

# MBACT Working by Water Guidelines

Working on or by the canal is fun and enjoyable but it can be hazardous as well. This guide gives you some advice that you must follow to “Stay Safe”.

This guide aligns with the Canal and River Trust (CRT) policies and guidance and we are grateful to CRT for their H&S resources.

The key message to remember when working by water is *Stay Away From the Edge* (SAFE). Also, if working in, on, or close to water, always wear the lifejacket provided if you have been told to. Even if the water is shallow, always have someone else with you - *Never Work Alone*. Make sure you know where the rescue equipment is before you begin work.

## Key messages:

- Stay away from the edge (SAFE). Keep back from the water’s edge or deep drops.
- Always wear a life jacket if you are working on foot, or are on a machine, within 2m of the water’s edge. If the water is <30cm deep then a life jacket is recommended, but optional.
- Always wear a life jacket if you are working on a boat on the water (this doesn’t include our passenger trip boats with a full complement of crew). Always wear a life jacket if the canal is flooding, or you are near fast flowing, or deep, water.
- Ensure any cuts or open wounds are covered with plasters, and that you use suitable work clothing to protect yourself from water exposure. This is to protect you from Leptospirosis (Weil's disease). See info overleaf.
- If you have any contact with the water thoroughly wash your hands, face and any part of your body that has come into contact with the water. If you become ill after contact with canal water please seek medical advice. You may not experience symptoms for several days or weeks.
- Never work alone. You must always have someone with you, and you should actively watch out for each other.

Before working on or near water:

If you are working on or near the canal *on a one-off basis or occasionally*:

1. You **must** have had a water safety briefing by your team leader or supervisor before your session. You must follow the supervisor’s instructions at all times.
2. You **must** have been briefed about water based diseases and protecting yourself from illnesses that may catch from having contact with water.
3. You **should** wear a life-jacket if told to do so.
4. You **must** wear suitable non-slip shoes or boots.

If you are working on or near the canal *on a regular basis*:

5. You **must** have had water safety training.
6. You **must** have watched the water safety videos listed overleaf.
7. You **must** check and read any relevant risk assessments related to your task / work and ensure that all safety measures are in place and adhered to.
8. You **should** wear a life-jacket if told to do so.
9. You **must** wear suitable non-slip shoes or boots.

### **Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis)**

Weil's Disease can be caught by people who work in or near water which has minimal flow. It is carried by rats and spread through their urine. Humans can catch the disease by contact with contaminated water getting into cuts or skin abrasions. It is thought to be responsible for approximately one death per five years in the UK.

If you have influenza-like symptoms from three days to three weeks after working by the canal, consult your doctor, telling him/her that you have been working in an environment where Leptospirosis is a possibility. This will allow the correct treatment to be given

### **Water Safety Videos**

If you work on or near the canal on a regular basis you must have watched the following videos. Although the videos are from the Canal and River Trust and other organisations they are all relevant and useful. Please ensure that you have watched them and understand them.

Canal & River Trust - Safety Video - Water safety, lifejacket and throwline revised - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKnX2o8xazI>

Safe Tea - Working on or near water - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgQp5OCX1Ww>

What to do if you fall into a canal - <https://youtu.be/SVBq35oT-SU>

Weil's Disease: Causes, Symptoms And Treatment - <https://youtu.be/CAVAcekfmco>

