



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Portland District

# Public Notice

Public Notice No. OP-ST-01-03

Date: 24 September 2001

Contact: Brian Schmidtke

Phone: (503) 808-4333

## Corps of Engineers Safe Lockage Policy for Recreational Craft on the Columbia and Snake Rivers

*Safe lockage is of foremost concern to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The following guidelines are in place for the continued safe lockage of recreational craft at McNary, John Day, The Dalles, and Bonneville on the Columbia River; and Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite on the Snake River.*

- Lockage shall be provided to "seaworthy" craft and not to swimmers, inner-tubers, wind-surfers, etc. Seaworthy craft must meet all United States Coast Guard requirements, and in particular, requirements for Personal Flotation Devices, and fire extinguishers. Vessels must carry mooring lines for lockage.
- On the Columbia River, motor power is critical to a safe and expeditious lockage. Non-motorized recreational craft (e.g. row boats, canoes, and kayaks) may lock through if moored to an assist vessel that is normally qualified for lockage, all passengers are on board the assist vessel, and such configuration would not adversely impact the stability or maneuverability of the assist vessel. The lockage acceptable configuration must occur prior to entering the approach channel and must remain that way upon departure until reaching a safe area beyond the approach channel. The Government does not provide assist vessels.
- On the Snake River, non-motorized recreational craft may be locked through when no spill is occurring through the spillway and the lock operator determines that weather and water conditions allow safe passage; otherwise, Columbia River guidance for non-motorized craft above applies.
- Personal watercraft of the "sit-down" variety, (those you sit on and ride), will be accepted for lockage. The "stand-up" variety, (those that require the vessel to be moving for the operator to be out of the water), may lock through under the Columbia River guidance for non-motorized recreational craft above. The lockmaster has final authority on the suitability of a craft for lockage.
- All vessel owner/operator's lock through at their own risk.
- Refer to the seasonal Recreational Lockage Schedule published separately for recreational vessel lockage times.

The most hazardous aspect of using navigation locks is in the approach and departure. Tugs with barges have large blind spots that inhibit their ability to see small vessels and they have very limited maneuverability around the lock approaches. Water around lock approaches is often turbulent due to high winds and strong currents. **Therefore, portage of non-motorized recreational craft and other vessels unsuitable for lockage is the preferred method of transport around the dams.**

For additional information contact Brian Schmidtke, (503) 808-4333, or Frank Hupp, (503) 808-4332 for John Day, The Dalles, and Bonneville; or Ann Glassley, (509) 527-7115, or Phil Benge (509) 527-7133 for McNary, Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite.

WAYNE H. JOHN  
Chief, Operations Division  
Walla Walla District

THOMAS E. SAVIDGE  
Chief, Operations Division  
Portland District