

## Safety Hazard

- Be advised that only experienced adults should hold onto the ropes to prevent the vessel from drifting backwards and losing grip and potentially falling into the water. Always wear your personal floating device, known as a PFD.
- Vessels are not permitted to tie off or moor to any government property in the queuing areas while awaiting lockage.
- Do not leave your vessel or attempt to enter the lock property. The lock is a federal facility and trespassers are reported to the authorities.



- Flying drones near this facility is a federal offense reported to authorities.



- Use fenders as needed to protect your vessel. Boat hooks may be used to grab the lockwall lines.



- Jet Ski operators need to be off the lake before sunset.

## Emergency Vessels Priority



- Occasionally emergency vessels (U.S. Coast Guard, Police or Fire) enter the lock with emergency lights flashing. During these lockages all four lock gates may be partially open at the same time, which creates a dangerous heavy current in the chamber.

- **No other vessels are allowed to enter the lock during emergency lockages.**
- If the government vessel does not have their lights flashing, they are locking through normally and other vessels may also enter the lock



## Fireworks displays

Recreation vessels wishing to transit the lock to witness fireworks displays (usually Wednesdays and Saturdays during the boating season), need to be aware that the commercial passenger vessels (carrying a U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Inspection) and the fireworks barge take top priority in locking order.

- After the fireworks, recreation vessels may need to wait 30-45 minutes before all of the commercial passenger vessels have returned to the river. However, every effort will be made to lock recreational vessels with commercial vessels if room allows.
- Please listen for messages over the loudspeaker and follow any directions provided. Some lockages may be designated for commercial vessels only.
- Charter vessels are not considered commercial passenger vessels unless they are issued a U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Inspection.
- Please plan for extended lockage and wait times on firework nights.

## Damaged Vessels

Damaged vessels may never enter the lock, whether they are on fire, taking on water or have engine trouble.



- They may moor along the approach walls outside the lock and call for help.
- Lock operators will call for assistance from the Police, U.S. Coast Guard or Fire Department.
- Once the situation is under control and the vessel is no longer in danger, the vessel may proceed through the lock being towed alongside (preferably "on-the-hip") by another vessel.

**To contact the lock operator,  
use Marine Radio Channel 14, 156.7 MHz  
or call 312-787-4795.**



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

# CHICAGO HARBOR LOCK

## SAFETY GUIDE



Over 75,000 vessels transit Chicago Harbor Lock annually!  
Your safety is our #1 Priority.



- **Red light:** DO NOT ENTER. All vessels must wait at the queuing area.
- **STAND CLEAR OF DEPARTING VESSELS.**
- At this time all passengers must wear their PFD, known as personal floating device.
- All vessels shall monitor marine radio channel 14,156.7 MHz for instructions. Operator instructions via radio or public address systems supersede traffic signals.



#### 4 INSIDE THE LOCK CHAMBER

- **DO NOT PASS** vessels in the chamber when entering or exiting.
- **KEEP HANDS AND FEET INSIDE THE BOAT AT ALL TIMES.** The water currents can cause the vessel to surge and hands can get crushed.
- **REDUCE LOUD MUSIC** to listen to instructions.
- The lock is a **NO WAKE ZONE.** The no wake zone extends to the ends of the lock guide walls, and the City of Chicago enforces a no wake zone for the main branch of the Chicago River. (Ord. 10-40-261)
- Recreation boats should try to stay behind the 450-foot marker, when locking to the lake.
- Recreation boater must hold on to the rope provided along the lock chamber wall and may not securely tie off lines to the wall to avoid the danger of capsizing your vessel when the water level drops 3-5 feet.
- Vessels may need to moor with an additional line during emergency operations.



#### 5 WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE FALLS INTO THE WATER



- Take your engine out of gear to avoid the propeller injuring the person in the water.
- Push your boat away from the lock wall to avoid crushing the person in the water.
- Blow your horn with 5 short blasts to notify the lock personnel, position along the wall and notify other boaters that you have a problem.
- Call the lock operator.

**Call Lock Operator  
312-787- 4795**



- **Amber Light:** Lock is ready for entrance of government vessels.
- Commercial vessels may enter the lock.
- No recreational vessels are allowed to enter the lock.
- Wait for the lock operator's instruction.



- **Green Light:** Lock is open for all vessels in order of priority. Late arriving vessels may enter with permission of lock operator.
- Keep clear of commercial and government vessels that have priority and will enter before recreational vessels.
- If **RED** signal appears, all vessels shall stop entering the lock and return to the queuing area.

### PASSING thru CHICAGO HARBOR LOCK

The summer boating season makes Chicago Harbor Lock one of the busiest in the nation. Special rules are in place to reduce congestion and to ensure everyone's safety.

