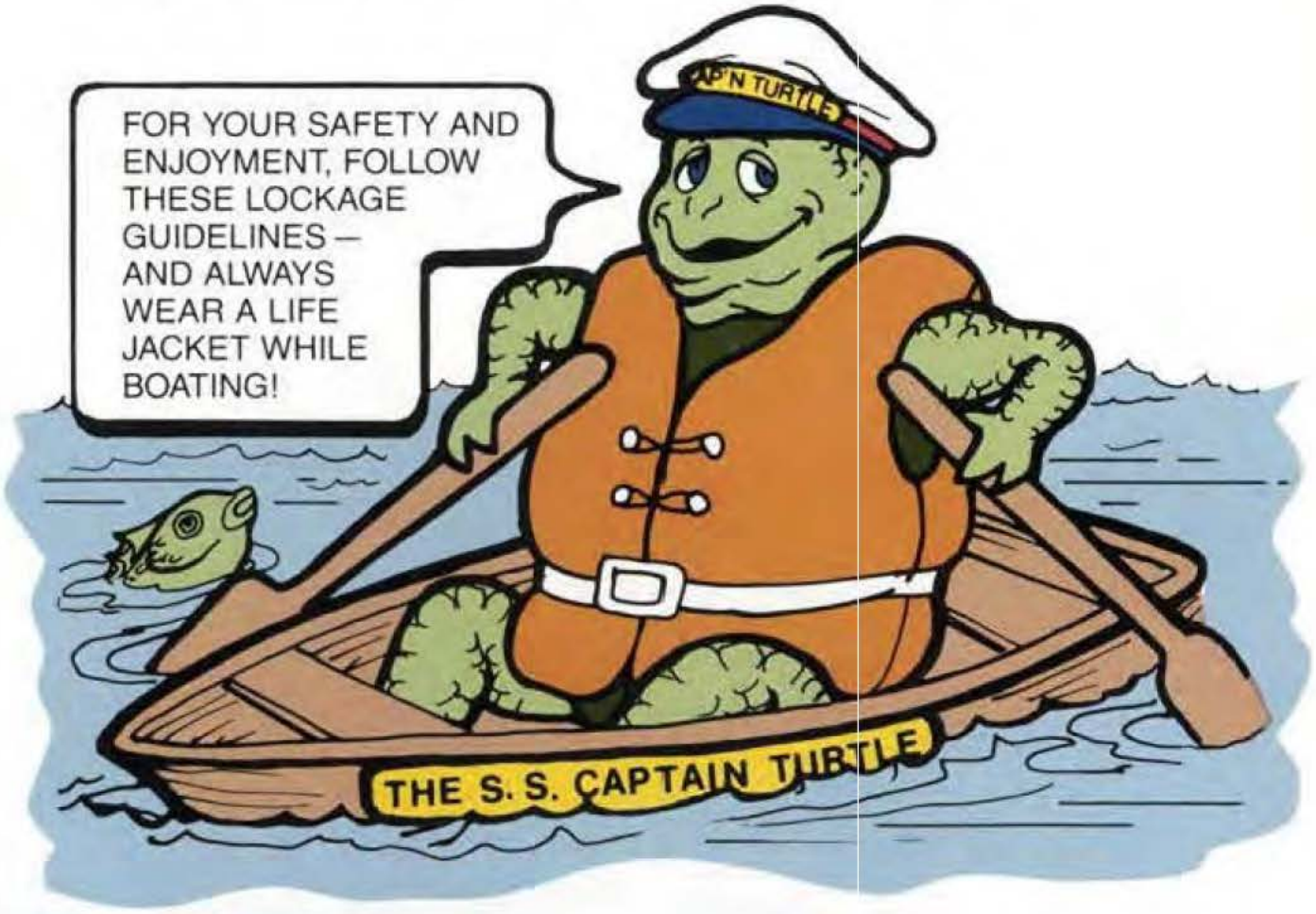
Locking Through

Things to remember when using NAVIGATION LOCKS

US Army Corps of Engineers
Nashville District

Operators of recreational vessels desiring lockage should review the following information:

1. Buoys and navigation markers
2. Vessel fittings and mooring equipment
3. Lockage priority
4. Approaching the lock
5. Avoiding danger areas
6. Preparing for lockage
7. Signalling for lockage
8. Lock traffic signals
9. Lock horn signals
10. Lockmaster's authority
11. Safe vessel speed
12. Proper mooring procedures
13. Special mooring caution
14. Safety considerations
15. Exiting the lock



1 Buoys and navigation markers

Recognize and obey all buoys and markers.

2 Vessel fittings and mooring equipment

Before requesting lockage, make sure your vessel is equipped with at least 50 feet of line to moor to floating mooring post, and is equipped with proper deck fittings to which the mooring line can be tied. Use fenders between your vessel and the lock wall to provide protection from hard contact with the concrete lock wall.

Lockage priority

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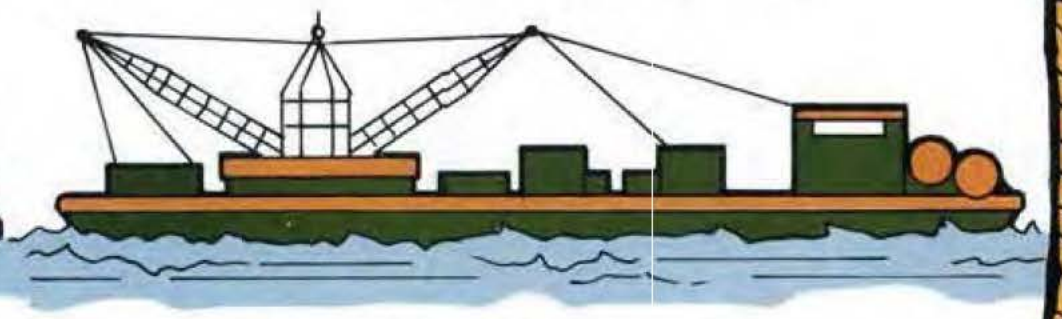
The Secretary of the Army has established the following priority for passing vessels through locks. Precedence for lockage is established when a craft passes the arrival point located above or below the lock.

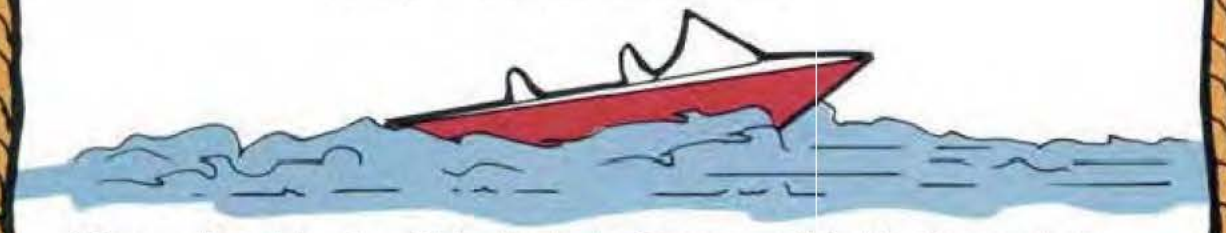
1st: U.S. Government fleet vessels



2nd: Commercial passenger vessels

3rd: Commercial tows or vessels

4th: Recreational boats



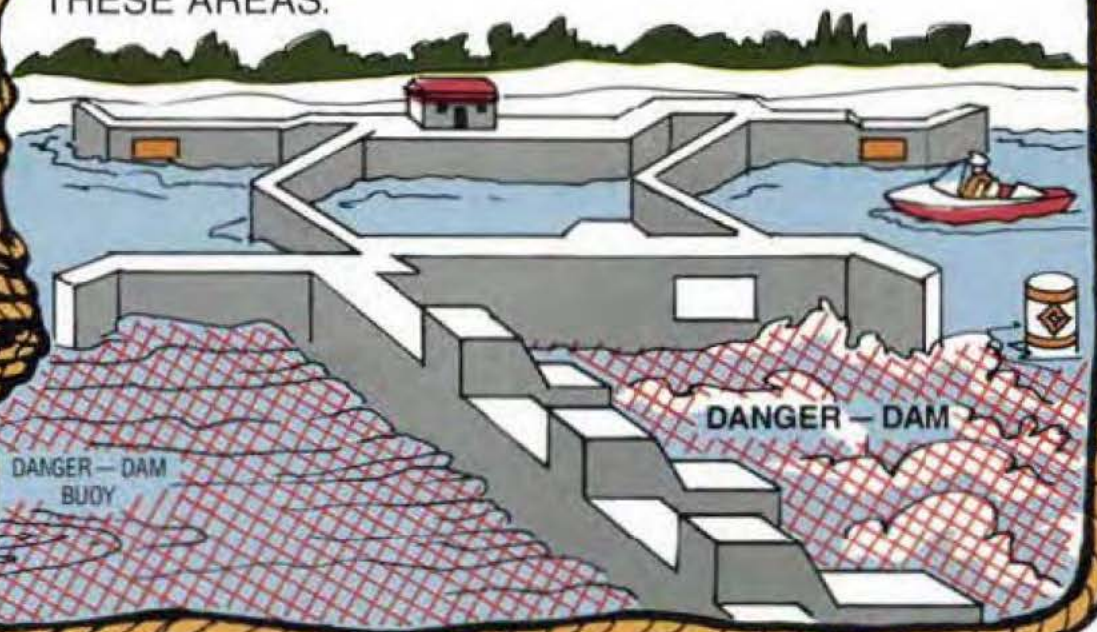
*Recreational boats will be locked after every third lockage when possible.

4 Approaching the lock

When approaching for lockage, stay within the navigation channel (sailing line) as marked by buoys. Head directly for the lock and slow your boat to a no-wake speed as you approach the wall.

5 Avoiding danger areas

Be "dam" conscious when approaching a lock and dam – there are several danger areas which are prominently marked by danger buoys and fixed signs. STAY CLEAR OF THESE AREAS.



Preparing for lockage

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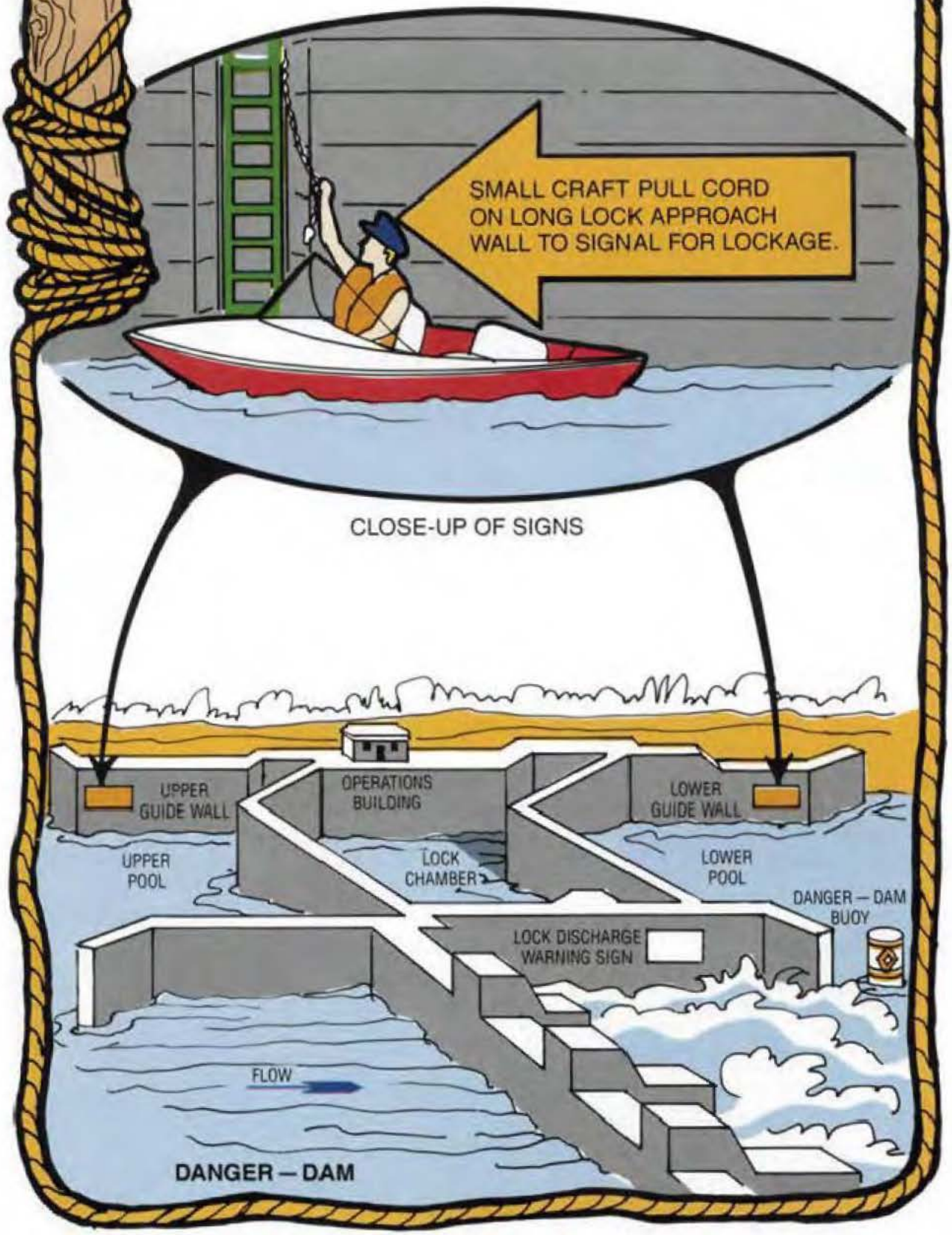
Be familiar with typical lock configurations. Notice the signalling instruction sign on the lock wall.



Signalling for lockage

7

Recreational craft may signal for lockage in one of three ways:

1. Give one long blast followed by a short blast of horn;
2. Pull recreational craft signal cord located in ladder recess near the end of the upper and lower lock approach walls;
3. Establish radio contact after lock arrival to request lockage. The following radio channels are continuously monitored by the lockmaster and are to be used as indicated:
   - *Channel 16* (Frequency 156.8) is for initial contact and distress signals only;
   - *Channel 13* (Frequency 156.65) is a bridge-to-bridge channel and may be used only for short messages to the Lockmaster;
   - *Channel 12* (Frequency 156.6) and *Channel 14* (Frequency 156.7) are for routine message handling after contact has been made on Channels 16 or 13.

Lock traffic signals

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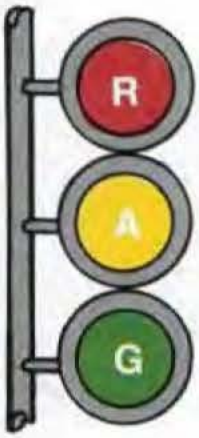
Traffic signals at the lock indicate the following messages:



RED FLASHING: Lock cannot be made ready immediately. Vessel stand clear.

AMBER FLASHING: Lock is being made ready. Vessel may approach lock guide wall, but do not enter lock.

AMBER AND GREEN FLASHING: Lock is ready for entry but gate cannot be recessed completely. Vessel may enter under full control and with extreme caution.

GREEN FLASHING: Lock is ready. Vessel may enter lock chamber.

9 Lock horn signals

In addition to traffic signals, the lockmaster will signal with horn blasts as indicated at right. At some dams there are two locks.

ONE LONG BLAST:
Enter landward lock.
TWO LONG BLASTS:
Enter riverward lock.
ONE SHORT BLAST:
Leave landward lock.
TWO SHORT BLASTS:
Leave riverward lock.

10 Lockmaster's authority

The Lockmaster has full authority over the movement of vessels in the lock and its approaches. Failure to follow the lockmaster's instructions will delay the lockage. Flagrant and willful violations of the lockmaster's orders can lead to a citation of the vessel operator for violation of Federal regulations governing lockage of floating craft, and could result in prosecution by the U.S. Attorney. DO NOT ENTER THE LOCK UNTIL THE LOCKMASTER DIRECTS YOU TO DO SO. YOU WILL BE DIRECTED BY TRAFFIC SIGNALS AND HORN SIGNALS AS NOTED.

11 Safe vessel speed

Enter and leave the lock at a no-wake or idle speed. Wheel wash from fast entrance or exit speeds could damage the lock gate machinery or other vessels in the lock chamber.

12 Proper mooring procedures

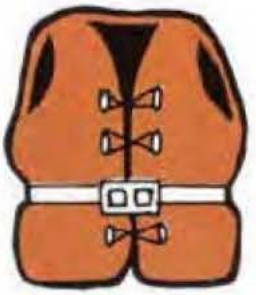
All locks have floating mooring posts which move up and down with the water level. All vessels should use them unless instructed otherwise. Small boats and larger pleasure boats with only one person aboard may use one long line securely fastened at the bow end of the boat, with the height of the line around the head of the floating mooring post, and the free end of the line around a cleat at the stern end of the boat. This will allow the person at the free end of the line to release the craft in the event of an emergency.

13 Special mooring caution

DO NOT moor your boat to the ladder or recessed mooring post in the face of the lock wall.

14 Safety considerations

Passengers should remain seated during lockage. Each person aboard should wear a life jacket. Only those engaged in locking activities should move about as required during lockage. Passengers on cruisers or houseboats should stay in the cabin area or wear a life jacket while on deck. All open flames should be extinguished — gas fumes can accumulate more readily when a vessel is in the lock chamber. Stop engine as soon as boat is properly moored.



WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET

NO OPEN FLAMES

PASSENGERS REMAIN SEATED

Exiting the lock

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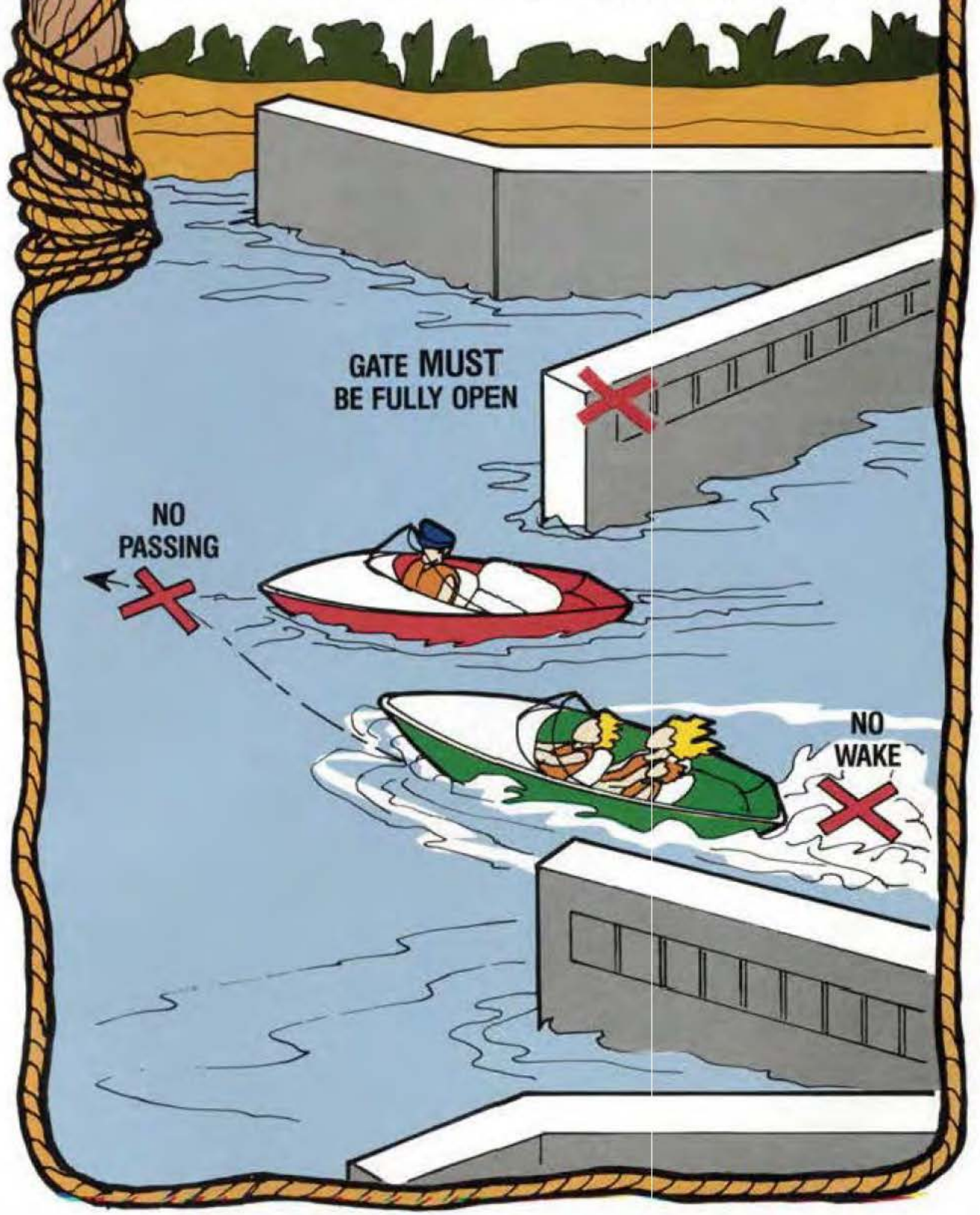
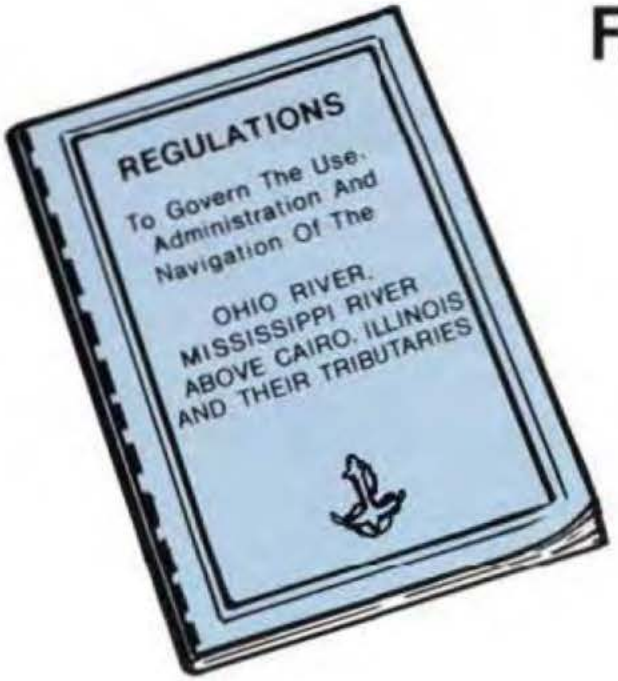
Remain moored until gate is fully opened and the Lockmaster signals you to depart. Vessels nearest the lock exit should leave first. Passing is not permitted in lock approach areas. Observe safe vessel speed (no wake) when exiting.



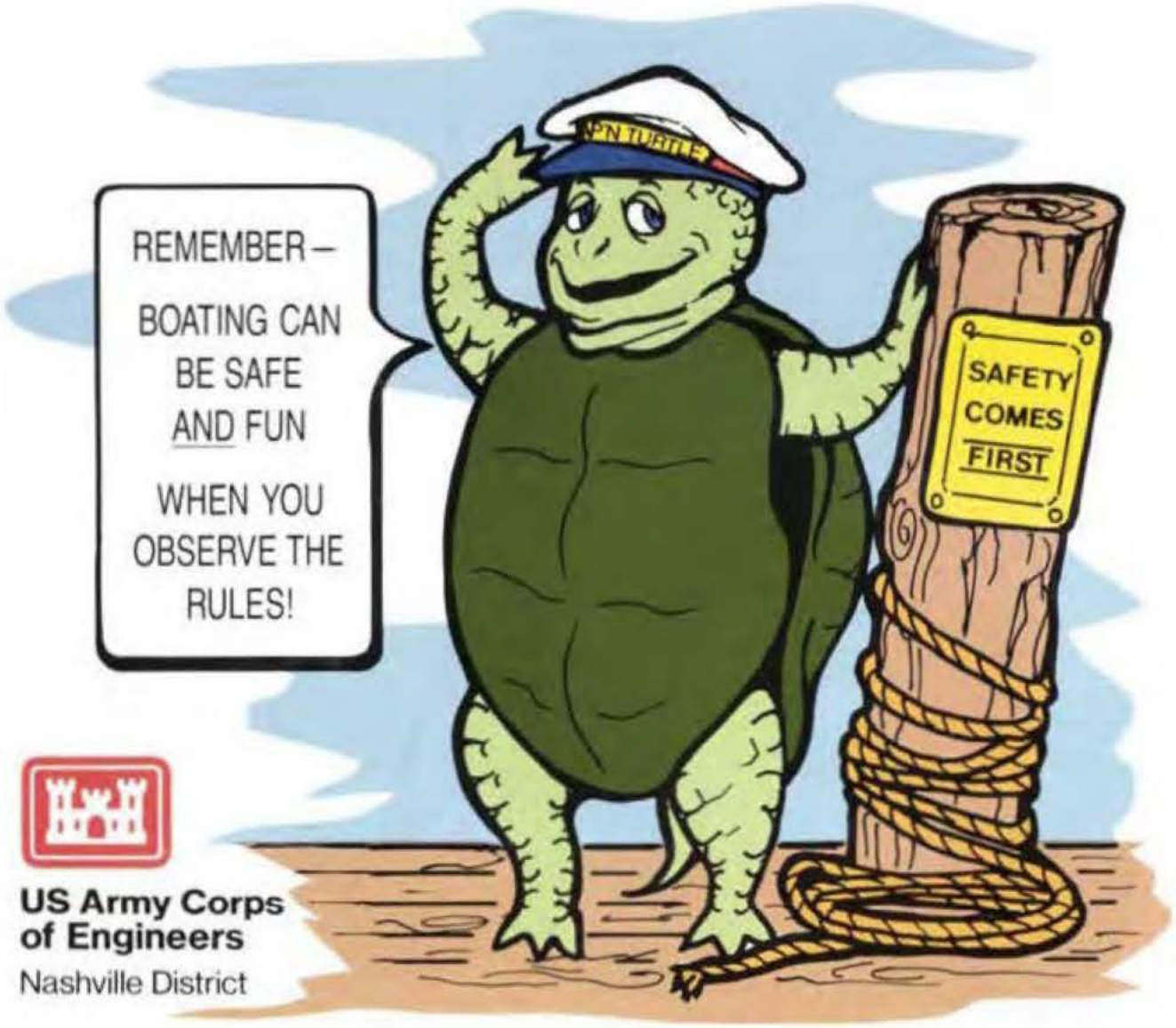


For more information...

Obtain a copy of the full regulations governing lockages, available at any lock

or
write to:

The District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Nashville District
P.O. Box 1070
Nashville, TN 37202-1070



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