

Regulation
No. 1130-2-74

1 June 2013

Project Operation
MCCLELLAN-KERR ARKANSAS RIVER NAVIGATION SYSTEM
STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURE NO. 15
RECREATIONAL VESSEL LOCKAGES

1. Purpose. This policy is to establish guidance for the implementation and execution of recreational vessel lockages on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS).
2. Applicability. This policy applies to locks in Arkansas on the MKARNS. The USACE Tulsa District is establishing a similar policy for the portion of the MKARNS in Oklahoma. These policies are intended to act in tandem and will only be revised or rescinded in tandem with coordination between the two Districts.
3. References.
 - a. 33 CFR 207.275, Navigation and Navigable Waters, McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System: Use, Administration, and Navigation.
 - b. 36 CFR 327, Rules and Regulations Governing Public Use of Water Resource Development Projects Administered by the Chief of Engineers.
 - c. Operations Order (OPORD) 2012-63, USACE Implementation of Inland Marine Transportation System (IMTS) Process Improvement, Standard Level of Service.
 - d. Southwestern Division (SWD) OPORD 2012-05, USACE Implementation of Inland Marine Transportation System (IMTS) Process Improvement, Standard Levels of Service,.
 - e. Little Rock District, SWLOM 1130-2-12, Project Operations Special Events Permits, Change 1.
4. Background. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) navigation mission is to provide safe, reliable, efficient, effective and environmentally sustainable waterborne transportation systems for movement of commerce, national security needs, and recreation. Faced with the realization of budget constraints and increasing maintenance requirements, USACE must take steps to extend the service life of its locks by optimizing usage and by increasing maintenance. This policy provides guidance to implement these steps related to recreational traffic on the system.

5. Authority.

a. The use, administration, and navigation of the structures to which this section applies shall be under the direction of the officers of USACE detailed in charge of their District, and their authorized assistants. The Little Rock District Engineer is located in Little Rock, Arkansas, and his/her jurisdiction on the MKARNS extends from the Mississippi River to the Arkansas-Oklahoma state line per 33 CFR 207.275(b) and 33 CFR 207.275(b)(1)(2).

b. The Lockmaster shall be charged with the immediate control and management of the lock and of the area set aside as the lock area per 33 CFR 207.275(c).

c. The term “project” or “water resources development project” refers to the water areas of any water resources development project administered by the Chief of Engineers, without regard to ownership of underlying land, to all lands owned in fee by the Federal Government and to all facilities therein or thereon of any such water resources development project per 36 CFR 327.1(c).

6. Objective. The intent of this policy is to effect measures related to recreational traffic on the MKARNS to (a) reduce the number of gate cycles, thus prolonging the life of the system and (b) increase the number of maintenance hours to address routine and critical maintenance needs (when required) to improve reliability and reduce unscheduled outages at these locations.

7. Definitions.

a. Recreational Vessels, also known as Pleasure Craft, are pleasure boats engaged in water recreational activities such as, but not limited to, boating, skiing, hunting, fishing, canoeing or kayaking.

b. The Default Maintenance Period is a “standing” designated time for lock personnel to address routine and critical maintenance needs of the lock or facility in an effort to improve reliability, reduce unscheduled outages and extend the service life of the MKARNS. This period is hereby established as being between 1000 hours and 1400 hours, Monday through Thursday, excluding federal holidays.

c. A Scheduled Maintenance Period is a lock-specific designated time for lock personnel to address routine and critical maintenance needs of the lock or facility in an effort to improve reliability, reduce unscheduled outages and extend the service life of the MKARNS. Scheduled Maintenance Periods may be regularly recurring (e.g. daily, weekly, etc.) or they may be non-routine in nature.

8. Policy. Based on the foregoing, the following will be implemented, related to recreational lockages on the MKARNS:

a. At any lock without an established Scheduled Maintenance Period, the Default Maintenance Period will be observed.

- b. Except as described below, no vessels will be locked during a Scheduled Maintenance Period.
- c. Except as described below, no recreational vessels will be locked during the Default Maintenance Period.
- d. If government, commercial, or passenger vessels are locked during the Default Maintenance Period, the period that day will not be shifted or lengthened.
- e. To the greatest extent possible, emergency response personnel in watercraft will be locked through to facilitate search and rescue operations.
- f. Consideration will be given to suspending or shortening Scheduled or Default Maintenance Periods at one or more locks due to a special event.
- g. An annual reassessment of this policy will be conducted to determine if adjustments are required. If adjustments are required, then the District Commander will approve changes to schedules. This annual reassessment will coincide with the annual reassessment of IMTS Levels of Service applicability to the MKARNS locks.

9. Procedures.

- a. The District will, to the greatest extent possible, advertise Scheduled Maintenance Periods by Navigation Notice, using established distribution methods. Relaying of these notices by internet or social media is strongly encouraged.
- b. All locks observing the Default Maintenance Period will be closed to recreational vessels from 1000 hours to 1400 hours, Monday through Thursday, excluding federal holidays.
- c. The locking of recreational vessels will normally be accomplished by the swinging of a single miter gate, rather than both gates. Generally, the miter gate on the recreational vessel's right side, in the direction of the lockage, will be used. This will ensure the amount of miter gate swings are evenly dispersed between landwall and riverwall miter gates with consistent use by the boat operators. The Lockmaster has the discretion to allow lockage of recreational vessels using both miter gates for safety considerations. During single miter gate operations, it is permissible to adjust the position of the opposite miter gate, as needed, to ensure a proper miter.
- d. In accordance with 33 CFR 202.275(d), precedence at locks shall be given to vessels owned by the United States, licensed commercial passenger vessels operating on a published schedule or regularly operating in the "for hire" trade, commercial tows, rafts and pleasure craft, in the order named.
- e. Lockmasters may expedite the lockage for recreational vessels by locking them through with commercial vessels, except when vessels carrying volatile cargoes or other substances are likely to emit toxic, flammable or explosive vapors, and shall be done in accordance with Standing Operating Procedure No. 1, SWL Regulation No 1130-2-60, dated 26 March 2012.

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f. Lockmasters may depart from this procedure to achieve optimum utilization of the lock or in accordance with the order of precedence stated in paragraphs (d) and (h) of section 207.275.

g. Consideration will be given to suspending or modifying maintenance periods that occur during Special Events including, but not limited to, tournament fishing, regattas, flotillas and other water-based group activities. The definition of "Special Events," as well as the review and approval process of permits, are in SWLOM 1130-2-12, Project Operations Special Events Permits. When submitting the application for a special event, the sponsor of that event should note any requests to modify or suspend established maintenance periods during the event.

h. Recreational boaters are encouraged to utilize the public boat ramps to access the upstream or downstream portions of the MKARNS, due to possible extended waiting periods that may be experienced due to scheduled maintenance outages or while a commercial tow progresses through a lock.

i. Commercial users of the system will be encouraged to adjust their schedules to allow for Scheduled Maintenance Periods to occur, where applicable.

10. Enforcement.

a. Failure to comply with directions given by the Lockmaster pursuant to the regulations in this section may result in refusal of lockage.

b. All boating laws are in effect, enforceable by Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Wildlife Officers.

11. Responsibilities.

a. This lockage policy is to be communicated to the public, commercial tow industry, private and state recreation stakeholders to maintain an open forum on this policy's guidelines, through respective communications plans developed by Little Rock District Public Affairs Office.

b. Project Offices with Navigation missions, Public Affairs and Operations Technical Support Offices will be responsible to ensure public availability of information and guidance for the safe and efficient use of locks.


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Commanding

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