



Canal &  
River Trust



Environment  
Agency

## **Navigation Authority Agreement in respect of the Boat Safety Scheme**

*[Edition 1, Revision 1 – March 2014]*

### **Foreword from the Chair of the Boat Safety Scheme Management Committee**

#### *Navigation Authority commitment to boat safety*

The Navigation Authorities make safety a key aspect of their activities with the common goal to make every visit to the waterways safe and pleasant for all.

The UK's Navigation Authorities and Harbour Authorities are committed to help prevent boat fires, explosions, or pollution harming visitors to the inland waterways, the waterways' workforce and any other users.

The Navigation Authorities are the duty holders for the purposes of implementation of risk controls and related safety management arrangements.

The Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) is in place to help minimise the risks to people and property presented by boats that have been inadequately constructed, equipped or maintained, or through the inappropriate use of appliances, engines and associated boat systems and fuels.

#### *About this agreement*

This Navigation Authority Agreement covers the purpose and focus of the BSS setting out the purpose of the Scheme how it operates and its commitment to continual improvement.

The Navigation Authority Agreement is for all those who are involved in formulating the direction of the Scheme and implementing strategy; namely, BSS Office Team staff, and all members of the BSS committees.

The Agreement also serves as the primary reference document for those navigation authorities that have adopted the Boat Safety Scheme or are considering participating in the Scheme. As set out at the end of this document, navigation authority participation includes a commitment to maintain their minimum safety requirements outside of any BSS verification date.

To the supporters and BSS partner organisations reading this, we hope you will find it a good insight into the purpose and activity of the Scheme and all those involved in delivering boat safety are encouraged to embrace this charter.

Vince Moran  
**Chairman,  
BSS Management Committee**

# Navigation Authority Agreement in respect of the Boat Safety Scheme

This *Navigation Authority Agreement* represents the management framework for the Boat Safety Scheme setting out what the Scheme does and how it operates.

This controlled document is owned by the BSS Management Committee and is subject to 5 yearly review in conjunction with the BSS Advisory Committee and recommendations for change are made to the BSS Management Committee for a decision. The review can be sooner if the need is identified and agreed at BSS Management Committee.

## a) The legal basis of the Boat Safety Scheme

The BSS is a 'collaboration' set up by way of a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) in 1995 between the owners of the Scheme, Canal & River Trust (formerly British Waterways) and the Environment Agency (formerly the National Rivers Authority). The MOU remains current and identifies Canal & River Trust as the initial Administrator/Registrar of the BSS.

## b) The Boat Safety Scheme purpose

The BSS is in place to help minimise the risks to all visitors to the waterways and the waterways' workforce, and to help protect adjacent property, related to the condition, equipment and use of boats. The BSS is also used to minimise the risk of avoidable pollution from boats. (Note – The Scheme's work does not relate to the fixed infrastructure and plant of the waterways).

In recognising that it is not possible to eliminate all safety risks the BSS is employed to help minimise them in a way that balances the responsibilities of the Navigation Authorities and the responsibilities of individual boat owners.

## c) The Boat Safety Scheme aim

To see that people and property are safer as a result of its work and, in doing so, be effective, efficient, trusted and supported in all that it does.

## d) What the Boat Safety Scheme does

The Navigation Authorities employ, through the BSS three broad approaches to meet the BSS purpose:

- 1) The BSS supports the Navigation Authorities' minimum safety requirements\* for boats by;
  - i. helping identify, monitor and develop the necessary and reasonable Navigation Authority minimum safety requirements;
  - ii. providing the verification service to assess whether any given boat meets the Navigation Authority minimum safety requirements.
- 2) The BSS employs education, persuasion and promotion of safety to address accepted risks linked to the use of the vessel and its appliances, engines and associated boat systems and fuels in order to assist owners and other craft occupants to identify and control the risks for which they have a responsibility\*\*.
- 3) The BSS monitors all boat-related risks and reports on any trends, local hot-spots and any critical groups.

\* the Navigation Authorities' minimum safety (legal) requirements for privately-owned and privately managed boats are published in the *BSS Essential Guide*. Meeting these minimum safety requirements is a requirement for vessels on Environment Agency, Canal & River Trust and other navigation authorities having the power to make compliance with them a condition of boat licensing.

These requirements, also known as the BSS General Requirements, are expressed in goal-setting terms. They are supported by expected means of compliance that are set out in Chapters 2 to 9 of the *BSS Essential Guide*.

The mandatory requirements of the BSS are kept to the minimum consistent with achieving the objectives and responsibilities of the Navigation Authorities to help prevent boat fires, explosions or boat pollution and environmental and other potential harm to people and property.

Further information concerning the BSS General Requirements and the BSS 'mandatory requirements' and 'advice checks' and the nature of BSS certification (or equivalent) as evidence of meeting compliance, is provided in the document, *The BSS Examination Explained*. This includes information on the basis and scope of the BSS Examination. A shortened version of this information is included in Chapter 1 of the *BSS Essential Guide*.

\*\* The BSS requirements concerning non-private classes of boats take account of the users of such classes of boat who may not be responsible for the full control of the risks to which they may be subjected. It follows that BSS requirements for such classes of boat will invariably be mandatory and the scope of such BSS requirements may be wider or different than for privately-owned and privately managed boats, as determined by the application of the BSS Risk Management Process

### **e) Boat Safety Scheme values and vision**

- having the trust of the Navigation Authorities and the boating public;
- delivering a high-quality BSS verification service;
- being alert to new safety risks and learning from the past;
- being open with stakeholders when proposing change and making key decisions;
- striving to always improve effectiveness and provide value for money;
- making the BSS open and accessible to all UK navigation and harbour authorities.

### **f) Ensuring effective and efficient decision making**

Operating to the following quality management principles and through commitment and involvement, the BSS committee members supported by BSS Office staff, ensure that key decisions are effective and efficient by:

- 1) focussing on the BSS purpose in a way that balances the responsibilities and needs, and meets the expectations of the various customer groups;
- 2) working closely together under clear leadership (BSS Office Team led by the BSS Manager, BSS committee members led by the relevant committee Chair);
- 3) utilising facts, data and risk analysis to ensure key decisions are proportionate, risk-based and effective;
- 4) operating a process-based approach in support of key decision making;
- 5) employing 'management review' to help ensure sustainable and effective improvements are achieved to support the purpose;
- 6) ensuring BSS committee activity is prioritised on the primary risks and that the outcomes provide value for money.

It is recognised that success in achieving the BSS purpose depends upon the positive involvement of those people involved in the operation, delivery and formulating the direction of the Scheme.

A summary of key people groupings (BSS Office staff, committee members, BSS Examiners and key partner group representatives) together with the commitment each grouping is encouraged to meet is included in the *BSS Quality Management Commitment*. BSS committee members are encouraged to follow *BSS Quality Management Commitment*, BSS Office staff work to this commitment.

Customers are the primary focus of the BSS and understanding the nature and aspirations of the various customer groups is essential in developing effective and supportable measures. (Customer groups are defined as the BSS's key customer groupings, namely - the Navigation Authorities (as

customers) participating in the Scheme, BSS practitioners (examiners and surveyors subject to the Scheme's Conditions of Registration) and those boat users affected by the Scheme).

Day to day operational decisions are made by BSS Office staff under the direction of the BSS Manager.

### **g) Governance through the BSS Management Committee**

Governance is the means by which Canal & River Trust and the Environment Agency maintain a sustainable BSS that is accountable to its stakeholders. Governance is achieved through the BSS Management Committee.

It is the system by which the BSS is directed and controlled, focusing particularly on the BSS purpose and setting performance objectives and financial standards, making key decisions and overseeing their implementation. It is also the focus for reports on the progress in meeting the performance objectives and associated planned risk-avoidance activities, and for assessing and controlling any business risks.

#### BSS Management Committee

The BSS Management Committee has the fundamental role on behalf of the Navigation Authorities:

- to determine and set in place an overall management framework which ensures the quality, cost effectiveness and the long term viability of the Scheme;
- to control and monitor the BSS and its operation and ensure it operates to time, budget and within agreed policy in support of its purpose and aligned with wider navigation authority interests;
- to manage the Scheme's resilience and other business risks to the BSS.

All key decisions including those concerning any new BSS requirements, the need for BSS safety awareness initiatives or the cost of certification to boaters, determining complaints about examiner performance are made by the BSS Management Committee.

The BSS Management Committee receives guidance from the two BSS support committees to help them (BSS Advisory Committee and BSS Technical Committee).

The Chairmanship of the BSS Management Committee may rotate between Canal & River Trust and the Environment Agency.

Financial control of the BSS is delivered by the BSS Management Committee Executive. Financial decisions are made by the BSS Management Committee and detailed costings may not be made available to the support committees unless specific advice is sought by the BSS Management Committee.

#### BSS Advisory Committee

The BSS Advisory Committee is the stakeholder committee that makes recommendations to the BSS Management Committee on matters pertaining to the operation and impact of the BSS.

The customer-group interests are evenly represented on the BSS Advisory Committee.

#### BSS Technical Committee

The BSS Technical Committee is the stakeholder committee that makes recommendations to the BSS Advisory Committee concerning issues of a technical nature. The BSS Technical Equivalence Panel is a sub-committee to BSS Technical Committee.

#### BSS Committee Members

All BSS committee members operate to the agreed *BSS Committee Terms of Reference*, are encouraged to meet the *BSS Quality Management Commitment* and operate to the *BSS Process-based Approach*.

#### BSS Office

BSS Office staff act in the role of a secretariat to the BSS committees and provide operational, policy and technical reports. BSS Office Team staff operate to the *BSS Quality Management Commitment* and the *BSS Process-based Approach*.

## **h) Delivering effective and efficient BSS business planning**

The BSS Business Plan is produced on a four year rolling basis in support of an agreed BSS strategy. It is the key output from the Business Planning process which is aligned with Canal & River Trusts' financial control procedures. (Canal & River Trust being for the time being the Administrator /Registrar of the BSS).

The purpose of the *BSS Business Plan* is to:

- 1) satisfy the Scheme's owners (Environment Agency and Canal & River Trust) that the BSS 4-yearly plans meet their requirements and that the BSS is being managed efficiently and effectively in support of the BSS purpose;
- 2) form the basis for activity planning & objective setting within the BSS Office. The aim is for the BSS to cover its own costs, however any shortfall will be divided equally between Canal & River Trust and the Environment Agency and any net excesses will be used in support of boat-related safety initiatives.

The plan is reviewed quarterly and may be updated annually by the BSS Management Committee Executive to ensure that it remains aligned with Scheme owners' strategic statements and that learning from experience is included. A shortened summary version of the *BSS Business Plan* will be made available for public distribution.

## **i) The BSS Office performance objectives**

In support of the BSS purpose the BSS Office aims to:

- 1) consistently deliver BSS examinations in accordance with published *BSS Examination Checking Procedures* (as supported by the *BSS Delivering Consistent Examinations Process*);
- 2) ensure that 'real' and accepted risks are identified and managed effectively (as supported by the *BSS Minimising Risk Process*);
- 3) deliver targeted, clear, straightforward safety advice through effective safety partnerships, that positively influences boat owner behaviour (success is measured against agreed benchmarks including the *BSS Annual Risk-activity Plan* as agreed by BSSMC);
- 4) carry out other targeted risk avoidance activities such as influencing trade bodies or standards developments (in accordance with the *BSS Annual Risk-activity Plan*, including timescales as agreed by BSSMC);
- 5) have in place sufficient independent, authorised, trained and competent examiners, to deliver the BSS Verification Service, (as measured by external perceptions);
- 6) support the Navigation Authorities to monitor and review BSS requirements and provide advisory and staff training services to the Navigation Authorities on matters relating to the condition and use of boats (as set out in the document, *Joint commitment between BSS and the participating navigation authorities*);
- 7) engage with customers in accordance with the *BSS Public Charter* and publish information in accordance with the *BSS Publication Scheme*;
- 8) support BSS Examiners ensuring their competence and eligibility, supporting their information and examination paperwork needs in accordance with the *BSS Examiner Service Level Agreement* measures;
- 9) support the BSS committee members in meeting *BSS Committee Terms of Reference* and in following the *BSS Process-based Approach*;
- 10) deliver the above in accordance with the four-yearly *BSS Business Plan* and in line with the *BSS Quality Management Commitment*.

## **j) Focussing on continual improvement through the BSS Core Processes**

The BSS Core Processes represent commitment to continual improvements in support of the BSS purpose. Improving the core processes is the focus of the BSS Office Team; alongside the focus on the BSS operation and the provision of good customer service. Helping deliver improvements to the core processes is one of the main outputs from the BSS support committees.

### **1) BSS Risk Management Process**

The *BSS Risk Management Process* is employed to help ensure that 'real' and accepted risks are identified and that risk management recommendations to the Navigation Authorities are appropriate, balanced and timely. National Water Safety Forum principles are adopted with this process and data from its WAID database utilised.

### **2) BSS Delivering Consistent Examinations Process**

The BSS employs the *Delivering Consistent Examinations Process* to ensure that BSS requirements are consistently and effectively applied by BSS examiners to all qualifying craft on participating waterways.

## **k) Joint commitment between BSS and the participating navigation authorities**

It is recognised that the Navigation Authorities' commitment to boat safety through the BSS involves a two-way inter-action whereby:

- 1) the BSS Office Team delivers the performance objectives and supports, upon request, the navigation authorities concerning enforcement and licensing matters related to the condition and equipping of boats.
- 2) the navigation authorities agree to enforce their minimum safety requirements, provide input into any BSS strategy/scope changes, support the reporting of boat-related incidents and support, help promote and distribute BSS published information.

The commitment between the BSS and the participating navigation authorities is set out in the document, *Joint commitment between BSS and the participating navigation authorities*.

Ends