

# Frequently asked questions

## Environment Agency 24 hour moorings

November 2016

As part of a 12 month pilot The Environment Agency is making some minor changes to the way we manage some of our designated 24 hour mooring sites. This is a 12 month trial aimed at helping boaters to be able to comply more easily with mooring conditions, including being able to register (and if necessary pay) to use our sites at any time of the day or night, irrespective of lock keeping hours or lock staff availability.

We have prepared a list of Frequently Asked Questions for our customers relating to this.

Q. Why have you introduced this change?

A. There are a number of practical reasons for introducing this but primarily to help customers to comply with mooring conditions at sites.

Q. Why have you chosen to use Thames Visitor Moorings?

A. We have listened to our customers who have told us it is not always easy to register their arrival at sites or pay any moorings fees due at local locks. Sometimes when the lock is unmanned or the lock keeper is away from the office, the phone is ringing unanswered, this can leave the customer with an uneasy feeling about non-compliance. We have been approached by Thames Visitor Moorings who believe they can provide customers with a beneficial service.

Q. How much will it cost to register with Thames Visitor Moorings?

A. Nothing, there is no charge for registering or for creating an account. Creating an account is advised as it simplifies the payment process.

Q. How can I create an account with Thames Visitor Moorings?

A. Visit [www.thamesvisitmoorings.co.uk](http://www.thamesvisitmoorings.co.uk) where you will be able to do so.

Q. But what if I don't have access to the internet.

A. We believe most of our customers have some form of access to the internet, however Thames Visitor Moorings can be contacted via the telephone number on their website 01932 506131

Q. How do I avoid getting charged £100 (£60 if paid early) for breaching mooring terms conditions?

A. You should ensure when you are mooring up that you have checked the signs, and other notices across the mooring facility. You should contact Thames Visitor Moorings on arrival at site to register your stay, if the sign states this is a requirement. Be mindful that the terms on the signs are clear and that you may receive a Mooring Charge Notice if you breach the conditions displayed on the signs.

Q. What could I be issued a Mooring Charge Notice (MCN) for?

A. An MCN will only be issued if you breach the conditions displayed on the signs. These terms are stated in plain English so there will be no excuse for not reading and understanding them.

Q. Is Thames Visitor Moorings going to be issuing Mooring Charge Notices?

A. No, a Mooring Charge Notice may be issued by our civil enforcement provider NSL Ltd, if and when we believe a charge has been incurred, and example of that may be not registering within a reasonable timescale (max 15 mins) on arrival at the mooring site, or registering but staying past 24 hours without having paid the appropriate fee.

Q. So there are two organisations with a management or regulation responsibility at the moorings sites?

A. Well actually there are three organisations all working together to bring boaters well managed 24 hour moorings sites; The Environment Agency as the land owner, Thames Visitor Moorings (TVM) as the managing agent, and NSL Ltd as the enforcement provider.

Q. What will happen if I don't register with Thames Visitor Moorings when I arrive at a site where the sign indicates I should?

A. You must register on arrival, even if you only intend to stay for the free 24 hour period. This is to ensure you comply with the conditions of use of the mooring. Environment Agency 24 hour moorings are limited and very popular, we believe the system is fair for everyone to ensure that all boaters have fair access to short term transient free moorings. If you are found on a mooring at which you have not registered, you risk being charged £100 (£60 if paid early) even if it is during the free 24 hour period.

Q. But I have arrived at a lock where there are 24 hour moorings nearby, I can see the Lock Keeper is on duty can't I just go and tell them instead?

A. No, because the Lock Keeper does not have access to the registration system so he can't register your arrival and intended departure date and time.

Q. What other services do Thames Visitor Moorings provide?

A. The web site [www.thamesvisitmoorings.co.uk](http://www.thamesvisitmoorings.co.uk) has an interactive map which shows most of the essential features and services on the river, details of moorings, the current state of the river, Harbour Masters Notices, a Journey Calculator and other useful information.

Q. Who is responsible for registering with Thames Visitor Moorings?

A. The owner of the boat if on-board or the designated skipper or hirer.

Q. Just going back to the Mooring Charge Notice, if I am issued with one, can I challenge it?

A. Yes, the MCN will detail the reason for issue, the date, time and location. If you feel it was wrongly issued or that there are special circumstances in your case, the details of how to appeal will be on the MCN. You must write to the civil enforcement provider, explaining your reasons for disputing the charge. All challenges must be received in writing or email within 28 days of receiving the notice, face to face challenges or challenges made over the phone are not accepted.

Q. Can I appeal to the Environment Agency?

A. No. The issue of the MCN is a matter for the recipient and NSL Limited. If you have a complaint regarding our moorings regulation or enforcement service you can contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506.

Q. If I challenge against the Mooring Charge Notice will I lose the right to pay the reduced rate?

A. No, as long as the challenge is received within 14 days of the issue date the case will then be put on hold until a decision has been made. If the appeal is rejected you will be given a further opportunity to pay the discounted rate but this payment must be received within 14 days of the date of the rejection letter. No further escalation of the charge will occur until the appeal has been decided.

Q. What happens if I don't pay?

A. If you do not pay or challenge within 28 days of issue of the MCN, NSL will notify the owner of their intention to pursue the matter to Small Claims Court. This will incur additional costs.

Q. What happens to mooring charges when red or yellow board are displayed?

A. At our short-stay mooring sites where we operate charges, we generally suspend them when Yellow 'stream increasing' boards are displayed. Yellow boards advise masters of all boats to seek safe mooring - this is because Red 'strong stream' warnings may be displayed suddenly and without warning.

Charges remain suspended during Red boards, but are re-instated when Yellow 'stream decreasing' boards are displayed. During these conditions, we advise masters of powered craft to proceed with caution.