

For living waterways



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Federal Waterways
and Shipping
Administration

Kiel Canal Transit Fees for Recreational Craft



How are the transit fees for recreational craft collected?



Transiting the Kiel Canal on recreational craft requires payment of a transit fee in accordance with the Regulation on Transit Fees for the Kiel Canal - see:

<https://www.gdws.wsv.bund.de/webcode/1852026>

Even for short trips through the canal a payment obligation exists.

Climbing of the lock walls via the ladders installed in the lock chambers of Brunsbüttel and Kiel-Holtenau locks is prohibited. These ladders are for emergency and rescue purposes only. You cannot pay the transit fee in the lock chambers.

We offer the following options for paying the transit fee (see pictures on the right):

- Two Pay machines (Kiel-Holtenau locks):
 1. at the recreational craft berth west of Tiessenkai (possibility to pay transit and berth fees)
 2. near the inner waiting area at Kiel-Holtenau on the north side of the canal (at the floating landing stages)
- Payment to the lock keeper at Gieselau Lock
- Occasionally at Brunsbüttel at the recreational craft berth inside the Kiel Canal (only if inspector is present)

Tips for recreational craft boaters

Please note:

- Recreational craft waiting areas at Kiel Lock:
Within Kiel Canal: north side (recreational craft landing stages) before ferry.
On “Kieler Förde”: north side, near Tiessenkai.
- Recreational craft waiting areas at Brunsbüttel Lock: Within Kiel Canal: south side, between ferry and small locks. On river “Elbe”: area off “mole 1”.
- Keep clear of commercial vessels and never wait in the lock approaches. You could cause unclear situations which could become dangerous to all parties involved.
- At Kiel, only the big locks are operational. If the traffic situation permits and sufficient number of recreational crafts are waiting, exclusive recreational craft lockings, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, will be conducted. Please pay attention to announcements on VHF channel 12.
- Commercial vessels enter first. After that, recreational craft will receive a signal (a SINGLE intermittent white light) to enter, depending on the space available in the chamber and the vessel’s propeller wake. Please leave the chamber quickly upon request by the lock operator.
- A SINGLE intermittent white light (no green/red) means: Recreational craft are permitted to enter. **All other signals mean: Recreational craft are not permitted to enter.**
- Listen carefully to the working channel (Brunsbüttel VHF CH 13; Kiel VHF CH 12). The lock operator will explain the lock situation and inform you about the next lockage. When requesting information, please always indicate your position (“in” or “outside the canal”).
- Kiel lock tel.: +49 431 3603 152
- Brunsbüttel lock tel.: +49 4852 885 252



Brunsbüttel locks: The small locks are preferentially available.



Kiel-Holtenau locks: Only the big locks are available.
The small locks are out of service for a longer period of time.



Pay machine at recreational craft berth west of Tiessenkai, Kiel-Holtenau



Pay machine at recreational craft landing stages,
waiting area Kiel-Canal north

The Kiel Canal

The Kiel Canal is 98.6 km long and the busiest man-made waterway in the world. It links the North Sea with the Baltic Sea.

The Kiel Canal constitutes not only an important part of the regional economic structure but also a key element in the Trans-European Transport Network.



Vessels will save approx. 450 km by transiting the canal. Saving distance and time on the Kiel Canal federal waterway means an enormous competitive advantage to international shipping. In addition to the locks at Brunsbüttel and Kiel, the Kiel Canal infrastructure includes 10 bridges, 2 tunnels, 14 ferries and 12 lay-bys (passing areas). The Kiel Canal is the

largest artificial receiving body of water in Schleswig-Holstein.

In the summer season, around 10,000 recreational crafts pass the Kiel Canal. The Federal Waterways and Shipping Administration ensures that the Kiel Canal is continuously maintained to provide a permanently available, safe and reliable transport route. Major expansion projects have been planned along this important transit route to meet the future demand of international shipping. About 35,000 commercial vessels passed the Kiel Canal, transporting roughly 100 million tons of cargo.

Picture credits

Map lock Kiel-Holtenau: © Federal Agency for
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Nord-Ostsee-Kanal

Waterways and Shipping Office Nord-Ostsee-Kanal

Alte Zentrale 4
25541 Brunsbüttel

Schleuseninsel 2
24159 Kiel

wsa-nord-ostsee-kanal@wsv.bund.de
www.wsa-nok.wsv.de



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