



In The Netherlands Passing through bridges and locks safely and quickly

When navigating through the Netherlands, you will pass through many bridges and locks. You can do this safely and quickly if you follow the rules and tips given below.

What to do at bridges

- Don't drift about in front of a bridge. Moor your vessel in the waiting area.
- Avoid making irritating waves.
- Go to the back of a waiting queue of boats and wait your turn.
- Always follow the instructions of the personnel in charge..
- If road traffic is busy, boats will be held together and you will have to wait.
- When the lights turn green and red, the bridge will soon open. You can then navigate towards the bridge.
- Navigate under the bridge quickly so that the road traffic doesn't have to wait unnecessarily.
- Give any oncoming vessels enough room to pass under the bridge.
- After passing under the bridge, navigate to starboard side.
- If you can navigate under a closed bridge, choose the correct section of the bridge and pay attention to any oncoming vessels, especially commercial vessels.

Remote-controlled bridges

Not every bridge has a bridgeman on location. A bridgeman sometimes operates several bridges via remote-control cameras. In these cases, moor your boat so that it can be seen by the camera and the bridgeman knows that boats are waiting.

Passing moveable bridges

When approaching a moveable bridge, you must reduce your speed and you may not overtake any other boats unless asked to do so by the bridgeman. You can moor in the waiting area only to wait for the bridge to begin operating. You may not, for example, spend the night there. You can request assistance from the bridgeman with the horn signal 'long-short-long': **— • —**

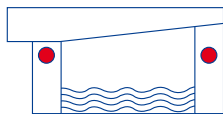
'Bridges in operation' will be opened and closed. 'Bridges not in operation' will not be opened or closed. This does not mean that the bridge is defective but that the bridgeman is not on duty.

The lights at moveable bridges show what the status is and what the rules for priority are. Here below are the most frequent light signals at bridges.

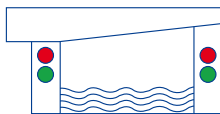


Bridges in operation

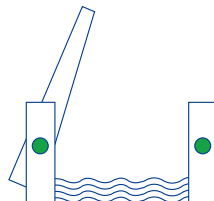
Red lights always mean that passage is prohibited unless an extra yellow or green light is also on. In these cases, you may navigate under the bridge.



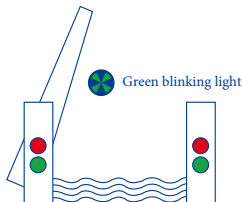
Passage prohibited



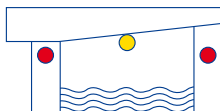
Passage prohibited,
will be allowed straight away



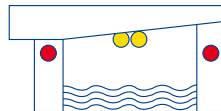
Passage allowed



Passage prohibited unless the vessel
is so close to the opening that it is
almost impossible to come to a halt



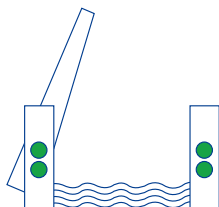
Passage under closed bridge
allowed; there may be oncoming
vessels



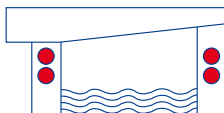
Passage under a closed bridge is
allowed but not for oncoming
vessels

Bridges not in operation

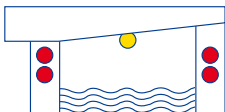
Double red lights always mean that the bridge is not in operation and that passage is prohibited unless an extra yellow or green light is on. In that case, you may pass under the bridge.



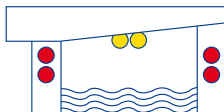
Passage is allowed, bridge is
unattended, there may be
oncoming vessels!



Bridge is not in operation;
passage is prohibited.



Passage under closed bridge
allowed; there may be oncoming
vessels.



Passage under a closed bridge is
allowed but not for oncoming vessels.



What to do at locks

- Don't drift about in front of a bridge. Moor your vessel in the waiting area.
- Avoid making irritating waves.
- Go to the back of a waiting queue of boats and wait your turn.
- Always follow the instructions of the personnel in charge..
- Hang enough fenders on both sides of your ship.
- Wait if the light is red. Enter a lock only if allowed.
- Green and red lights indicate that the lock will open straight away. Make sure you are ready to enter the lock..
- Make room for the vessels leaving the lock chamber.
- Ships must enter the lock in the order of arrival.

When commercial and recreational vessels are together, the commercial vessels enter the lock first unless otherwise instructed by the lock keeper. This is for safety and speed. Recreational vessels should wait until commercial vessels have fastened the ropes and turned the propeller off before they enter the lock.

- Navigate as far as possible to the front of the lock chamber and close up. Stay far enough away from commercial vessels, the doors of the lock and, where necessary, the water inlet.

- Secure your vessel with enough mooring lines. Make sure they don't get stuck. Loosen them on time when the water goes down and tighten them when the water rises.
- Ropes secure? Propellers off!
- Listen to your maritime telephone when in a lock but don't use it unnecessarily. A small vessel can also report to the lock keeper via the maritime telephone and receive instructions for passing through the lock. There is usually also a button on the holding pontoon with which you can contact the lock keeper if you have no maritime telephone on board.

Passing through a lock together

Passing through locks demands extra attention. Both commercial and recreational vessels have to manoeuvre in a limited space in a lock. This demands concentration and communicating with each other and with the lock keepers.

Take each other into consideration so that all vessels can pass through the lock quickly and safely. Don't jump the queue, wait your turn and obey the rules.

Pass bridges and locks quickly and safely?

Know the rules and take other vessels into consideration.


Passing through locks from fresh to salt water

Always fasten the stern before navigating from fresh to salt water since you will ride with the current in the lock. If you fail to do this, there is a large chance that you will end up diagonally or backwards in the lock. The force of water on a ship is much more powerful than the wind, especially in the protection of a lock.

Stewards: a helping hand

In good weather, waterways become busier. In the summer, the Department of Waterways uses stewards at busy locks. They help water sports lovers to moor their vessels and help vessels to move more quickly through the locks.

Navigating through locks

A request to operate a lock is the same signal as that for operating a bridge: 

The meanings of the lights at locks are almost the same as for the lights at bridges.

Water level indicators

Yellow-black scales of water levels or signs sometimes indicate the clearance at bridges or other suspended constructions.



Scale of water levels

The scale is on the starboard side or on both sides of the opening of a bridge. A scale is divided into 1-metre blocks and, depending on the local situation, it may also be further divided into half metres and decimetres.

Water level signs

On some waterways, the clearance is indicated by a sign on the suspended construction.



More information

The ANWB Almanac 1 contains the Inland Waterways Police Regulations (BPR) that explain the rules for passing bridges and locks. More information on safe navigating can be found on www.varendoejesamen.nl

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Questions? Go to www.safeboating.eu and www.varendoejesamen.nl



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