
2024

**Thompson Boat Center
Operational Guidelines**

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General Operations

Purpose

"—to promote and regulate the use of the... national parks... which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

National Park Service Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. Chapter 1

Thompson Boat Center, in its role with the National Park Service, is responsible for promoting the intention of this 1916 piece of legislation, which outlines the mission of the National Park Service.

Boat Center Overview

Thompson Boat Center is conveniently located near the Georgetown waterfront, Watergate complex, and the Foggy Bottom Metro stop.

The original name of the facility was The National Capital Water Sports Center. However, before opening (1961) it was renamed in recognition of Department of Interior worker and boat center project champion Harry S. Thompson. The site plan consists of ten inside bays and two outside fenced compounds for temporary storage. The facility also offers restrooms, lockers and showers for its licensees and guests. Extensive users of the facility include college, high school, and individual rowers, along with recreational canoeists, kayakers, day bikers, and bicyclists who may be ending or beginning their Chesapeake and Ohio Canal bike trip. Numerous other daily park visitors include foreign tourists, residents, running clubs, and scouting troops.

The Thompson Boat Center is managed by NCR Guest Services, LLC, a subsidiary of Guest Services, Inc. (GSI), a management firm that operates numerous concessions of the National Park Service in Washington, DC and across the country.

Facility improvements, changes in rates, additional services, or commercial use of facilities must be approved by the National Park Service.

Seasons of Operation

The contractual operating season of Thompson Boat Center (“Boat Center”) is April 1st through September 30th, weather permitting. In addition, the facility is authorized to be open from October 1st through March 31st.

Facility Access during the 2024-2025 Season

Hours of Operation for Thompson Boat Center:

Dates	Monday-Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1/2/24 - 2/23/24	6:00am - 7:30pm	6:00am - 12:00pm	Closed
2/24/24 - 3/31/24	5:30am - 7:30pm	5:30am - 12:00pm	5:30am-12:00pm
4/1/24-9/29/24	5:30am - 8:00pm	5:30am - 8:00pm	5:30am - 8:00pm
9/30/24-11/3/24	5:30am - 7:30pm	5:30am - 7:30pm	5:30am - 7:30pm
11/4/24-2/16/25	6:00am - 7:30pm	6:00am - 12:00pm	Closed
2/17/25 - 3/30/25	5:30am - 7:30pm	5:30am - 12:00pm	5:30am-12:00pm
*Off-Season Hours are for teams and slip holders that have purchased "Winter Training Pass"			
Operating hours are subject to change.			

Closures	
11/27 - 12/1/2024	Thanksgiving
12/21/24 - 1/1/2025	Holidays/New Years

The Boat Center reserves the right to close all services and facilities during inclement weather or by order of a government agency without prior notice. Scheduled operating hours may be altered when public interest and safety are at risk.

1. Hours of Operation: In Season April 1 – October 31*
 - a. Access to storage at the Boat Center is available from 5:30am-8pm seven days a week.
 - b. Those who qualify will have access to the dock, locker rooms, and land equipment.
 2. Hours of Operation: Off Season November 1 – March 31*
 - a. Access to personal equipment stored at the boat center is available from
 - Monday – Friday 6:00am - 7:30pm
 - Saturdays 6:00am-12pm between November 1 and February 28
 - Saturdays and Sundays 6:00am-12pm between March 1 and March 31
 - b. Storage customers interested in continued use of the facilities, including the dock, land equipment, and locker rooms during the off-season will be charged an additional fee. This fee will be established no later than September 1.
- *Dates will vary based on the calendar, see Hours of Operation for specific hours by date.
3. Access Outside of Operational Hours
 - a. Access to the site outside of the established operational hours is by appointment only. Please contact tbc@guestservices.com if you require an appointment. All requests for access must be made at least 2 business days in advance. A minimum surcharge of \$50 per hour (minimum one hour) may be assessed to access requests.

Site Rules and Restrictions

Applicability of Thompson Boat Center Rules

Use of the Boat Center's facilities is restricted to patrons who participate in the Boat Center's programs, store or launch shells, rent boats or bicycles, or are affiliated with organizations which are patrons of the Boat Center. Contracts and agreements entered into with NCR Guest Services incorporate the requirements of this guide. Users are also advised to adhere to its guidelines, which have been developed to protect athletes and equipment, promote a safe and efficient facility, and provide an enjoyable on-water experience.

These rules govern the use of the Boat Center and are binding to all persons using the facility. Failure to comply with these rules may result in complete or partial suspension of rowing privileges for individuals or programs, without refund of fees or any part thereof. Additionally, failure to comply with these rules by Boat Center licensees or their guests may be grounds for additional fees, revocation of privileges, or termination of their license agreements. The programs of user organizations (e.g., high schools, colleges, clubs) may adopt rules of their own, but in the event of a conflict, Boat Center rules shall prevail.

To maintain good standing, all facility users must at minimum:

1. Pay all fees incurred by the date specified.
2. Comply with Thompson Boat Center Operational Guidelines.
3. Provide necessary risk acknowledgement forms.

Thompson Boat Center Rules and Regulations

1. Business Operation (36 CFR 5.3):
 - a. Engaging in or soliciting any business in park areas, except in accordance with the provisions of a permit, contract, or other written agreement with the United States, except as such may be specifically authorized under special regulations applicable to a park area, is prohibited. Prohibited commercial use includes, but is not limited to, subletting or renting out equipment or operating a camp at the Boat Center.
2. General Behavior:
 - a. Refrain from the use of foul language, excessive noise, and discourteous behavior.
 - b. Assist in maintaining the appearance of the grounds by properly disposing of trash and water bottles in the proper recycling containers and by leaving the premises in a neat and orderly condition.
 - c. Overboard dumping of any trash into the river is illegal and not tolerated. Bring back what you take out. Only take out what you will bring in.
3. Alcohol and Drugs:
 - a. Outside alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs (including marijuana) are strictly prohibited on the Boat Center property and the tide lock area.
 - b. Anyone appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed on the premises of the Boat Center.
4. Personal Injury or Property Damage:
 - a. All occurrences of personal injury, property or equipment damage, and required equipment maintenance must be reported immediately to the supervisor on duty. All incident reports must be filled out within 24 hours.

5. Security:
 - a. The cooperation of slip holders, rowers and coaches is critical to the protection of the facility and equipment. Equipment stored at the Boat Center may only be used by the owner of said equipment or their authorized representatives. Anyone found using someone else's equipment without prior authorization may be reported or detained until the owner can be contacted. Unauthorized use or theft of any kind may result in the cancellation of all privileges, including a contract.
6. Parking:
 - a. Parking spaces adjacent to the Boat Center are reserved for employees only. Short-term parking (15 minutes or less) is permitted only for the loading and unloading of equipment and must be approved by the supervisor on duty.
 - b. Absolutely no parking is permitted in the compound, on the tarmac, or any grassy areas of the Boat Center.
 - c. No vehicle or trailer is to be left unattended for any length of time without first obtaining permission from Boat Center staff.
 - d. Management must be notified 24 hours in advance of any trailer that will be brought on site. Trailers that do not obtain permission may be asked to leave.
7. Water Safety:
 - a. US Coast Guard navigation rules must be followed by all Boat Center users.
 - b. All No Wake Zones must be observed, including in front of the Boat Center dock.
 - c. All shells launched from the Boat Center dock must attach a white light to the stern and red/green light to the bow before sunrise and after sunset.
 - d. Coxswains and scullers shall always carry a noise making device.
8. Safety Hazards:
 - a. Gear and other potential trip hazards are not to be left on the docks, ramps, interior or exterior walkways, and access roads. The Boat Center reserves the right to remove and dispose of such obstructions in keeping with state, local, and federal fire and safety laws.
9. Thompson Boat Center Equipment:
 - a. Use of Thompson Boat Center equipment is limited to those enrolled in Boat Center programs and Boat Center rental customers. Boat Center equipment may be used with prior consent of the General Manager or Assistant Manager.
 - b. Land based fitness equipment is for the use of slip holders, members of Boat Center classes, and Rowing Season Pass holders. Use of land-based fitness equipment is governed by the "Land Equipment Guidelines," which are included in this document.
 - c. Unauthorized use of this equipment is grounds for suspension of Boat Center privileges.
10. Equipment Storage:
 - a. Equipment stored at the Boat Center that is valued at \$100 or more must be insured for the full value of the item. Proof of this insurance must be presented to Boat Center management upon request.
 - b. All equipment must be properly labeled by the owner/organization. This includes oars, stretchers, paddles, launches, life vests, gasoline containers, etc.
 - c. Equipment left unlabeled will be removed from the premises. Any equipment not properly stored will be confiscated without notice to the owner, as outlined in Section 25 of the Storage License Agreement.

- d. Any equipment deemed unfit for use will not be allowed to be stored on Boat Center property.
 - e. No boats are to be left on slings in any area of the Boat Center without the approval of Boat Center management.
 - f. Additional storage must be requested through the waitlist form located on the Thompson Boat Center website. No additional storage will be granted without this form on file.
 - g. Climbing on the racks is dangerous and strictly prohibited.
11. Flammable items:
- a. No flammable items of any kind are allowed inside the Boat Center area. This includes gasoline, paints, solvents, lubricants, adhesives, flammable epoxies, etc.
12. Lockers and Locker Rooms:
- a. Lockers and locker rooms are provided for free daily use by Boat Center customers.
 - b. All daily lockers must be vacated by the end of each day. If a lock is left on a daily use locker at the end of the day, the lock will be cut, and the contents of the locker will be removed and placed in Lost and Found for a period of one month before being disposed of.
 - c. Use of the locker room is a privilege for all customers. If there is evidence of vandalism or defacing of property, we will no longer be able to provide this service.
13. Storage on Rack:
- a. Only one watercraft of any type may be stored in a rack. Additional equipment such as life jackets, paddles or oars must be stored within the confines of the boat and may not be stored separately on the assigned rack.
 - b. Equipment must be stored on racks specifically designated to store that equipment.
 - Ex. Sweep oars must be stored on sweep oar racks, not sculling oar racks. Hanging boat racks may only hold single sculls.
 - c. Use of any rack space, other than that space assigned to the boat, without prior approval of the Thompson Boat Center General Manager is prohibited.
 - d. Use of rack by other than contracted slip holder is also prohibited.
 - e. Climbing on the racks is dangerous and strictly prohibited.
14. Change of Contact Information:
- a. All rack holders must notify the management of any change in name, address, phone numbers, email, primary point of contact, or pertinent billing information. Please notify us if you are taking your boat off the premises temporarily or permanently.
15. Regattas/Events:
- a. At times, Thompson Boat Center may provide usage of the Boat Center facilities and docks by outside parties for regattas, events, or other functions related to the overall purpose of the site.
 - b. Parties who wish to use the site for this purpose must submit the appropriate regatta/event application at least two weeks prior to the event.
 - c. Management reserves the right to close the Boat Center to licensees or the general public or otherwise restrict usage during certain special events.
 - d. No event of any kind may take place at the Boat Center without prior authorization. Any violations may result in suspension of Boat Center privileges.

Thompson Boat Center Institutional Contract Addendum

If any of the requirements listed previously or below are not fully met, the named organization may not be allowed access to the Thompson Boat Center dock.

1. Institutions will provide a list of key personnel, their position titles and contact information, with updates as changes occur.
2. Scholastic and collegiate rowers are expected to act in a responsible and safe manner while using the Thompson Boat Center facility. Thompson Boat Center reserves the right to ban any rower from Thompson Boat Center found to be acting beyond these boundaries.
3. All organizations' coaching staff must have small boat safety US Coast Guard certification and be prepared to provide documentation that they have attended any required training before being allowed to coach out of Thompson Boat Center.
4. All organizations involving athletes who are minor must be overseen by a head coach who is 21 years of age or older.
5. Any requests made of Thompson Boat Center must be documented in either written or email form.
6. Temporary rack agreements between organizations are prohibited.
7. Equipment deemed unfit for use by Thompson Boat Center management must not be stored on Thompson Boat Center property, e.g., damaged oars, stretchers, launches and rowing shells.
8. All equipment must be properly labeled by the organization. This includes oars, stretchers, paddles, launches, life vests, gasoline containers, etc. If equipment is left unlabeled it will be impounded per Section 25 of the Storage License Agreement.
9. All motorboats/launches must be equipped with permanently fixed bow and stern lights before use in low visibility conditions, prior to sunrise and after sunset.
10. All motorboats/launches must have a beam of 5' 6" or less to be stored on a Thompson Boat Center cleat.
11. All motorboats/launches must be tied to that team's assigned cleat. Thompson Boat Center reserves the right to relocate improperly stored motorboats/launches.
12. All motorboat/launches must be labeled in accordance with the following manner as requested by Harbor Patrol:
 - a. All boats must be properly registered in accordance with the Washington D. C. Metropolitan Police Department Harbor Patrol regulations.
 - b. All boats must have the team's name clearly marked on the front of the console or other easily seen area, so that Harbor Patrol can ID the boat if it breaks away from the dock.
 - c. All boats must have a contact name and number located on the boat so that Harbor Patrol is able to notify you if the boat breaks away from the dock.
 - d. All boats must have their assigned cleat number affixed in large print to the bow of the hull.
 - e. Any boat not properly labeled resulting in Thompson Boat Center staff working with Harbor Patrol to recover a boat may be charged a fee for recovery costs.

****Add information about extra fees for camp and winter training.

Thompson Boat Center Land Equipment Guidelines

1. Land equipment is for the use of teams, private storage customers, and rowing season passholders only.
2. Strength training equipment may not be used by anyone under the age of 14.

3. Anyone under 18 years of age must be supervised by either a parent/guardian, or in the case of an institution, a coach.
4. Equipment may not be moved from its designated location (e.g., ergs may not be relocated to other areas of the room, racks may not be repositioned, etc.). Exceptions to this are weight benches, which may be moved to use the squat rack/bench press, and free weights which may be moved to the desired strength training station.
5. At no time should weights be thrown or dropped onto the floor.
6. Deadlifts may only be done on the deadlift platform.
7. All weights are to be re-racked, and benches returned to their location after use.
8. All strength training equipment must be wiped down after each use, with designated wipes.
9. All ergs must be wiped down after each use. This includes Seat, Slide, Handle, Monitor
10. Please wipe down stretching mat/foam rollers after use.
11. All ergs must have their handle returned to the top of the cage at the end of your workout.
12. Please be mindful of other guests. During high volume times, we ask that you limit your time on the rowing machines to 1 hour (60 minutes.)
13. During high volume times, please consider “working in” or alternating sets with another guest on the strength training equipment.
14. At no time should a guest “hold” or reserve one strength training station while they are using another.
15. Notify staff immediately if you have any concerns or notice any damage to any land training equipment.

Environmental Issues

Environmental Management Program

Goal: To establish a process to ensure that the activities of users of Thompson Boat Center are consistent with sound environmental practices.

Statement to Site Users and Suppliers

Our company and its suppliers enjoy a proud tradition responding to the challenge of supporting the mission of the National Park Service. We share the nation's concern for protecting, conserving, and preserving the environment and our natural resources. We are committed to reducing our company's impact on the environment and satisfying customer demand for environmentally preferable products and services. This commitment will impact virtually everything we sell and service. Reducing, reusing and recycling packaging and other materials can significantly cut purchasing, operating, and disposal costs. In addition, environmentally preferable purchasing may also reduce the hazardous materials used and disposed of in daily activities. Specifically, we ask you to be a partner with us to:

- Use materials made from recycled content, especially post-consumer recycled content, including paper products, motor oil, and antifreeze.
- Recycle wastes where economically feasible and appropriate.
- Practice energy and water conservation measures.

We are also interested in hearing of your current environmental practices, planned future environmental activities, and welcome your participation throughout the year in periodic Thompson Boat Center cleanup and project initiatives. Thank you for your support.

Fuel storage and handling procedures.

At present, the Thompson Boat Center has no capacity to provide bulk storage of gasoline for the launches required to support the ongoing rowing programs. Each user is responsible for acquiring and mixing gasoline fuel and for complying with center requirements relative to small tank storage. It is the purpose of this section of the manual to assist in defining those requirements and to establish the responsibilities for their compliance.

Thompson Boat Center shall:

- Designate specific outside areas for small tank and gas can storage and for the mixing of gasoline and oil for use in two cycle engines.
- Provide appropriate sheds for small tank and gas can storage.
- Provide materials necessary to clean up small-scale gasoline spills.

Institutions and/or Individual Users shall:

- Clearly label all gas cans.
- Limit fuel storage to a maximum of one gas tank per assigned launch space plus one fill can per two assigned launch spaces. Each fill can and gas tank can be no larger than 6 gallons. Institutional crews are responsible for the size and shape of their gas tanks or fill cans to allow for the maximum amount of storage within the gas cabinet. Institutions whose gas tanks or fill cans are shaped in such a way as to negatively impact the maximum storage of

the cabinet may be required to further limit the amount of fuel that they store on site.

- Acquire and store gasoline and gasoline mixes in proper fire rated containers for the handling and transporting of flammable and combustible liquids.
- Store gasoline containers only in outside flammable storage cabinets provided.
- Close and secure flammable storage cabinet doors after accessing.
- Ensure that all sources of ignition are prohibited near or around storage and mixing areas.
- Ensure that no gas containers are stored for any reason within any area of the Boat Center.
- Flashlights and electric lanterns used during the handling of flammable liquids shall be of the type listed by the Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. or another nationally recognized testing laboratory for use in such hazardous areas.
- In the event of an accidental spill of amounts which will not readily evaporate, clean spill using "Spill Kit" absorbent materials provided for that purpose and immediately notify Boat Center management.
- No flammable items, unless otherwise specifically exempted or properly contained, are allowed to be stored in the Boat Center. This includes gasoline, paints, solvents, lubricants, adhesives, flammable epoxies and outboard fuel hoses.
- The fuel storage cabinet must contain all SDS sheets of chemical inventories contained therein. An inventory sheet will be posted on the storage shed of all hazardous chemicals.
- Access to flammable cabinet(s) must be available at all times to Boat Center and National Park Service staff. Teams may not alter or remove the lock provided by the Boat Center.
- All fuel tanks must be stored in a designated flammable storage cabinet located in the Boat Storage Compound.
- Fuel containers must be stored upright and be vented.
- Mixing or the exchanging of gasoline and oil is prohibited anywhere other than in the mixing area in the compound of the Boat Center. Mixing and exchanging gasoline and oil on the Boat Center dock is prohibited.
- No outboard engines will be serviced or washed on the Boat Center property. No outboard engines are to be stored on Boat Center property. This includes the area of the compound(s) and within the boat center.
- The use of non-biodegradable soap for boat washing is prohibited on the Boat Center property. An environmentally friendly product must be used by all contract holders.

Water accumulated in launches must be kept to a minimum to ensure safe and sound environmental practices. If a launch accumulates an unacceptable amount of water, the Boat Center may bail the launch at a fee of \$50.00 per launch/per incident. Failure to pay the fee may result in cancellation of the owner's storage contract. The launch owner is responsible for the owned equipment and should make assignments accordingly. The Boat Center is not liable or responsible for the launch or attached engine.

Institutional users are responsible for the proper disposal of any trash or garbage produced by their members. It is the responsibility of the Institutional users to always monitor and maintain the cleanliness of the Boat Center facilities and property.

[Suggestions for Safely Fueling Your Boat](#)

- Always remove portable tanks from the boat. Use caution to prevent spills.
- Never smoke or strike a match while fueling or when near fuel storage cabinet.
- Check fuel lines for leaks and replace any cracking hoses.
- Tighten fuel line connections frequently as they may loosen due to engine vibration.
- Never fill a tank to the brim. Leave room for gas to expand and not overflow into the water.
- After fueling, put the fill cap on tightly to prevent vapors from escaping.
- Immediately manage any spilled gas.

Fuel/Oil Spill Response

Should you experience a fuel spill on or around a boat in slip, immediately take responsible action, which may include:

- Determine source (rate and type of spill).
- If a leak is present, evacuate all people close by.
- If alone, call ALL numbers on spill notification list for large spill (5 gallons or more).
- If assisted, have the assistant call while you begin safety and appropriate clean up procedures.
- Safety and Clean Up Procedures
- Evacuate non-essential people.
- Alert Boat Center management.

Remove all sources of electrical power (e.g., unplug extension cords). If a fuel leak is present, place caution tape around the area.

- Take any other precautionary measures deemed reasonable.
- Containment Procedures
- Spill kit is located near Flammable Storage Lockers.
- Take reasonable measures to keep any spill from reaching the canal or river. Use absorbent pads to contain and clean the area.
- Stop leaking if possible but do not risk ANYONE's safety.

Launch Bailing (contaminated water):

- Visually inspect the water in the launch for visible oil sheen. If no oil sheen is present, then the launch may be bailed.
- If oil sheen exists, immediately obtain a spill mat or other absorbent designed for such a spill. Use absorbents to capture oil. When sheen no longer is observed, the launch may be bailed.
- If the spill is greater than what may be absorbed by an absorbent, the water must be bilged out to another container for disposal as waste gasoline/diesel mixture. Ensure the container is closed tight, labeled properly, and is provided with secondary containment.
- Maintain disposal records (e.g., waste shipping log).

Safety Practices

Temporary Closing of Docks

Access to and use of the docks will be at the discretion of Boat Center management. Access to the dock is prohibited anytime the gates blocking the ramps are in place. There are circumstances when docks will be closed, or their use restricted by the management of the Boat Center, the National Park Service, or any other government agency. These include, but are not limited to:

- Docks may be closed to all users when the following occurs:
 - River conditions are unsafe.
 - Water height at Little Falls is at or nearing flood stage, water flow rate, and/or floating debris pose unusual hazards.
 - Weather conditions are unsafe.
 - Icing conditions, electrical storm, high winds, fog, or other prohibitive weather conditions
 - Other conditions
 - Conditions, as determined by the Boat Center management, which prohibit the safe use of the docks
 - Closure by authority of law enforcement or a government agency.

Notification: Patrons are encouraged to call the Boat Center to check boating conditions.

Contact Information for Thompson Boat Center

Guest Services, Inc.

Address: 2900 Virginia Ave., NW Washington, DC 20037
Boat Center Telephone: (202) 333-3140
Boat Center Email: tbc@guestservices.com
Boat Center Website: <https://boatingindc.com/thompson-boat-center/>
General Manager: Kyle Kraft-Culkin
Email: kyle.kraft-culkin@guestservices.com

National Park Service

Commercial Use Authorization (202) 438-6615

EMS

DC Harbor Patrol: (202) 727-4582
Park Police: (202) 610-7500
DC Fire Boat: (202) 673-3200
GW Hospital, Emergency Room (202) 994-3211
GW Hospital, General (202) 994-3921

Other Important Information

Waitlist Application: <https://boatingindc.com/boathouses/thompson-boat-center/>;
Select "Boat Storage" tab.

Little Falls Gauge: <https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?gage>