.
- A minimum of one, and preferably two, qualified crew members are assigned to every trip.
- Skippers hold Emergency First Aid at Work certificates, and a First Aid kit is provided.
- A range of personal life preserving devices is available in sizes suitable for use by persons of all ages.
- Before the start of any trip a safety talk is given, outlining the following:
 - conduct of persons on board
 - what to do in the event of a fire and the position of firefighting equipment
 - action should a person fall overboard
 - operation of toilet and shower facilities (if appropriate)
 - hygiene requirement for the prevention of Weil's disease
 - correct method of wearing life preservers (if required)
 - areas of access

- emergency evacuation procedures.
- Hydraulic lifts are only to be operated by crew members.
- Communication is available by mobile telephone and VHF marine band radio.
- A list of rendezvous points, for waterways we use regularly, is available to meet emergency services should the need arise.

In consultation with the Group Leader, the crew may invite members of a group to assist at locks and bridges. Any such participation will be under the strict control of a crew member in accordance with the Risk Assessment and Insurance Company Directives and may be curtailed at any time by the Skipper or crew member. (See the earlier section 'Persons not in the Trust's employment' for more detail.)

The crew is responsible for the safety of the boat and the group. Carers/leaders are responsible for the behaviour and welfare of the group. However should the Skipper consider that the behaviour of any individual, or group as a whole, is not appropriate the trip will be halted until the situation is resolved. If the situation cannot be resolved then the whole party will be asked to leave the barge.

It is at the discretion of the Skipper to curtail any trip in the interests of the safety of the persons on board and/or the barge