Falkirk Wheel Navigation Safety Code

Introduction
Scottish Canals undertake and regulate maritime operations in the controlled waters of the Falkirk Wheel, from Lock 1 to Lock 3 including canals, basins, tunnel and the wheel, in a way which safeguards our waterways, their users and the environment.

Compliance with the Navigation Safety Code is mandatory for all parties wishing to access and transit the controlled waters of the Falkirk Wheel, in the interest of the safety, environmental protection and wellbeing of all users.

Definitions

The Falkirk Wheel means all the waters and landward assets between Lock 1 and Lock 3 connecting the Union Canal to the Forth and Clyde Canal.

Designated Person means the Scottish Canals employee who is legally responsible to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) for the safe operation and management of Scottish Canals Passenger Ships. For the purpose of The Falkirk Wheel Navigation Code the Designated Person has ultimate control over all access, egress or transit through the Falkirk Wheel controlled waters, in the interest of safety and environmental protection.

Basin Controller means a Scottish Canals employee, suitably certified by Scottish Canals as being competent to safely manage and direct all vessels or craft which access the controlled waters of the Falkirk Wheel. The Basin Controller is the
inland waterways equivalent to a Harbour Master or Air Traffic Controller. Directions or instructions from the Basin Controller must be complied with.

**Berthed / Moored** means a vessel which is secured to a wharf, quay or pontoon or secured to any other vessel so berthed or moored.

**Boatmasters’ Licence** is issued by the MCA at “Tier 2 Level 1” and is required to operate a passenger ship in Category A to C waters.

**MCA “Categorisation of Water”** The controlled waters of the Falkirk Wheel are categorised as:

- **Category A**: Narrow canals with a water depth generally less than 1.5m.
- **Category B**: Wider canals where the depth of water is generally 1.5m or more and where the significant wave height could not be expected to exceed 1.2m at any time.

**Types of Vessels Using TFW:**

- **Passenger Ships** – Ships which carry more than 12 passengers and require to comply with MCA regulations (Class IV & V Vessels and Post 2010 Vessels)
- **Small Passenger Ships** – Ships in commercial use for sport or pleasure and carry no more than 12 passengers. (Inland Waters Small Passenger Boat Code)
- **Non-passenger vessels** – Work boats required to comply with MCA regulations (Class IX(A) Vessels)
- **Pleasure vessels** – Vessels used by owners only for fun or sport and not for financial gain. All pleasure vessels require a Navigation Licence to transit through the Falkirk Wheel, including hire boats used as pleasure craft.

**The Falkirk Wheel Navigation Safety Code will:**

- Implement these rules for passage and use of the Falkirk Wheel.
- Ensure that the relevant assets of the Falkirk Wheel are managed safely.
- Enforce Basin Controller directions and instructions appropriately.
- Ensure that SC staff are properly trained for emergencies and contingencies.
- Adequately resource management of Falkirk Wheel’s navigational safety.
- Protect the canal environment from pollution.

**Purpose of the Code**

The Falkirk Wheel is one of Scottish Canals busiest waterways which intersects all types of canal vessels, tourism, and land and water based leisure. This intensive interaction of land and water users requires additional levels of control to ensure safe use of the facility for all.

As Scottish Canals also operates passenger ships in these waters additional governance is required by the MCA to manage vessel safety, movements and environmental risks.

Scottish Canals as waterway managers, have implemented safe systems of work for the operation of the Falkirk Wheel boat lift and lock gates and a traffic control system directed by the Basin Controller.
The Basin Controller assisted by the Site Operations Team, manages all vessel (powered and unpowered) movements through the Falkirk Wheel. All access, transit and egress from the Falkirk Wheel requires the express permission of the Basin Controller or his designated operative.

The Basin Controller is in the unique position of having an oversight of all traffic within the controlled waters. The Falkirk Wheel Control Room overlooks the main basin and lock 3, and has CCTV coverage of the remaining controlled waters. The Basin Controller also benefits from constant VHF Radio communications with Operatives. This allows the Basin Controller to make informed decisions on boat movements, in the best interest of water resources and timeous interchanges with the Wheel.

The Basin controller will direct all boat movements whilst in the controlled water of the Falkirk Wheel to mitigate any risk of hazards and collision.

There is a fundamental requirement for a high level of respect between all parties who use the Falkirk Wheel. Scottish Canals is committed to offering a high quality service to all users however this does require a reciprocal commitment by users.

Scottish Canals Basin Controller and Site Operatives will give directions and instructions to vessels operators and passengers. All directions should be followed promptly. In certain circumstances of increased hazard, wind, rain etc. Scottish Canals Operatives may have to raise their voice or shout instructions to be heard. Such action should not be considered as rude or lacking in respect, rather this is only a reaction to circumstance.

If you witness disrespectful behaviour by Scottish Canals staff or by canal users, please inform the Basin Controller.

**Basin Controller Directions & Conditions of Passage.**

- All powered vessels require to have a current Navigation Licence and Boat Safety Certificate or be licenced for use by the Maritime Coastguard Agency.
- All vessels must operate within the criteria set out by the Basin Controller or designated operative.
- All access to the Falkirk Wheel requires to be booked with the Basin Controller 24 hours in advance.
- Any vessel presenting at the Falkirk Wheel without a booking will be accommodated at the first available opportunity but cannot be guaranteed passage where the navigation pattern is full.
- All vessels presenting at the Falkirk Wheel require to minimise items stored on deck, any items stored on deck require to be lashed down or tethered. The Falkirk Wheel can be exposed to increased wind speed and extra precautions are required to ensure nothing can be blown from a vessel transiting the wheel. This is in the interest of public safety. The Basin Controller or designated operative may instruct items to be lashed or stored inboard where a risk is observed.
- Embarkation and disembarkation of crew and passengers from vessels can only be accommodated at designated berths or moorings, as directed by the Basin Controller.
- Embarkation or disembarkation of crew or passengers from vessels within SC designated work areas is prohibited unless with the express permission of the Basin Controller and appropriate PPE is being worn. Plan 1 SC Designated Work Areas.
- No powered vessel may access prohibited areas. Plan 2 Vessel Prohibition Area.
• All occupants of vessels must be respectful to SC Staff. SC staff will be respectful of all users.
• No maintenance of vessels is allowed in the controlled water of the Falkirk Wheel. This is in the interest of safety, customer experience and environmental protection.
• No bilging or discharging of fouls allowed in the controlled water of the Falkirk Wheel. Automatic bilge pumps should be disabled during passage or bilged into a holding tank.
• No vessel should discharge rubbish, effluent or pollutant of any kind within the controlled water limits.
• All pollution incidents must be reported to the Basin Controller.
• A four knot speed limit is applied at all times in the controlled waters of the Falkirk Wheel. All vessels should respect this maximum speed but should never travel at such a speed as to cause discomfort or danger to other water users.
• Private or commercial vessels within the controlled water should not play loud music or create a nuisance to other users.
• No vessel should be operated by a person under the influence of Alcohol or drugs.
• All vessels should be navigated with care and caution especial in the vicinity of smaller craft and moorings. Any incident or collision must be reported to the Basin Controller.
• Owners and masters of vessels should be prepared to furnish the Basin Controller with insurance, voyage and vessel details and other information as may be reasonably required.
• Any vessel picking up any mooring that has not been registered to that vessel should contact the Basin Controller to ensure that it is available for use and the mooring is suitable for the vessel.
• There is a general presumption against accessing the Falkirk Wheel for a “wheel rotation” all access through the Falkirk Wheel will be for the purpose of passage.

Failure to obey Basin Controller Directions will result in passage being cancelled and the vessel will be required to vacate the controlled waters immediately.
**Plan 1 SC Designated Work Areas.**

Lock 3 – Jubilee Lock

No embarkation or disembarkation within this area, unless authorised by the Basin Controller and wearing appropriate PPE.

**Plan 2 Vessel Prohibition Area.**

This area of the main basin is designated for non-vessel use. All leisure and commercial craft are prohibited from entering this area.

Vessel Prohibition Area