

## SAFETY BULLETIN No.2 of 2017

### COMPLIANCE WITH CLOSED ARCH SIGNS

There has been an increasing number of incidents involving recreational vessels navigating through Richmond Lock, Weir and Footbridge while the weirs are being lowered or raised. The most recent incident occurred in May this year, where a Rowing Eight ignored the Closed Arch Signs at the behest of an accompanying coaching launch while the weir gates were in the process of being lowered.



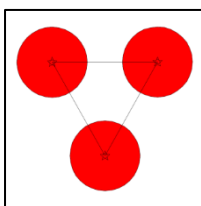
This behaviour is extremely dangerous and could result in serious injury. Bridges arches are closed for a variety of reasons to protect the safety of river users, in the case of Richmond Footbridge the dangers of navigating a closed arch are:

- Collision with the 32 Ton weir gates being raised/lowered
- Debris falling from the weir as they are being raised/lowered
- Navigational restrictions (No.4 arch in particular).

In the case of closed bridge arches throughout the tidal Thames, the dangers of navigating a closed arch are:

- Underwater navigational hazards, such as scaffold poles or sunken objects
- Reduced air draft as a result of equipment or scaffolding within the arch
- Potential for falling debris
- Subsurface mooring wires/ropes across the arch
- Divers in the water.

#### The Rules



- An arch that is closed to navigation is identifiable by a **Closed Arch Sign**, which by day, consists of three red discs 0.6 metres in diameter at the points of an equilateral triangle with the apex downwards. By night; the signal changes to three red lights in similar positions to the discs displayed by day. When this sign is suspended within a bridge arch, **you must not proceed through the arch.**

Recipients of this Safety Bulletin are requested to circulate the content widely within their organisations, including posting on notice boards to heighten all River Users awareness in order that all can enjoy their activities on the tidal Thames in safety.

**12 June 2017**

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**BOB BAKER**  
CHIEF HARBOUR MASTER



Telephone calls, VHF radio traffic, CCTV and radar traffic images may be recorded in the VTS Centres at Gravesend and Woolwich

