

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 craft 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. In 2017, about 30,300 commercial vessels passed the Kiel Canal, transporting roughly 87 million tons of cargo.

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Wir machen Schifffahrt möglich.

Kiel Canal Transit Fees 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 Internet: wsa-kiel.wsv.de/Aktuelles) 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):

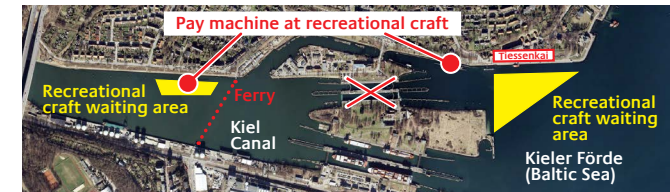
- Port Warden Kiel-Holtenau, Tiessenkai
- Two Pay machines (Kiel-Holtenau locks):
 1. at the recreational craft berth west of Tiessenkai
 2. near the inner waiting area at Kiel-Holtenau on the north side of the canal (at the floating landing stages)
- Payment to the lock keeper at Gieselau Lock
- Occasionally at Brunsbüttel at the recreational craft berth in the Kiel Canal (only if inspector 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: 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.
- Please keep clear of commercial vessels. Never wait in the lock approaches. You would cause unclear situations that can become dangerous for commercial vessels and yourself.
- At Kiel, only the big locks are operational. If the traffic situation permits and a sufficient number of recreational craft is waiting, exclusive recreational craft lockings will be conducted, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Please pay attention to announcements on VHF channel 12 and/or to the variable text display near the waiting area within Kiel Canal (north side, recreational craft landing stages).
- Commercial vessels enter first. After that, recreational craft will receive a signal 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. 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 (0)431 3603 152



BRUNSBÜTTEL LOCK: Please use the small locks.



KIEL-HOLTENAU LOCK: Please use the big locks. The small locks are out of service for a longer period of time.



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



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