



Thompson Boat Center 2008 Season

Operation Guidelines An Overview



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General Operations

Purpose

"...to promote and regulate the use of the...national parks...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

[National Park Service Organic Act, 16 U.S.C.I.](#)

Thompson Boat Center, in its role with the National Park Service is responsible for promoting the intention of this 1916 piece of legislation, which outlines the mission of the National Park Service.

Boat Center Overview

Thompson Boat Center is conveniently located near the Georgetown waterfront, Watergate complex, and the Foggy Bottom Metro stop.

The original name of the facility was The National Capital Water Sports Center. However, before opening (1961) it was renamed in recognition of Department of Interior worker and boat center project champion Harry S. Thompson. The site plan consists of ten inside bays and two outside fenced compounds for temporary storage. The facility also offers restrooms, lockers and showers for its contract holders and guests. Extensive users of the facility include college, high school, and individual rowers, along with recreational canoeist, kayakers, day bikers, and bicyclists who may be ending or beginning or their Cumberland Trail bike trip. Numerous other daily park visitors include foreign tourists, local residents, running clubs, and scouting troops.

The Thompson Boat Center is managed by Guest Services, Inc. (GSI), a management firm that operates numerous concessions of the National Park Service in Washington, DC and across the country, e.g., [Canaan Valley Resort](#) (Davis, West Virginia), [Mount Rainier](#) (Ashford, Washington), [Big Sur Lodge](#) (Big Sur, California). Within the **National Capital Regional Parks (Washington, D.C.)**, Guest Services operates the following recreational facilities in Washington, D.C.: [Columbia Island Marina](#) , [East Potomac Tennis Center](#) , [Pierce Mill Tennis Center](#) , [Rock Creek Park Horse Center](#) , [Rock Creek Park Tennis Center](#) , [Thompson Boat Center](#) , [Tidal Basin](#) , [Washington Sailing Marina](#) , [Fletcher's Boat House](#), [The Sculpture Garden Ice Rink](#), and [Pershing Park Ice Rink](#)

Facility improvements, changes in rates, or commercial use of facilities outside of National Park Service regulations must be approved by the National Park Service.



Seasons of Operation

The proscribed opening date of Thompson Boat Center is March 1st. The official closing date is on or about November 15th, depending on the weather. To prevent damage to the facility and its contents during the off-season, the water service to the boat center is disconnected.

The boat center recognizes three different rowing seasons within the year. They are typically broken down as follows:

SPRING:	March 1 - May 31
SUMMER:	June 1 - August 31
FALL:	September 1 - November 15

Access during the off-season

Access to the boat center between November 15th and March 1st is through special arrangement with the Thompson Boat Center management which may be made by calling 202-333-9543 or via email tbc@guestservices.com.



Site Rules and Restrictions

Applicability of Thompson Boat Center Rules

The Thompson Boat Center (TBC) is a facility of the National Park Service, managed by Guest Services Inc. While it is open to the public, use of the facility is restricted to patrons who participate in TBC's programs, store or launch shells, rent boats or bicycles, or are affiliated with organizations which are patrons of TBC. Contracts and agreements entered into with GSI incorporate the requirements of this guide. Users are also advised to adhere to its guidelines, which have been developed to protect athletes and equipment, promote a safe and efficient facility, and provide an enjoyable on-water experience.

These rules govern the use of the Thompson Boat Center and are binding to all persons using the facility. Failure to comply with these rules may result in complete or partial suspension of rowing privileges for developmental programs, without refund of fees or any part thereof. Additionally, failure to comply with these rules by TBC slipholders may be grounds for termination of their contracts.

The programs of user organizations, i.e., high schools, colleges, may adopt rules of their own, but in the event of a conflict, these rules shall prevail. To maintain good standing, all facility users must at minimum (a) pay all fees incurred by the date specified, (b) comply with Thompson Boat Center rules and guidelines, and (c) provide necessary waiver forms required for developmental programs.

Thompson Boat Center Rules and Regulations

1. Business Operation (36 CFR 5.3): Engaging in or soliciting any business in park areas, except in accordance with the provisions of a permit, contract, or other written agreement with the United States, except as such may be specifically authorized under special regulations applicable to a park area, is prohibited.
2. General Behavior: Refrain from the use of foul language, excessive noise and discourteous behavior. Assist in maintaining the appearance of the grounds by properly disposing of rubbish and water bottles in the proper recycling containers and by leaving the premises in a neat and orderly condition. Overboard dumping of any trash is illegal and not tolerated. Bring back what you take out. Take out what you bring in.



3. Alcoholic beverages of any kind are strictly prohibited on the Thompson Boat Center property and the Tidelock area. Anyone appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed on the premises of TBC.
4. Personal Injury or Property Damage: All occurrences of personal injury, property or equipment damage and required equipment maintenance must be reported immediately to the Manager on duty. All incident reports must be filled out in a timely fashion.
5. Security: The cooperation of slip holders, rowers and coaches is critical to the protection of the facility and equipment. Only authorized people may have keys to the boat bays and the compound. Only the owner or others authorized by the owners of equipment stored at Thompson Boat Center may use it. Anyone found 'borrowing' equipment may be reported, or detained until the owner can be contacted. Unauthorized use or theft of any kind may result in the cancellation of all privileges, including your contract.
6. Parking: Parking spaces adjacent to the boat center are reserved for employees only. Short term parking is permitted only for the loading and unloading of equipment. Absolutely no parking is permitted in the compound, on the tarmac or any grassy areas of the boat center. No vehicle or trailer is to be left unattended for any length of time without first obtaining permission from boat center staff. Please call our National Park Service contact directly for parking permits, Mr. Steve LeBel (202) 619-7072.
7. Hours of Operation: The boat center reserves the right to close all services and facilities during inclement weather without prior notice. Scheduled operating hours may be altered when public interest and safety are at risk.
8. Water Safety: US Coast Guard navigation rules must be followed by all TBC users. All shells launched from TBC dock must attach a white light to the bow before sunrise and after sunset. Coxswains and scullers shall always carry a noise making device.
9. Safety Hazards: Gear and other potential trip hazards are not to be left on the docks, ramps, and walkways. The boat center reserves the right to remove and dispose of such obstructions in keeping with state, local and federal fire and safety laws.
10. Thompson Boat Center Equipment: Use of TBC equipment is limited to those enrolled in TBC programs. Equipment used by others may be arranged by way of a lease agreement. Unauthorized use of this equipment is grounds for suspension of boat center privileges. TBC equipment may be used with prior consent of the Program Manager.



11. Equipment Storage: All equipment must be properly labeled by owner/organization. This includes oars, stretchers, paddles, launches, life vests, gasoline containers, etc. Equipment left unlabeled will be removed from the premises. Any equipment deemed unfit for use will no longer be allowed to be stored on Thompson Boat Center. A two week maximum time allowed for staging any rowing equipment in the boat repair area. Permission must be attained prior to placing any equipment on the boat repair rack.
12. Flammable items: No flammable items of any kind are allowed in the boat center area. This includes paints, solvents, lubricants, adhesives, flammable epoxies and outboard gas hoses.
13. Number of Boats per Rack: Only one boat or windsurfing board may be stored in a rack.
14. Sub-leasing: Sub-leasing is strictly prohibited. Use of any rack space, other than that space assigned to the boat, without prior approval of the TBC Manager is prohibited. Use of rack by other than contracted slip holder is also prohibited.
15. Sale of Boat: Boat racks **DO NOT** convey with the sale of the boat.
16. Change of Contract Information: All rack holders must notify the management of any change in name, address, phone numbers or email. Please notify us if you are taking your boat off the premises temporarily or permanently.

Thompson Boat Center Institutional Contract Addendum

If any of the requirements listed previously or below are not fully met, the named organization may not be allowed access to the Thompson Boat Center dock.

- Institutions will provide a list of key personnel, their position titles, with updates as changes occur.
- Scholastic and collegiate rowers are expected to act in a responsible and safe manner while using the Thompson Boat Center facility. Thompson Boat Center reserves the right to ban any rower from TBC found to be acting beyond these boundaries.
- All organization's coxswains must attend required any annual NCASRA mandated coxswain orientation or training, and be prepared to provide documentation that they have attended any required training before being allowed to cox out of Thompson Boat Center.



- All organization's coaching staff must have on water small boat safety US Coast Guard certification, and be prepared to provide documentation that they have attended any required training before being allowed to coach out of Thompson Boat Center.
- All organization's coaching staff must be equipped with on water communication devices, which may include cellular phones or marine radio devices with their own bandwidth. TBC is to be provided with the cellular number or bandwidth and/or any change to bandwidth use.
- Any requests made of Thompson Boat Center must be documented in written form.
- Any temporary rack agreements between organizations must be presented to Thompson Boat Center in a formal letter before it is acted upon.
- All equipment deemed unfit for use will no longer be allowed to be stored on Thompson Boat Center property. For example; damaged or old oars, stretchers, launches and rowing shells.
- All equipment must be properly labeled by organization. This includes oars, stretchers, paddles, launches, life vests, gasoline containers, etc. If equipment is left unlabeled it may be removed from the premises.
- All motorboats/launches must be equipped with permanently fixed bow and stern lights before use in low visibility conditions, prior to sunrise and after sunset.
- Permission must be attained before placing any equipment in the repair area. A two week-maximum is allowed for any rowing equipment in the repair area.



Environmental Issues

Environmental Management Program

Goal: To establish a process to ensure that the activities of users of TBC are consistent with sound environmental practices.

Statement to Site Users and Suppliers

Our company and its suppliers enjoy a proud tradition responding to the challenge of supporting the mission of the National Park Service. We share the nation's concern for protecting, conserving, and preserving the environment and our natural resources. We are committed to reducing our company's impact on the environment and satisfying customer demand for environmentally preferable products and services. This commitment will impact virtually everything we sell and service. Reducing, reusing and recycling packaging and other materials can significantly cut purchasing, operating, and disposal costs. In addition, environmentally preferable purchasing may also reduce the hazardous materials used and disposed of in daily activities. Specifically, we ask you to be a partner with us to:

Use materials made from recycled content, especially post-consumer recycled content, including paper products, motor oil, and antifreeze.

Recycle wastes where economically feasible and appropriate.

Practice energy and water conservation measures.

We are also interested in hearing of your current environmental practices, planned future environmental activities, and welcome your participation throughout the year in periodic TBC clean up and project initiatives. Thank you for your support.

Fuel storage and handling procedures

At present, the Thompson Boat Center has no capacity to provide bulk storage of gasoline for the approximately thirty-five launches required to support the ongoing rowing programs. Each user is responsible for acquiring and mixing gasoline fuel and for complying with center requirements relative to small tank storage. It is the purpose of this section of the manual to assist in defining those requirements and to establish the responsibilities for their compliance.



Thompson Boat Center shall:

- Designate specific outside areas for small tank storage and for the mixing of gasoline and oil for use in two cycle engines.
- Provide appropriate sheds for small tank storage.
- Provide materials necessary to clean up small-scale gasoline spills.

Institutions and/or Individual Users shall:

- Acquire and store gasoline and gasoline mixes in proper fire rated containers for the handling and transporting of flammable and combustible liquids.
- Store gasoline containers only in outside storage sheds provided for that purpose.
- Close and secure storage shed doors after obtaining or returning gasoline containers.
- Insure that all sources of ignition are prohibited near or around storage and mixing areas.
- Insure that no containers are stored for any reason within any area of the boat center.
- Flashlights and electric lanterns used during the handling of flammable liquids shall be of the type listed by the Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. or another nationally recognized testing laboratory for use in such hazardous areas.
- In the event of an accidental spill of amounts which will not readily evaporate, clean spill using "Spill Kit" absorbent materials provided for that purpose.
- No flammable items, unless otherwise specifically exempted or properly contained, are allowed to be stored in the boat center. This includes paints, solvents, lubricants, adhesives, flammable epoxies and outboard fuel hoses.
- The fuel storage shed must contain all MSDS sheets of chemical inventories in shed. An inventory sheet will be posted on the storage shed of all hazardous chemicals.



- Access to storage shed(s) must be available at all times to Thompson Boat Center and the NPS by providing TBC a key or combination to the storage shed.
- Storage of fuel for institutional crew support vessels is limited to one 6 gallon container per vessel,
- All fuel tanks must be stored in a designated flammable storage cabinet located in the Boat Storage Compound.
- Fuel containers must be stored upright and be vented.
- TBC will impound, and may remove from the facility, improperly stored fuel containers or containers that exceed the permissible quantity. All incidents of non-compliance will be documented. Repeated violations may result in cancellation of owner's or institution's storage contract.
- Mixing or exchanging of gasoline and oil is prohibited anywhere other than in the mixing area in the compound of Thompson Boat Center. Mixing and exchanging of gasoline and oil on the TBC dock will be dealt with in the most severe manner.
- No outboard engines will be serviced or washed within the Concessionaire's land assignment. No outboard engines are to be stored on Thompson Boat Center property. This includes the area of the compound(s) and within the boat center.
- The use of non biodegradable soap for boat washing is prohibited within the concessionaire's land assignment. An environmentally friendly product must be used by all contract holders.
- Water accumulated in launches must be kept to a minimum to ensure safe and sound environmental practices. If a launch accumulates an unacceptable amount of water, the concessionaire may bail the launch at a fee of \$50.00 per launch/per incident. Failure to pay fee may result in cancellation of the owners storage contract. The launch owner is responsible for their equipment and should make assignments accordingly. The boat center is not liable or responsible for the launch or attached engine.
- Institutional users are responsible for the proper disposal of any trash or garbage produced by their members. It is the responsibility of the Institutional users to monitor and maintain the cleanliness of the TBC land assignment at all times.
- Thompson's Boat Center will impound improperly stored or excess fuel containers. Impounded containers may be moved off-site for proper storage. All incidents of non-compliance will be documented, and repeated violations may result in cancellation of owner's storage contract.





Suggestions for Safely Fueling Your Boat

- Always remove portable tanks from the boat. Use caution to prevent spills.
- Never smoke or strike a match while fueling or when near fuel storage cabinet.
- Check fuel lines for leaks and replace any cracking hoses.
- Tighten fuel line connections frequently, as they may loosen due to engine vibration.
- Never fill a tank to the brim. Leave room for gas to expand and not overflow into the water.
- After fueling, put the fill cap on tightly to prevent vapors from escaping.
- Immediately wipe up any spilled gas.

Fuel/Oil Spill Response

Should you experience a fuel spill on or around a boat in slip, immediately take responsible action, which may include:

- Determine source (rate and type of spill).
 - If leak is present, evacuate all people close by.
 - If alone, call ALL numbers on spill notification list for large spill (5 gallons or more).
 - If assisted, have them call and begin safety and appropriate clean up procedures.
- Safety and Clean Up Procedures
 - Evacuate non-essential people.
 - Remove all sources of electrical power, e.g., extension cords unplugged
 - If fuel leak is present, place caution tape around area.
 - Take any other precautionary measures deemed reasonable.
- Containment Procedures
 - Spill kit is located near Flammable Storage Lockers.
 - Take reasonable measures to keep any spill from reaching the canal or river.
 - Use absorbent pads to contain and clean area.
 - Stop leak if possible but do not risk ANYONE's safety.



- Launch Bailing (contaminated water) :
 - Visually inspect the water in the launch for visible oil sheen. If no oil sheen is present, then the launch may be bailed.
 - If oil sheen exists, immediately obtain a spill mat or other absorbent designed for such a spill. Use absorbents to capture oil. When sheen no longer is observed, the launch may be bailed.
 - If the spill is greater than what may be absorbed by an absorbent, the water must be bilged out to another container for disposal as waste gasoline/diesel mixture. Ensure the container is closed tight, labeled properly, and is provided with secondary containment.
 - Maintain disposal records (e.g., waste shipping log).

Management Flow Chart



Safety Practices

***Temporary Closing of Docks**

Access to and use of the docks will be at the discretion of Thompson Boat Center management. There are circumstances when docks will be closed, may be closed, or their use restricted by management of Thompson Boat Center. These include, but are not limited to:

Docks may be closed to all users when the following occur:

- 1- River conditions are considered potentially unsafe:
Water height at Little Falls is at or nearing flood stage, and/or floating debris pose unusual hazards

- 2 - Weather conditions are considered potentially unsafe:
Icing conditions, electrical storm, fog, winds in excess of 15 mph, air and water temperature (combined less than 100), or other prohibitive weather conditions

- 3 - Other conditions:
Conditions, as determined by the boat center management, which prohibit safe use of the docks

Notification: Patrons are encouraged to call the boat center to check on boating conditions.

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Sample Coach's Equipment Safety Checklist

Pre-Launch

- Check NOAA weather report
www.weather.noaa.gov
- Check Potomac River Status-
www.waterdata.usgs.gov
- Know travel pattern of other programs and coaches
- Check running lights on launch
- Check bow light on rowing shell
- Check reception of your cell phone, two-way radio, or vhf marine radio



In the Launch -

- Lifejackets w/ Noisemaker, e.g., whistle, attached
 - Minimum one per rower, coxswain, launch driver, and guest
 - All Coaches in TBC Launches must wear a PFD
- Throwable PFD w/ line attached
- Everyone riding in the launch wears a lifejacket
- Anchor – secure/store properly
- Marine Radio and/or cell phone – list channel/telephone # w/ Office
- Paddle(s) – Minimum one per launch
- Throw line/Tow Rope – appx. 50'
- Megaphone
- Emergency blankets for every rower, coxswain, and guest
- Motor “Safety Stop Switch” w/ lanyard
- Bilge pump (Manual and/or attached automatic)
 - Recommend redundant system
- Fire Extinguisher
- Noisemaker (whistles or air horn)
- Repair tool kit
- Launch (e.g., Carolina Skiff) Safety/Swim Ladder
- Tie down fuel can w/ easy release
- Tie down battery

Coxswains

- Coxswains recommend they wear PFD's
- Coxswains carry a whistle
- Coxswains carry 911 emergency cell phone and/or two-way marine radio



Weather Monitoring

The boat center, during daylight operating hours, will monitor for weather and emergency reports. Should an emergency broadcast be issued, a Visual Display Signal will be flown from the flag pole, and crews on the water contacted via the numbers on file in the lobby monitoring station.

Coastal Warning Display Signals

DAYTIME SIGNALS

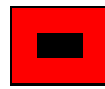
SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY



GALE WARNING



STORM WARNING



HURRICANE WARNING



Explanation of Warnings

SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY: To alert mariners to sustained (more than two hours) weather or sea conditions, either present or forecast, that might be hazardous to small boats. If a mariner notices a Small Craft Advisory pennant displayed he should determine immediately the reason by tuning his radio to the latest marine broadcast. Decision as to the degree of hazard will be left up to the boatman, based on his experience and size and type of boat. The threshold conditions for the Small Craft Advisory are usually 18 knots of wind (less than 18 knots in some dangerous waters) or hazardous wave conditions.

GALE WARNING: To indicate winds within the range 34 to 47 knots are forecast for the area.

STORM WARNING: To indicate winds 48 knots and above, no matter how high the speed, are forecast for the area. However, if the winds are associated with a tropical cyclone (hurricane), the **STORM WARNING** indicates that winds within the range 48-63 knots are forecast.

HURRICANE WARNING: Issued only in connection with a tropical cyclone (hurricane) to indicate that winds 64 knots and above are forecast for the area.

This information came from National Weather Service
<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/marine/cwd.htm>



Contact Information for Thompson Boat Center

Address: 2900 Virginia Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20037
Boat Center Telephone: (202) 333-9543
Boat Center fax: (202) 337-8064
Boat Center Website: www.thompsonboatcenter.com
Email: tbc@guestservices.com
General Manager, Gary Weeden

Emergency Contact:

Telephone: 911
Marine Radio Monitor: Channel 16

Guest Services Inc., District Manager

Kirk Huserik (office) (202) 628-8481

National Park Service, Concessions Relations

Steve LeBel (office) (202) 619-7072.

Harbor Police - (202) 727-4582

Park Police - (202) 619-7310

Fire Boat - (202) 673-3200

GW Hospital, Emergency Room - (202) 994-3211

GW Hospital, General Information - (202) 994-3921