

Locking Through

Boats can move from one TVA-managed reservoir to another through a series of well-planned locks. Here's what you need to know to go through a lock safely.

Moving from one reservoir to another, or "locking through," is a free service with facilities provided by TVA and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The process usually takes 45 minutes to an hour, but may take longer when commercial traffic is heavy.

All boats entering locks should have at least 50 feet of rope or line that can be used to moor the boat to floating mooring bits (posts) on the lock chamber wall, which move as the water levels in the lock fluctuate. Also, make sure to use fenders to avoid damage from scraping the lock wall or another boat.

1

Nearing the Lock

- Stay in the navigation channel as marked by the buoys. Be aware that some areas near locks can be dangerous. Always follow posted safety regulations.
- Use marine radio channel 16 to identify yourself to the lock operator and let him or her know your intentions.
- Or, using your mobile phone, call the lock operator at one of the phone numbers provided on this page.
- Or, pull the small-craft signal cord located in the ladder recess near the end of the upper and lower approach walls.
- Once notified, the lock operator will tell you how to proceed via radio, phone or loudspeaker. Pay close attention, and obey the traffic signals:
- A red flashing signal means that the lock is not available.
- An amber flashing signal indicates the lock is being made ready. You may approach the lock guide wall, but do not attempt to enter the lock chamber.
- A green flashing light means the lock is ready and you may enter the lock chamber.
- In addition, the operator will communicate with horn blasts. One long blast means enter the lock; one short blast means exit the lock.

2

In the Lock Chamber

Enter the lock at no-wake speed. Tie off your boat to a floating mooring post; do not tie it to a ladder or any other fixed structure within the lock. In a crowded lock chamber, you may also be asked to tie off another boat.

Engines should be shut down during the lockage, passengers should remain seated, and everyone aboard should wear a personal floatation device during the entire process.

3

Exiting the Lock

Remain moored until the lockage is complete, the gate is fully open and the lock operator signals you to exit the lock. Exit at no-wake speed, and do not pass any other vessels as you exit the lock.

Phone Numbers for Locks on the Tennessee River

Fort Loudoun Lock
(865) 986-2762

Melton Hill Lock
(865) 986-2762

Watts Bar Lock
(423) 334-3522

Chickamauga Lock
(423) 875-6230

Nickajack Lock
(423) 942-3985

Guntersville Lock
(256) 582-3263

Wheeler Lock
(256) 247-3311

Wilson Lock
(256) 764-5226

Pickwick Lock
(731) 925-2334

Kentucky Lock
(270) 362-4226

LOCK-THROUGH CHECKLIST

- **All aboard** vessel put on PDF before approaching the lock
- Prep fenders & lines
- No-wake speed the whole time while inside the lock
- Call Dockmaster on Channel 16 or by cell phone
- **Red Light = NO GO** **Amber Light= Dock Almost Ready** **Green - ENTER LOCK**
- Horn Blasts: One LOOONG BLAST ENTER LOCK One short blast exit lock
- Tie-off to a floating mooring post only; yellow with prominent vertical groove
- Turn-off engine > once tied off, but not before in case current moves you away
- Follow Dockmaster's exit instruction
- No passing other vessels