

A New Boaters' Guide to **SUSTAINABLE BOATING**



FROM THE SUSTAINABLE BOATING GROUP

This leaflet aims to help you, as a new boater, use your boat more sustainably by reducing the need to run the engine when moored.



THE PROBLEM

So, what's wrong with running the engine when moored?

Firstly, running a 2-litre diesel engine just to generate electricity or provide hot water is very inefficient and contributes to global warming. Secondly, even if you are doing it within the 'permitted hours' of 8 am to 8 pm, noise and diesel fumes can be a nuisance to others.

If the boat is a modern one, it will likely have comforts you expect at home. Heating, lighting, fridge, freezer, washing machine, microwave, maybe a dishwasher, hairdryer, TV and somewhere to plug in your phone.

But you are 'off grid'!

All the things you need are available but in limited quantities. You'll soon get used to refilling your water tank as you travel, and you'll probably have enough gas and diesel to last the trip. You'll notice on a daily basis – because the boat batteries will run down - that electricity is limited. You also have a smallish tank of hot water.

The boat batteries are like those in your car but bigger and are charged by the engine using an alternator. However, on your boat, you are using much more electricity than your car does. A small hairdryer will take 83 amps from your batteries and a washing machine will take up to 250 amps. What you take out of the battery must be replaced by running the engine.

Your water will most likely be heated by waste heat from the engine and stored in an insulated tank ('calorifier'). There will generally be enough for showers and washing up, but it's limited in capacity and will cool down slowly if the engine isn't running.

WHAT CAN I DO?

So how does knowing this help you and your crew to reduce the need to run your engine when moored? Well, it's about adjusting how and when you do things. When cruising, your engine will produce continual hot water and electricity for you - and more efficiently and cheaply than the engine will if you run it when the boat is moored. In fact, your hot water will be totally free!

Therefore, consider only using high powered appliances while cruising. Almost anything that uses mains voltage, except perhaps phone chargers and the like, is 'high powered' in boating terms.

Again, while cruising, you will have all the hot water you need, so if you're not needed up on deck then it's a good time to take a shower or wash up. Immediately after cruising you'll have lots of piping hot water, so that's also a good time!

If you only plan a short cruise today, or no cruising at all, it's probably not the day to use the washing machine.

These small changes will mean that when you moor, you'll have ample electricity to do the things you want to do in the evening like turning on the lights, watching TV or charging your phone, without the need to run the engine.

Although happening at varying speeds around the country, charging points are increasingly being installed at moorings. If your boat is equipped with a charging lead, using it will charge your batteries and allow you, within reason, to use any appliances.

Understanding how your boat works and the differences compared with life ashore will allow you to adjust how and when you do things. This will reduce your environmental impact, make you a better neighbour and result in a more enjoyable cruising experience.

ENJOY YOUR TRIP

and the many benefits of boating sustainably including:

BE A BETTER NEIGHBOUR

CHEAP ELECTRICITY!

FREE HOT WATER



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We are a group of boaters who started out in 2020 looking at alternatives to diesel engines in narrowboats. We have gone on to explore how using and living on boats can be done in a more sustainable manner. You may have read our articles in waterways publications, or heard us at IWA branch meetings or at the Crick Boat Show.

WATERWAYS.ORG.UK