

Towpaths form part of a network of off road routes, sometimes referred to as 'shared-use greenways' which are used by thousands of people each day. They connect people to facilities and open spaces in and around towns and the countryside. Towpaths are for shared use by people on foot and bicycle and play a vital role in London's sustainable and healthy transport strategies.

In most cases towpaths are not public rights of way but routes that can be used by the public with the permission of the landowner. Permission to use the towpath is given to walkers and cyclists on a long-term basis by British Waterways but we may have to close the towpath for maintenance work from time to time.

The towpath is used by people travelling to work and school. Generally the busiest times are weekdays between 7.30am and 9.30am and between 4.30pm and 7pm. If you're planning a recreational visit to London's waterways try to avoid these busy times.



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TOWPATH CODE OF CONDUCT

MAKING LONDON'S TOWPATHS SAFER FOR EVERYONE



The Regent's Canal was built between 1812 and 1820 to link the Grand Union Canal in Paddington to the River Thames at Limehouse. This meant that sailing ships arriving in London from all over the world could unload their cargoes onto barges and narrowboats on the Regent's Canal to be transported to other parts of the country by water.

Did you know?

The Regent's Canal is 14km long and runs from Limehouse in East London to Paddington in West London. There are two tunnels and 12 locks which raise the level of the canal by 26 metres.

Did you know?

The Regent's Canal has been designated a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.

It provides an ideal habitat and feeding ground for a diverse range of flora and fauna including several species of dragonflies, damselflies and waterfowl.



Towpath code of conduct for all users

- **Pedestrians have priority** over cyclists on the towpath.
- **Considerate cycling permitted** providing this code of conduct is followed.
- **Give way to oncoming users at bridges**
Some bridges have poor visibility so check (using the mirrors if available) that someone isn't already coming through.

Cyclists should slow down, ring with **Two Tings** and let other users through the bridge before continuing. Never pass a pedestrian or another cyclist underneath a bridge - there is not room to do so safely.

Pedestrians should listen out for the **Two Tings** warning from cyclists. Please note cyclists no longer have to dismount to go under a bridge.
- **Be extra careful at bends and entrances**
Cyclists, be prepared to slow down, stop, or dismount if necessary.
- **Consider other users and the local environment**
The waterways and towpaths have many historic structures and important wildlife habitats for people to enjoy.



Code of conduct for cyclists

- **Ring with Two Tings**
Use a bell, giving **Two Tings** when approaching pedestrians. Ringing with **Two Tings** is not an order to pedestrians to get out of your way.

Be aware that some pedestrians may have visual or hearing impairments and might not hear your **Two Tings**.
- **Pass people slowly. Give people space**
Slow down when approaching pedestrians and only pass when it is safe to do so. Extra care should be taken when passing children, less able people and animals.

Try to pass on the water side of the path. Pedestrians will tend to move to the back edge of the towpath to allow you to pass.

Be patient and courteous to pedestrians. Saying "thank you" to pedestrians who move to let you pass will make them more likely to move next time.
- **Ride at a sensible speed**
The towpath is **never** suitable for cycling fast as there are many other users, low bridges and narrow sections. If you are in a hurry, use an alternative route.

Code of conduct for pedestrians

- **Listen for Two Tings**
Two Tings is not an order for you to move out of the way. It is to make you aware that cyclists are looking for a safe opportunity to pass. We advise you not to use headphones at peak times so you can hear a cyclist's **Two Tings**.
- **Allow cyclists to pass**
Allow cyclists to pass you when it is safe. Remember that cyclists need room to brake and stop. If a cyclist stops or waits for you to pass, thank them and they will be more likely to stop next time.



Use a bell and ring it twice when approaching a pedestrian. This will provide a signal that you are there and waiting to pass when it is safe to do so.

Please do not ring your bell constantly at pedestrians.

Consider how you would like to be treated!

Cycle permits

Cyclists are not required to have a cycle permit to use the towpaths in London.

Reporting incidents

British Waterways strives to provide a safe environment for everyone who uses and visits its canals and rivers. If you are involved in an incident please report it by filling in the online form at: www.britishwaterways.co.uk/responsibilities/safety/visitor_incident_reporting or by telephone on 020 7985 7200. Freepost forms are also available on request.

Maintenance

If you come across instances where maintenance is required please contact British Waterways on 020 7985 7200 or email enquiries.london@britishwaterways.co.uk giving details and the location of the problem.

Dog walkers

Please clear up after your dog, keep your dog under control at all times and don't allow your dog to swim in the water.