

# MARYLAND

## STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR RECREATIONAL VESSELS



## **Message from the Boating Law Administrator**

Maryland offers some of the finest recreational boating opportunities in the country. The state's beautiful Chesapeake Bay, diverse tributaries, and coastal bays represent a marine environment that attracts recreational boaters of every description. However, along with that prosperity, we also have a responsibility to keep our waterways safe and clean. Safe and healthy waterways benefit all of us.

When you boat on Maryland waters, remember to BOAT SMART FROM THE START! Boating education and awareness are essential to establishing safe boating practices. Please help us to make your Maryland boating experience a safe and pleasurable one. Boat wisely, boat cleanly, and boat safely.



Colonel George F. Johnson, IV,  
Superintendent  
Maryland Natural Resources Police



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## The Maryland Boat Act Advisory Committee

The Boat Act Advisory Committee is appointed by the Governor to review and make recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources on proposed regulations concerning boating in the State. The Committee is composed of citizens from various boating user groups throughout the State and provides valuable assistance to the Department in the regulations process.

### Advisory Committee Members

*Howard Barry, Chairman*

*Captain Robert Davis, Natural Resources Police*

John Bush	Coles Marsh
J. Streett Broadbent	Gail Mongan
Betty Duty	Christopher Parlin
Russ Dwyer	Dr. Willard Parson
Dan Jarzynski	Alvin L. Simon
Thornell T. Jones	Bob Slaff
Steve Kling	Ednah Stang
Kenneth Kloostra	Col. Jack Taylor (NRP Retired)
Frederick Levitan	William Weintraub
John Marple	James Wimsatt, Jr.

#### Web Address

[www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations)

# **Registration and Numbering Requirements**

[www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/registration/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/registration/)

## **Vessels Required to be Registered in Maryland**

Any vessel purchased in Maryland that is equipped with primary or secondary propulsion must register with the Department of Natural Resources and pay vessel excise tax within 30 days of purchase.

- Federally documented vessels purchased in Maryland do not need to obtain a Maryland title but are required to purchase a use sticker and pay Maryland vessel excise tax.
- An exception exists for a vessel certifying principal use elsewhere. DNR Form B110 must be filed with the Department within 30 days of purchase.

Vessels purchased out of state must register (or apply for a documented vessel sticker) and pay vessel excise tax if the boat is principally used in Maryland.

## **Determining Principal Use**

“Use” means to operate, navigate or employ a vessel. A vessel is in use whenever it is upon the water, whether it is moving, anchored or tied up to any manner of dock or buoy. A vessel is also in use if it is kept in any structure in readiness for use.

Unless an exception applies, every vessel in principal use in Maryland must register (or apply for a documented vessel sticker) and pay vessel excise tax. A vessel is in principal use if it is used in Maryland more than in any other single jurisdiction.

There are some exceptions to use in Maryland. For example, a vessel is not in use when held for maintenance, repair or commissioning for 30 consecutive days or more, but must meet all provisions of §8-716(k) of the State Boat Act:

- Work is provided in exchange for compensation,
- Work is performed pursuant to a schedule pre-established with one or more marine contractors, and
- The total cost is at least two times the reasonable current market cost of docking or storing the vessel.

A vessel duly registered in another jurisdiction may enjoy Maryland waters for a cumulative total of 90 days in a calendar year without being required to pay vessel excise tax. A vessel may remain longer than 90 days so long as a majority of the year is spent in another jurisdiction (i.e. Florida for 7 months and Maryland for 5 months).

## **Titling**

No vessel can be registered unless it has been issued a valid Maryland Certificate of Title showing the names of all owners and all security interests. All applications to title previously documented vessels require an Abstract of Title issued by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Maryland registered vessels are transferred by assignment of title only. Assignment must be completed in full by seller and signed by all owners. Date of sale and sales price (vessel, motor, accessories) must be entered by the seller. Trailer is registered separately with the MD Motor Vehicle Administration.

# Applying for a Title – Required Documentation

## New vessel

- Completed Application for Maryland Certificate (DNR B-240)
- Original Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin (CO) assigned by the dealer or manufacturer to the purchaser(s)

## Used vessel titled in Maryland

- Original MD Certificate of Title assigned to the purchaser(s) and signed by all owners shown on the front of the title
- Original certified Bill of Sale if total purchase price is not stated in the assignment
- Original Notice of Security Interest with a properly executed release if a lien or security interest is recorded on the seller's title

## Taxes, Titling and Registration Fees

1. 5% vessel excise tax on the total purchase price (vessel, motor and accessories, but not the trailer). If more than 3 years have elapsed since purchase, fair market value will be determined from a national publication of used vessel values adopted by the Department.
2. \$2 title fee
3. Biennial registration
  - a. \$24 -- Vessel >16' in length, or propulsion > 7.5 hp
  - b. No charge -- Vessel < 16' in length with propulsion < 7.5 hp
4. \$15 security interest filing fee

## Vessel Excise Tax

All vessel excise tax is deposited in the Waterway Improvement Fund. These special funds are earmarked for the engineering, construction and maintenance of boating related projects on public lands, including dredging, channel marking, clearing debris, constructing and maintaining marine facilities, and other projects that benefit the boating public.

## Display of Numbers and Validation Decals

The vessel number issued to a MD titled vessel must be painted on or otherwise permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the vessel (the bow). No other number can be displayed near the vessel number.

### Vessel numbers must be displayed as follows:

- Reading from left to right
- Plain vertical block characters 3" high or larger
- Contrasting color to the boat hull or background
- Placed as high above the waterline as practical
- Letters separated from numbers by hyphens or spaces.

The registration decal set (two 3" x 3" decals) and the 3" round dealer-issued temporary decals must be displayed within 3" of the vessel number. Vessels must display boat number and current decals, and have the registration card on board and available for inspection whenever the boat is in use.

**Starboard**



**Port**



**VALIDATION STICKER**

## **Documented Vessels**

A federally documented vessel in principal use in Maryland, though exempt from the vessel numbering provisions of the State Boat Act, must display documented use decals. The vessel is subject to vessel excise tax and to inspection by the Maryland Natural Resources Police. The documented use decals must be displayed on each side of the forward half of the vessel in a conspicuous manner so as to be easily seen from a passing vessel.

A vessel is not federally documented until it has a valid document from the U.S. Coast Guard and has had its official number carved into a main beam or a main structural member. Application for documentation is not sufficient to exempt a vessel from State numbering and titling requirements. Until officially documented, a vessel must have a valid Certificate of Vessel number and display a boat number and registration decals to operate on Maryland waters.

A 5% excise tax on the vessel's fair market value is due to the Department of Natural Resources within 30 days of the transfer, trade or sale of a documented vessel used principally in Maryland. See "Vessels Required to be Registered in Maryland" for a detailed discussion of "principal use". For vessels purchased outside of Maryland, tax is due within 30 days of the date upon which the possession within the State became subject to the tax. Generally, tax is due when a vessel is principally used in Maryland.

Upon initial application for documented use decals, a vessel owner must provide evidence that Maryland excise tax (or comparable tax in another state) was paid at the time of purchase or pay the appropriate tax (plus penalty and interest, if applicable). In addition, a copy of the official documentation papers issued in the owner's name is required as part of the first time application for documented use decals.

## **Report of Sale of Vessels**

### **Registered and Documented Vessels**

The Department of Natural Resources must be notified within 15 days when a vessel is sold, traded or transferred. The report of sale should include the name and address of the new owner(s) and the date and amount of the sale.

## **Renewals – Registered and Documented Vessels**

Renewal applications are mailed to the address on record approximately 30 days before expiration of the registration or documented use decal. Failure to receive a renewal application by mail is not a valid reason for failing to renew the registration. Renew early by mail to avoid the last-minute rush!

# **Licensing & Registration REGIONAL SERVICE CENTERS**

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Monday through Friday  
(except Dundalk)

## **Annapolis Service Center**

Tawes State Office Bldg C-1  
580 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis MD 21401  
(410) 260-3220  
1-866-344-8889

## **Southern Service Center**

6904 Hallowing Lane  
Prince Frederick MD 20678  
(410) 535-3382  
(301) 855-1642  
1-866-688-3823

## **Western Service Center**

3 Pershing Street Rm 103  
Cumberland MD 21502  
(301) 777-2134  
1-866-679-0906

## **Eastern Service Center**

201 Baptist Street Rm 3340  
Salisbury MD 21801  
(410) 543-6700  
1-866-812-1678

## **East Central Service Center**

120 Broadway Ste 5 & 6  
Centreville MD 21617  
(410) 819-4100  
1-866-439-1708

## **Central Service Center**

2 S. Bond Street  
Bel Air MD 21014  
(410) 836-4550  
1-866-623-3187

## **Dundalk Service Center (open M/W/F only)**

7701 Wise Avenue  
Baltimore MD 21222  
(410) 284-1654  
1-866-535-8319



# **Law Enforcement**

**[www.dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/)**

## **Maryland Natural Resources Police**

The Maryland Natural Resources Police enforce all natural resource laws of the State, including enforcement provisions of the Maryland State Boat Act on all waterways of the State. The Natural Resources Police are also mandated to enforce all other laws of the State. Patrol vessels can be identified by the blue emergency light, the “POLICE” identification on the side of the vessels, and the uniformed officers on board. Boaters are reminded that on the immediate approach of a Maryland Natural Resources Police patrol vessel using a flashing blue light, the vessel operator, unless otherwise directed by the officer, shall yield the right-of-way, stop the vessel, and stay in that position until the Natural Resources Police vessel has passed. Failure to stop and/or permit boarding or inspection may subject the operator or owner to a penalty of up to \$500.00. All vessels, including those documented, are subject to Maryland’s rules and regulations. A vessel does not have to be underway to be boarded or inspected. A vessel may be boarded at dockside.

The Natural Resources Police utilize rotary-wing aircraft and fixed wing aircraft, cruisers, and outboard vessels stationed throughout the State. In addition, Mobile Enforcement Teams (MET) and District response units are available to respond to high complaint areas and special enforcement problems.

All cruisers are equipped for search and rescue with radar, Global Positioning System (GPS), VHF and police radios, and emergency pumps. Officers are also equipped with portable VHF radios and hand held GPS units. Officers are trained and equipped to administer first aid and deal with any type of boating emergency. Each year, the Natural Resources Police officers execute between 2,000 and 3,000 rescues and assists.

Emergency telephone numbers to request assistance or report violations are: (410) 260-8888 or (410) 260-8940. Additional numbers can be found at [www.dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/) or dial 911 for an emergency.

## **Termination of Use**

A Natural Resources Police Officer who observes a boat being operated in an unsafe manner and who determines that an especially hazardous condition exists may direct the operator to take immediate steps to correct the condition, including returning to port. Termination for unsafe use may be imposed for, but is not limited to:

1. Insufficient number of USCG approved life jackets.
2. Insufficient fire extinguishers.
3. Overloading beyond manufacturer's recommended safe loading capacity.
4. Improper navigation light display.
5. Insufficient ventilation for tanks and engine spaces.
6. Fuel leakage.
7. Fuel in bilges.
8. Improper backfire flame arrestor.

## **Boating Accident Reports**

The operator of any boat involved in an accident must stop, render assistance, and offer



identification. An accident report must be made to the Department within 48 hours if:

1. A death occurs - no time limit on death;
2. A person loses consciousness or receives medical treatment beyond first aid or is disabled more than 24 hours;
3. A person disappears from the vessel under circumstances that indicate death or injury.

Accidents must be reported within 10 days if damage to all vessels and other property totals more than \$2,000.00, unless an earlier report is required. Running aground, or hitting a fixed or floating object, is considered a boating accident. Boating accident report forms (DNR-149) are obtainable from the Natural Resources Police. The operator of the vessel or vessels involved must submit them to the Natural Resources Police. Accident reports are required by federal law and furnish information for use in accident prevention. Information from individual reports will not be publicly disclosed nor may the information be used in court.

## **Rendering Assistance**

Federal law requires the operator of a vessel to provide assistance that can be safely provided, to any individual in danger on the water. Persons who fail to provide assistance may be subject to a fine or imprisonment.

## **Reckless and Negligent Operation**

Law prohibits negligent or grossly negligent operation of a vessel that endangers lives and/or property. The U.S. Coast Guard for this offense may impose a civil penalty under federal laws. The operator may be subjected to a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or imprisonment for up to one year, or both. The Maryland penalty is a fine of up to \$500 for the first offense.

Some examples of actions that may constitute negligent or grossly negligent operation include but are not limited to:

1. Operating in a swimming area.
2. Operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
3. Excessive speed in the vicinity of other boats or in dangerous waters.
4. Hazardous water skiing practices or Personal Watercraft operations (i.e., Jet Ski's, etc.).
5. Bow riding or riding on seatback, gunwale, or transom.

## **Alcohol and Boating**

Alcohol and boating do not mix. Approximately 50% of all boating accidents are alcohol related. Alcohol is a depressant and affects balance, vision, and coordination. It increases heat loss from the body so hypothermia occurs faster. When combined with engine noise, vibration, sun, and wind, alcohol causes boaters to be fatigued much faster than normal.

A person may not operate or attempt to operate a vessel while the person:

1. Is impaired.
2. Is under the influence of alcohol.
3. Is so far under the influence of any drug, combination of drugs, or combination of drugs and alcohol that the person cannot operate a vessel safely, or
4. Is under the influence of any controlled dangerous substance, as defined in the Digest of Criminal Laws, Natural Resources Article 8-738.

# **Natural Resources Police Regional Offices**

## **Town Hill Office**

11701 Mountain Rd. N.E.  
Flintstone, MD 21530  
Tel: (301) 478-2110  
Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and  
Washington counties

## **Waldorf Office**

2160 Old Washington Road  
Waldorf, MD 20601  
Tel: 301-645-0062  
Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's  
counties

## **Annapolis Office**

69 Prince George Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Tel: 410-974-5640  
Anne Arundel and Prince George's  
counties

## **Johnson Office**

32144 Mt. Olive Road  
Salisbury, MD 21804  
Tel: 410-548-7070  
Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester  
counties

## **Gwynnbrook Office**

3738 Gwynnbrook Avenue  
Owings Mills, MD 21117  
Tel: 410-356-7060  
Baltimore City; Baltimore, Carroll,  
Cecil, Harford, Howard, Montgomery  
counties

## **Emergencies on the Water**

VHF-FM 156-800 Mhz or VHF-FM  
167 Mhz CH.16. Nearest NRP or  
Coast Guard boat will assist you. From  
cell phone (410) 260-8888

## **Hillsboro Office**

P.O. Box 157  
Queen Anne, MD 21657  
Tel: 410-758-2890  
Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen  
Anne's, and Talbot counties



# **Boating Safety Education Requirements**

**[www.dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/boating/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/boating/)**

Maryland's Boating Safety Education Law is designed to assure that the younger generations of boaters have fundamental knowledge of boating rules and safety and that eventually, all boaters will be operating their boats with a basic level of boating education. The law also imposes the requirement for persons convicted of certain boating violations to successfully complete a boating safety education course regardless of the age of the operator.

The Boating Safety Education Law requires that any person born on, or after July 1, 1972, must have in their possession a certificate of boating safety education while operating a numbered or documented vessel on Maryland waters. The certificate may be obtained by completing an approved boating safety course or passing an equivalency examination. The Natural Resources Police offer the Maryland Basic Boating Course through local recreation departments and community colleges. This course is 8-10 hours in length and covers the basics of boating and water safety. The equivalency examination is for those persons who desire not to take a course. It is offered, by appointment, at locations throughout the State. To obtain study materials for the equivalency examination, or course information, contact:

## **Maryland Natural Resources Police**

Safety Education Division  
1804 West Street, Suite 300.  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
(410) 260-3280

Other approved courses are available from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadrons. For further information call 1-800-336-BOAT.

A certificate of boating safety education is not required if:

1. A vessel is operated for commercial purposes.
2. A person 16 years of age or older is a resident of another state, visiting Maryland for 60 days or less, in a vessel numbered in another state.
3. A person is visiting the State for 90 days or less in a vessel from a foreign country.
4. A person is operating a vessel on a body of water located on private property.

A boating safety education certificate issued by another state is valid in Maryland as long as it meets the criteria of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. The Certificate of Boating Safety Education is valid for a lifetime and may not be revoked.

# Equipment Requirements

[www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations/)

The U.S. Coast Guard sets minimum safety standards for vessels and associated equipment. To meet these standards some of the equipment must be Coast Guard Approved. "Coast Guard Approved Equipment" has been determined to be in compliance with USCG specifications and regulations related to performance, construction or materials. The class of the boat determines some of the equipment requirements. The class of the boat is determined by the length of the boat as follows:

- Class A - Boats less than 16 ft. long
- Class 1 - Boats from 16 ft. to less than 26 ft.
- Class 2 - Boats from 26 ft. to less than 40 ft.
- Class 3 - Boats from 40 ft. to not more than 65 ft.

## Measuring length of a Boat

For determining the length of a vessel, the distance is measured in a straight line from the foremost part of the vessel to the aftermost part of the vessel, parallel to the centerline, exclusive of the sheer. Bowsprits, bumpkins, rudders, outboard motors, brackets, and similar fittings or attachments are not to be included in the measurement.

## Life Jackets (Personal Flotation Device)

### General Life Jacket (PFD) Information

Life jackets must be Coast Guard approved, in good and serviceable condition, readily available and of appropriate size for the intended user. Throwable devices (Type IV) must be immediately available. Though not required, a life jacket should be worn at all times when the vessel is underway. A wearable life jacket may save your life, but only if you wear it. If a type V life jacket is to be counted toward minimum carriage requirements, it must be worn and may be carried instead of another type of life jacket only if used according to the approval conditions on the label. **Life jackets are required on non-motorized vessels including canoes and kayaks.**

Remember, life jackets will keep you from sinking, but not necessarily from drowning. Extra time should be taken in selecting a properly sized life jacket to insure a safe fit. Testing your life jacket in shallow water or a guarded swimming pool is a good and reassuring practice.



## Children's Life Jacket Requirements

All children under the age of 7 must WEAR a United States Coast Guard approved Life Jacket (Type I, II, III or V) while underway on a recreational vessel under 21 feet in length on Maryland waters. Recreational vessels include: motorboats, sailboats, canoes, kayaks, rowboats, and any other device capable of being used for transportation on the water, when the vessel is being used for other than commercial purposes.

The life jacket must be the proper size for the child and must be in serviceable condition. This requirement does not apply when a vessel is moored or anchored or, when a child is below deck or in an enclosed cabin.

Also, a child under the age of 4 or a person weighing less than 50 pounds must wear a life jacket that features additional safety precautions, as appropriate for an infant, toddler, or young child, so as to:

- Hold the child securely within the life jacket, including a strap that is secured between the child's legs to fasten together the front and back of the life jacket;
- Maintain the buoyancy of the child, including an inflatable headrest or high collar; and
- Ensure the ready accessibility of the child from the water, including a web handle.

This does not apply to a vessel that is moored or anchored or a child who is below deck or in an enclosed cabin.

## Types of Life Jackets

- Type I Life Jacket or OFF-SHORE LIFE JACKET provides the most buoyancy. It is effective for all waters, especially open, rough or remote waters where rescue may be delayed. It is designed to turn most unconscious wearers in the water to a face-up position.
- Type II Life Jacket or NEAR-SHORE BUOYANCY VEST is intended for calm, inland water or where there is a good chance of quick rescue. This type will turn some unconscious wearers to a face-up position in the water. The turning action is not as pronounced and it will not turn as many persons to a face-up position under the same conditions as a type I.
- Type III Life Jacket is good for calm, inland water or where there is a good chance of quick rescue. The Type III has the same buoyancy as a Type II life jacket. It comes in many styles, colors and sizes and is generally the most comfortable type for continuous wear. Float coats, fishing vests, and vests designed with features suitable for various sports activities are examples of this type life jacket.
- Type IV or THROWABLE DEVICE is intended for calm, inland water with heavy boat traffic, where help is always present. It is designed to be thrown to a person in the water and grasped and held by the user until rescued. It is not designed to be worn. Type IV devices include buoyant cushions, ring buoys, and horseshoe buoys.
- Type V Life Jacket or SPECIAL USE DEVICE is intended for specific activities and may be carried instead of another life jacket only if used according to the approval condition on the label. Some TYPE V devices provide significant hypothermia protection. Varieties include deck suits, work vests, board sailing vests and Hybrid life jackets.
- Type V HYBRID INFLATABLE LIFE JACKET is the least bulky of all life jacket types. It contains a small amount of inherent buoyancy, and an inflatable chamber. Its performance is equal to a Type I, II, or III LIFE JACKET (as noted on the label) when inflated. Hybrid life jackets must be worn when underway to be acceptable.

## **Water Skiing and Life Jackets**

A water skier is considered to be on board the vessel and a life jacket is required for the purpose of compliance with the life jacket carriage requirements. “Impact Class” marking on the label refers to life jacket strength, not personal protection. Maryland requires skiers to wear an approved life jacket. It is advisable and recommended for a skier to wear a life jacket designed to withstand the impact of hitting the water at high speed.

## **Life Jacket Requirements for Sailboards**

Persons operating sailboards may meet the life jacket requirements by using:

1. Neoprene wetsuit or dry suit, or
2. Closed-cell, foam design, padded chest, waist or seat harness, or
3. A combination of 1 and 2.

Between October 15 and May 15 inclusive, persons on sailboards must wear a neoprene wet or dry suit that covers the entire torso of the body.

## **Visual Distress Signals**

All vessels, used on coastal waters, the Great Lakes, territorial seas, and those waters connected directly to them, up to a point where a body of water is less than two miles wide, must be equipped with U.S. Coast Guard Approved visual distress signals. Vessels owned in the United States and operating on the high seas must be equipped with U.S. Coast Guard Approved visual distress signals.

The following are not required to carry day signals but must carry night signals when operating from sunset to sunrise:

1. Recreational boats less than 16 feet in length.
2. Boats participating in organized events such as races, regattas, or marine parades.
3. Open sailboats less than 26 feet in length not equipped with propulsion machinery.
4. Manually propelled boats

## **Pyrotechnic Devices**

Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals must be U.S. Coast Guard Approved, in serviceable condition, and readily accessible. They are marked with a date showing the service life, which must not have expired. Launchers manufactured before January 1, 1981, intended for use with approved signals, are not required to be Coast Guard Approved. If pyrotechnic devices are selected, a minimum of three is required. That is, three signals for day use and three signals for night. Some pyrotechnic signals meet both day and night use requirements. Pyrotechnic devices should be stored in a cool, dry location. A watertight container painted red or orange and marked “DISTRESS SIGNALS” is recommended.

U.S. Coast Guard Approved Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals and associated devices include:

1. Pyrotechnic red flares, hand-held or aerial.
2. Pyrotechnic orange smoke, hand held or floating.
3. Launchers for aerial red meteors or parachute flares.

## **Non-Pyrotechnic Devices**

Non-Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals must be in serviceable condition, readily accessible, and certified by the manufacturer as complying with U.S. Coast Guard Requirements. They include:

1. Orange distress flag.
2. Electric distress light.

The distress flag is a day signal only. It must be at least 3 x 3 feet with a black square and ball on an orange background. It is most distinctive when attached and waved on a paddle, boathook, or flown from a mast.

The electric distress light is acceptable for night use only and must automatically flash the international SOS distress signal (...---...).

Under Inland Navigation Rules, a high intensity white light flashing at regular intervals from 50-70 times per minute is considered a distress signal, however, lights of this type do not meet the carriage requirements for visual distress signals.

Regulations prohibit the display of visual distress signals on the water under any circumstances except when assistance is required to prevent immediate or potential danger to persons on board a vessel.

All distress signals have distinct advantages and disadvantages. No single device is ideal under all conditions or suitable for all purposes. Pyrotechnics are universally recognized as excellent distress signals. However, there is potential for injury and property damage if not properly handled. These devices produce a very hot flame and the residue can cause burns and ignite flammable material. Pistol-launched and hand-held parachute flares and meteors have many characteristics of a firearm and must be handled with extreme caution.

## **Fire Extinguishers**

U.S. Coast Guard Approved or UL Marine Use fire extinguishers are required on certain boats. A letter and number symbol classify extinguishers. The letter indicates the type fire the unit is designed to extinguish (Type B, for example, are designed to extinguish flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, and grease fires). The number indicates the relative size of the extinguisher (The higher the number, the longer the extinguisher functions).

U.S. Coast Guard approved marine type extinguishers are hand-held, either B-I or B-II classification or have a specific marine type mounting bracket. It is recommended that extinguishers be mounted in a readily accessible position, away from areas where a fire could likely start.

***Fire extinguishers are required if any one (1) or more of the following conditions exist:***

1. Inboard engines
2. Closed compartments and compartments under seats where portable fuel tanks may be stored.
3. Double bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not completely filled with flotation material.
4. Closed living spaces.
5. Closed stowage compartments in which combustible or flammable materials are stored.
6. Permanently installed fuel tanks. Fuel tanks secured so they cannot be moved in case of fire or other emergency are considered permanently installed. There are no gallon or capacity limits to determine if a fuel tank is portable. If the weight of a fuel tank is such that the persons on board cannot move it, the Coast Guard considers it permanently installed.

***Inspect extinguishers monthly to make sure that:***

1. Seals and tamper indicators are not broken or missing.
2. Pressure gauges or indicators read in the operable range.
3. There is no physical damage, corrosion, leakage or clogged nozzles.

## **Ventilation**

All vessels built after April 25, 1940, which use gasoline for electrical generation, mechanical power, or propulsion are required to be equipped with a ventilation system. A natural ventilation system consists of at least two ventilator ducts, fitted with cowls or their equivalent:

1. A minimum of one exhaust duct installed so as to extend from the open atmosphere to the lower portion of the bilge; and
2. A minimum of one intake duct installed so as to extend to a point at least midway to the bilge or at least below the level of the carburetor air intake.

A powered ventilation system consists of one or more exhaust blowers. Each intake duct for an exhaust blower should be in the lower, one-third of the compartment and above the normal accumulation of bilge water.

The U.S. Coast Guard Ventilation Standard, a manufacturer requirement, applies to all boats built on or after August 1, 1980. Some builders began manufacturing boats in compliance with the Ventilation Standard as early as August 1978. If your boat was built on or after August 1, 1978, it might have been equipped with either (1) a natural ventilation system, or (2) both a natural ventilation system and a powered ventilation system. If your boat bears a label containing the words: "This boat complies with U.S. Coast Guard Safety standards," etc., you can assume that the design of your boats ventilation system meets the applicable regulations.

Boats built after August 1, 1980 which comply with the Coast Guard Ventilation Standard, must display at each ignition switch, a label which contains the following information:

***\* WARNING: Gasoline vapors can explode. Before starting the engine, operate blower for at least four (4) minutes and check engine compartment bilge for gasoline vapors.***

All owners are responsible for keeping their boats ventilation systems in operating condition. This means, making sure openings are free of obstructions, ducts are not blocked or torn, blowers are operating properly, and worn out components are replaced with equivalent marine type equipment.

## **Backfire Flame Arrestor**

Gasoline engines installed in a vessel after April 25, 1940, except outboard motors, must be equipped with an acceptable means of backfire flame control. This device must be suitably attached to the air intake with a flame tight connection and is required to be U.S. Coast Guard approved or comply with SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 standards.



## Sound Producing Devices

The navigation rules require sound signals to be made under certain circumstances. Meeting, crossing, and overtaking situations described in the Navigation Rules section are examples of when sound signals are required. Vessels 12 meters or more in length are required to carry on board a whistle or horn, and a bell. Any vessel less than 12 meters in length (including Personal Watercraft) must carry a whistle or horn, or some means to make an efficient sound to signal your intentions and to signal your position during periods of reduced visibility.

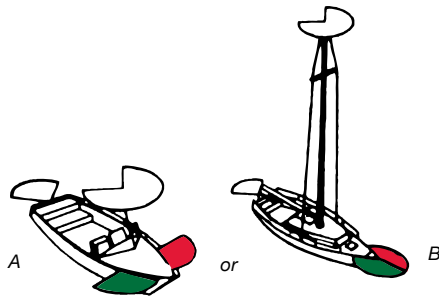
## Navigation Lights

Recreational vessels are required to display navigation lights between sunset, sunrise, and other periods of reduced visibility (fog, rain, haze, etc.). The U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Rules, International-Inland encompasses lighting requirements for every description of watercraft. The information provided here is intended for power-driven and sailing vessels less than 20 meters.

## Power Driven Vessels

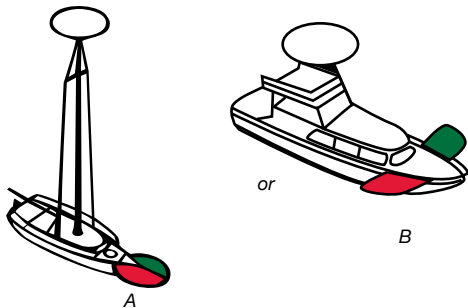
Power driven vessels of less than 20 meters, shall exhibit navigation lights as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1



Vessels of less than 12 meters in length, including vessels equipped with electric outboard motors, may show the lights in either figure 1 or 2.

Figure 2



# Sailing Vessels and Vessels Under Oars

Sailing vessels less than 20 meters may exhibit the navigation lights shown in Figures 3 or 4. Another option for sailboats is to use a combined tricolor light at the top of the mast as shown in figure 5.

Figure 3

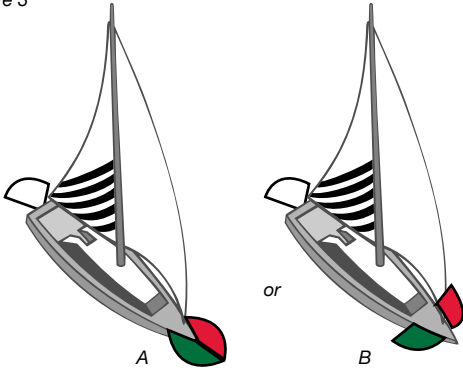


Figure 4

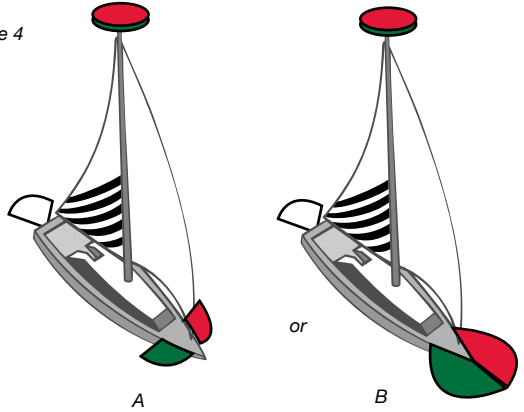


Figure 5

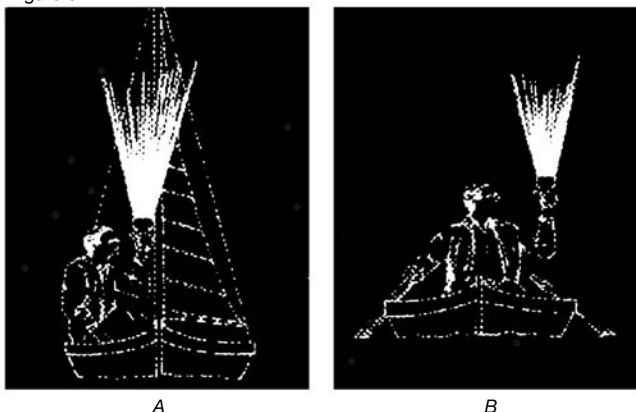


Sailing vessels less than 7 meters may carry an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light to be displayed in sufficient time to prevent collision (see figure 6A). If practicable, the lights prescribed for sailing vessels less than 20 meters should be displayed.

Vessels under oars may display the lights prescribed for sailing vessels, but if not, one must have an electric torch ready at hand, or lighted lantern showing a white light to be displayed in sufficient time to prevent collision (see figure 6B).

Docking lights shall not be used or displayed while a vessel is underway and not actively engaged in docking maneuvers.

Figure 6



## Shapes and Lights

To alert other vessels of conditions which may be hazardous, there are requirements to display lights at night and shapes during the day. Sailing vessels under both sail and power must display a day shape consisting of a cone with the apex pointed downward. In inland waters a sailing vessel less than 12 meters need not display the day shape.

## Anchored Vessels

At night, power-driven vessels and sailing vessels at anchor must display anchor lights. An anchor light for a vessel less than 50 meters in length is an all-around white light visible for 2 miles exhibited where it can best be seen. During the day, vessels at anchor shall exhibit forward where best seen, a ball shape. Vessels less than 7 meters are not required to display anchor lights or day shapes unless anchored in or near a narrow channel, fairway or anchorage, or where other vessels normally navigate.

At night, sailing vessels operating under machinery, or under sail and machinery, are considered power-driven and must display the lights prescribed for a power-driven vessel.

## Diving Activities

The Navigation Rules require vessels restricted in their ability to maneuver to display appropriate day shapes or lights. To meet this requirement, recreational vessels engaged in diving activities during the day must exhibit a rigid replica of the international code

flag “A” not less than one meter in height, or at night, display navigation lights 360 degrees red on top, white in middle and red on the bottom. This requirement does not affect the use of a red and white diver flag used to mark a divers location.

## **Capacity Plate**

The U.S. Coast Guard requires boat manufacturers to install a Capacity Plate in plain sight of the helm on most vessels less than 20 feet in length. The capacity plate provides the operator with information concerning the maximum horsepower of the engine, maximum number of persons on board and total weight the boat can carry which includes persons, equipment, fuel, engine, etc. Always adhere to the information provided on the capacity plate. Do not overload your boat.

## **Pollution Regulations**

The Refuse Act of 1899 prohibits throwing, discharging or depositing any refuse matter of any kind (including trash, garbage, oil and other liquid pollutants) into the water of the United States. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act prohibits the discharge of oil or hazardous substances that may be harmful into U.S. navigable waters. Vessels 26 feet in length and over must display a placard at least 5 by 8 inches, made of durable material, fixed in a conspicuous place in the machinery spaces, or at the bilge pump control station that states the following:

### **Discharge of Oil Prohibited**

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Prohibits the discharge of oil or oily waste into or upon the navigable waters of the United States or the waters of the contiguous zone if such discharge causes a film or sheen upon, or a discoloration of, the surface of the water, or causes sludge or emulsion beneath the surface of the water. Violators are subject to a penalty of \$5,000.00.

The Marine Plastics Pollution Research & Control Act (MARPOL) places limitations on the discharge of garbage from vessels. It is illegal to dump plastic trash anywhere in the ocean or navigable waters of the United States, including the Great Lakes. The discharge of other types of garbage is permitted outside of specific distances offshore as determined by the nature of that garbage.

### **IT IS ILLEGAL TO DUMP:**

- **INSIDE 3 MILES** (and in U.S. Lakes, Rivers, Bays and Sounds): plastic; dunnage; lining, and packing materials that float, and any garbage except dishwasher, gray water and fish parts.
- **3 TO 12 MILES**: plastic, dunnage, lining, and packing materials that float, any garbage not ground to less than one square inch.
- **12 TO 25 MILES**: Plastic, dunnage, lining, and packing materials that float.
- **OUTSIDE 25 MILES**: Plastic

United States vessels of 26 feet or longer must display, in a prominent location, a durable placard at least 4 by 9 inches notifying the crew and passengers of the discharge restrictions Maryland’s litter law makes it illegal to throw anything overboard, and in order to preserve

the beauty and purity of our waters, the Natural Resources Police will strictly enforce this law. The owner as well as the operator is liable for any trash thrown from a vessel.

## **Marine Sanitation Devices**

It is illegal to discharge raw sewage from a vessel anywhere in Maryland waters. If a vessel has an installed toilet, it must be equipped with an operable marine sanitation device (MSD). Vessels 65 feet and under must have a Type I, II or III MSD. Vessels over 65 feet must have a type II or III MSD. All Type I and II MSD's (that treat and discharge sewage) must have a certification label affixed by the manufacturer.

Although a "Y" valve is permitted, when operating in Maryland waters, it must be secured to prevent the discharge of raw sewage. The use of a non-reusable wire tie, or padlock, or removing the valve handle are acceptable ways to secure the "Y" valve. Additionally, all pathways for overboard discharge of vessel sewage from any vessel with a Type III MSD must be blocked or secured in such a way as to prevent any accidental or intentional vessel sewage discharge by disconnecting or physically blocking those onboard sewage lines or hull fittings which would allow for overboard vessel discharge.

For any vessel offered as a non-captained charter, the leasing entity must ensure that the vessel is in compliance with the above and must include in the lease agreement, signed by the leasing party, a paragraph outlining the operator's responsibilities. A person that violates any of the above requirements is subject to a fine not to exceed \$2,000.

Type I and II MSD's do not reduce the amount of nutrients that are in boat sewage. Because reducing nutrient over-enrichment is critically important to the health of Maryland waters, it is highly recommended that vessels with installed toilets be equipped with a holding tank. Marine sewage pumpout facilities (which empty boat holding tanks and portable toilets) are inexpensive to use and are conveniently located at many marinas in Maryland. The Natural Resources Police Reserve Officers periodically conduct voluntary "Clean Boat Inspections" at various marinas throughout the State. Vessels passing inspection receive a "Clean Boat" decal to display on their vessel. Boat Owners not meeting the MSD requirements receive information/instruction on how to bring their vessel(s) up to compliance, and are offered a follow-up inspection. Information on how to retrofit a boat with a holding tank, produced by the American Boat and Yacht Council, as well as information on the location of pumpout facilities, is available on-line at [www.dnr.md.gov/boating/pumpout](http://www.dnr.md.gov/boating/pumpout). To participate in a "Clean Boat Inspection," call your local regional office of the Natural Resources Police.

## **No Discharge Zones**

No Discharge Zones are areas of water that require greater environmental protection and where the discharge of treated sewage could be harmful. When operating in a No Discharge Zone, a Type I or Type II MSD (they both discharge treated sewage) must be secured in some way to prevent discharge. Closing the seacock and padlocking, using a non-releasable wire-tie, or removing the seacock handle would be sufficient. Locking the door to the head with a padlock or a door handle key lock is another acceptable method of securing the MSD while in a No Discharge Zone. Currently there are two federally designated No Discharge Zones in Maryland. The first is located in Herring Bay on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay in southern Anne Arundel County. The second is located in the Northern Coastal Bays

starting at the Ocean City Inlet and extending north to the Delaware State Line. To report a No Discharge Zone violation, please contact the Maryland Department of the Environment weekdays at (410) 537-3510 and evenings and weekends at 1-866-MDE-GOTO (633-4686), violators will be subject to fines up to \$1,000.00. For more information on No Discharge Zones, please contact the Maryland Department of Natural Resources at (410) 260-8770 or the web site at: [www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/pumpout/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/pumpout/)

## **Additional Recommended Equipment**

Besides meeting the legal requirements, prudent boaters carry additional safety equipment. The following items of equipment are suggested depending on the size, location and use of your boat:

VHF Radio	Fuel tanks	Cell Phone
Spare Fuel	Visual Distress Signals	Chart and Compass
Spare Anchor	Boat Hook	Heaving Line
Spare Propeller	Fenders	Mooring Line
First Aid Kit	Food and Water	Flashlight
Binoculars	Mirror	Spare Batteries
Searchlight	Sunglasses	Sun Screen
Marine Hardware	Tool Kit	Extra Clothing
Ring Buoy	Spare Parts	Whistle or horn
Alternate Propulsion- (Paddle)	Anchor	Dewatering Device

## **Satellite EPIRBS**

Satellite EPIRBS are designed to quickly and reliably alert rescue personnel, indicate an accurate position, and guide rescue units to the distress scene, even when all other communications fail.

Satellite EPIRBS operate as part of a worldwide distress system. An international satellite constellation maintains a global “listening” watch for satellite EPIRBS distress signals. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) operates satellites, ground stations and alert distribution system serving the U.S. and international community.

When activated, the satellite EPIRBS transmits a distress signal with a beacon-unique identifying code. The system detects the signal, calculates an accurate position, checks the identifying code against the EPIRBS registration database and routes the distress alert to the appropriate rescue agency.

## **Vessel Safety Checks**

The Vessel Safety Check (VSC) is one of the many services provided by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, a volunteer organization dedicated to assisting the Coast Guard in boating safety. The US Power Squadrons and Maryland Natural Resources Police are now participating in this program. This free examination is a courtesy check of safety equipment carried or installed on a vessel and certain aspects of the vessel’s condition. VSC requirements parallel and sometimes exceed Federal requirements with regard to equipment and vessel condition. If the vessel meets or exceeds all VSC requirements, the examiner will award the owner or operator a Vessel Safety Check Decal (Seal of Safety). It must be emphasized, the VSC is NOT a law enforcement action and is not conducted by, or is any information obtained or provided to, any law enforcement organization. It is a FREE public service in the interest of boating safety.

# Maryland Required Equipment Checklist

	PWC	Boats less than 16 Feet	Boats 16 Feet to less than 26 Feet
Boating Safety Education Certificate	✓ 1	✓ 1	✓ 1
Certificate of Number On Board	✓	✓	✓
Validation Decal Displayed	✓	✓	✓
PFDs: Type I, II, III, or V	✓ 3	✓ 4	✓ 4
PFD: Type IV			✓
Type B-I Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓
Ignition Safety Switch	✓		
Backfire Flame Arrestor	✓	✓ 5	✓ 5
Ventilation System	✓	✓	✓
Muffler	✓	✓	✓
Horn, Whistle, or Bell	✓	✓	✓
Daytime Visual Distress Signal			✓ 6
Night Time Visual Distress Signal	7	✓ 5	✓ 6
Navigation Lights	✓ 7	✓	✓

1. Applicable if operator is born on or after July 1, 1972.
2. Except all non-motorized vessels
3. Everyone onboard a PWC must wear a personal floatation device (PFD).
4. Children under 7 years of age must wear a PFD while underway on a vessel under 21 feet in length. In addition children under 4 years of age and/or less than 50 pounds must have a PFD equipped with a grab strap, inflatable headrest and crotch strap.
5. Required on inboard engines.
6. Required when boating on federally controlled waters.
7. Certain items are not applicable to PWC because they are not allowed to operate between sunset and sunrise.

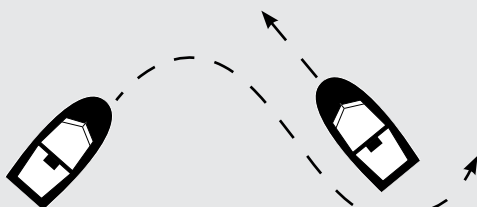
# Operating Procedures

[www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations/)

## Navigation Rules

Navigation Rules establish actions to be taken by vessels to avoid collision. The following diagrams describe the signals to be given and actions to be taken in a crossing, meeting or overtaking situation while operating in inland waters. They are basic examples. For further information, consult the "NAVIGATION RULES" International-Inland that may be purchased from the U.S. Government Printing Office or most marine stores.

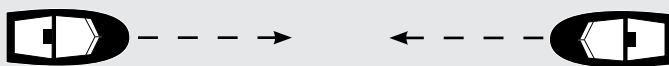
### Crossing Situations



Give-way Vessel  
...give way  
1 short blast (1 sec.)

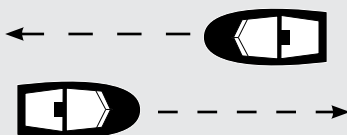
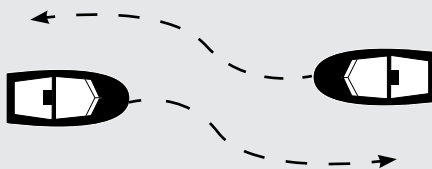
Stand-on Vessel  
...hold course and speed  
1 short blast (1 sec.)

### Meeting Head-On or Nearly So Situations



1 short blast (1 sec.)

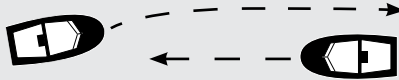
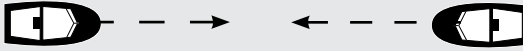
1 short blast (1 sec.)



Vessels generally pass portside to portside.

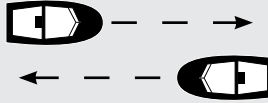


However, vessels may pass starboard to starboard if proper signals are given.



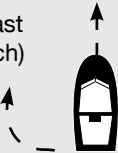
2 short blast (1 sec. each)

2 short blast (1 sec. each)



### Overtaking Situations

2 short blast  
(1 sec. each)



Stand-on Vessel  
Overtaken



1 short blast  
(1 sec.)

2 short blast  
(1 sec. each)



Give-way Vessel  
Overtaken  
(keep clear)



short blast  
(1 sec.)

## Aids to Navigation

Aids to Navigation are placed along coasts and navigable waters as guides to mark safe water and to assist mariners in determining their position in relation to land and hidden dangers. Each aid to navigation is used to provide specific information.

Several aids to navigation are usually used together to form a local aid to navigation system that helps the mariner follow natural and improved channels. Such aids to navigation also provide a continuous system of channel marks for coastal piloting. Individual aids to navigation are used to mark landfall from seaward, and to mark isolated dangers.

Lateral marks are buoys or beacons that indicate the port and starboard sides of a route to be followed. Virtually all U.S. lateral marks follow the traditional 3R rule of “red, right, returning”. This means, when returning from sea, keep red marks on the right hand (starboard) side of the vessel.

## KEEP CLEAR - Big Ships in the Chesapeake Bay

### Collision Avoidance Checklist

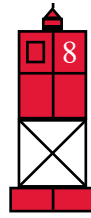
- Avoid shipping channels when possible or cross them quickly.
- Be alert! Watch for ship traffic
- Be seen, especially at night.
- Use radio channel 13 for bridge-to-bridge communication.
- Keep in mind that few survive collisions with ships.



R "9"  
FI G 4sec

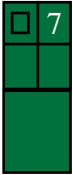
LIGHTED BOUY

Mariners must NOT rely on buoys alone for determining their positions. Storms and wave actions sometimes cause buoys to move.



R "8"  
FI R 4sec

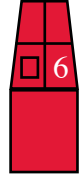
LIGHTED BOUY



R  
C "7"

CAN

Do not tie up to Aids to Navigation. It is dangerous and illegal.



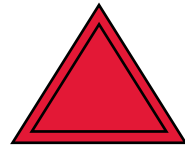
R  
N "6"

NUN



DAYMARK

Lateral aids marking the sides of channels, as seen when entering from seaward.



DAYMARK

R  
"2"



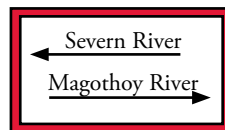
Diamond Shape warns of danger



Diamond Shape with cross means boats keep out



Circle marks area controlled "as indicated"



For displaying information such as directions, distances, locations, etc.

## **Nautical Charts**

One of the most important tools used by boaters for planning trips and safely navigating waterways are nautical charts. Nautical charts show the nature and shape of the coast, depth of water, general configuration and character of the bottom and prominent landmarks, port facilities, aids to navigation, marine hazards, and other pertinent information. Changes brought about by nature and man requires that nautical charts be constantly maintained and updated to aid safe navigation.

The National Ocean Service (NOS) produces a variety of nautical related charts and chart related products. The date of a nautical chart is important. Only current charts should be used for navigation. Free chart updating information can be obtained from "Local Notice to Mariners" published by the U.S. Coast Guard and available from: Fifth Coast Guard District, Federal Building, 431 Crawford St., Portsmouth, VA 23704-5004. (703) 313-5900. NOS charts are available in most marine stores.

## **Personal Watercraft (PWC, i.e. Jet Ski's, Wave Runners, etc.)**

*The following regulations have been established which govern the use of PWCs on all waters of the State:*

1. A person must be at least 16 years of age to operate a PWC.
2. PWC may not be operated between sunset and sunrise.
3. All persons on board a PWC must wear a USCG approved Type I, II, or III life jacket.
4. All PWCs must be equipped with a self-circling device or a lanyard cut off switch. The cut-off switch lanyard must be attached to the operator, or the operator's clothing or life jacket. Self-circling devices and cut off switches may not be altered and must be functioning.
5. A PWC may not be used to tow a person on water skis, aquaplanes or other similar devices unless:
  - a. The PWC has the capacity to carry 3 persons which includes the driver, a rear facing observer and the skier; and
  - b. The PWC is specifically designed for skiing by the manufacturer.
6. On all waters of the State except the Atlantic Ocean, a PWC may not be operated at a speed in excess of 6 knots within 100 feet of any shore, wharf, pier, bridge abutment, another pwc or persons in the water.
7. On Maryland waters of the Atlantic Ocean, a PWC may not be operated within 300 feet of persons in the water or surf fishermen.
8. On Maryland waters of the Atlantic Ocean, a PWC may not be operated at a speed in excess of 6 knots within 100 feet of any wharf, pier or jetty.
9. A PWC may not be operated in excess of 6 knots within 100 feet of another vessel except in a crossing or overtaking situation as described in the Federal Rules of the Road.
10. A PWC may not be operated in a negligent manner. i.e., splashing, playing "chicken", intentionally throwing off a passenger, etc.).
11. All PWCs operated in Maryland waters and registered in the State of Maryland must have a DNR approved PWC regulations sticker properly affixed to the PWC.
12. A person may not operate or give permission to operate a PWC in excess of idle speed in any waters of the State less than 18 inches in depth, except when required to maintain speed in a crossing or overtaking situation pursuant to the Federal Inland or International Navigation Rules. It shall be a reputable presumption that the operator is aware that the depth of the water is less than 18 inches if:
  - a. The area is marked as an idle speed limit area; or

- b. The operator was previously issued a warning or citation for exceeding idle speed in the same area.

NOTE: PWC operating on Deep Creek Lake are subject to additional restrictions. Personal Watercraft (and Hover Crafts) may not be operated on the lake between 11 am and 4 pm on the Saturday, Sunday and holiday of Memorial Day weekend, as well as the Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays from July 1 through Labor Day. For more information, contact Deep Creek Lake Recreation Area at (301) 387-4111.

## **Tips for Safe Riding**

1. A personal watercraft is not a toy. RIDE RESPONSIBLY!
2. Show consideration for other boaters and property owners.
3. Maintain a proper lookout at all times.
4. A PWC has no brakes.
5. When you have no propulsion, you have no steering.

## **Speed Limits**

Where it has been determined that an area is too populated with boats and/or persons to allow unlimited speed, speed limits of 6 knots have been established and skiing is not allowed. These areas are posted with white signs or buoys with the restrictions stated within an orange circle. These signs and buoys conform to the nationwide system of state markers. Special time restrictions may also apply as posted.

One knot is 1.15 statute MPH. Therefore, 6 knots equals 6.9 statute MPH.

There is a special limit on Seneca Creek in Montgomery County of 6 knots under NR8-725.5 and the penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$25.00 to \$200.00 or imprisonment for not more than 30 days or both.

Another special speed limit of 6 knots is on Broad Creek in Harford County. A number of counties and towns have established speed limits under special acts of the State Legislature.

## **Severn, South, Magothy and Middle Rivers**

Special regulations apply to the Severn, South, Magothy and Middle Rivers and their tributaries. A variety of speed limits and time restrictions are in effect in these river systems, which include maximum daylight speed limits of 35 knots for portions of the Severn, South and Middle Rivers. Contact the Natural Resources Police, Safety Education Division at (410) 260-3280 for a brochure on the regulations on these rivers. This information is also available on line at [www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating).

## **Water Skiing**

In Maryland, water skiing is not allowed between the hours of sunset and sunrise. The towing boat must have at least two persons on board, an observer and an operator, both of whom are at least 12 years of age. In certain marked areas, water skiing is not allowed. Towlines may not be more than 75 feet in length, except when barefoot skiing; in which a towline 100 feet in length may be used. Except for taking off from shore, the towing boat must stay at least 100 feet from shore, piers, bridges, people in the water, and other passing boats. Water skiers must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device. On the slack water areas above Dams 3, 4, and 5 on the Upper Potomac River, a motorboat may not tow more than two tubes or similar devices when the towline is attached directly to the device.

# Miscellaneous Regulations and Information

## [www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations/)

### **Tributyltin Anti-Fouling Paint**

Federal and State laws have placed severe restrictions on the use of anti-fouling paints that contain tributyltin (TBT) as an active biocide. Except under specific conditions paints containing TBT no longer may be applied to recreational vessels. TBT is an ingredient that has been found to be extremely toxic to fish and oyster larvae. Anyone wishing to apply paints containing TBT must first obtain a permit from the Maryland Department of Agriculture (410) 841-5710. Permits are not required to apply approved paints from spray cans of 16 oz. or less (commonly referred to as lower unit paint).

### **Noise Regulations**

A person may not operate or give permission to operate a vessel on Maryland Waters that emits a maximum noise level that exceeds 90 dB(a). The 90-decibel vessel noise level limit shall be measured using the testing procedures based on the Marine Environment Sound Level Measurement Procedure, SAE J 2005. The procedure involves taking a sound level measurement near the vessel's exhaust while the engine(s) are operated at idle speed and in neutral gear. All vessels manufactured after January 1, 1990 must have a muffler, device, or system that suppresses engine noise in accordance with Maryland's noise level regulations. Maryland's noise regulations do not apply to vessels displaying a valid seafood harvester's license number and engaged in the harvest of seafood for sale. Vessels involved in a race, regatta, parade, or exhibition approved by the Department of Natural Resources or the U.S. Coast Guard are also exempt from this regulation. Vessels being repaired or tested by a service person, an American Power Boat Association driver or a sanctioning association recognized by the Department are exempt from the 90 decibel noise level limit during the hours of 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday if the following requirements are met: Notify the Natural Resources Police with 24 to 72 hour advance notice of the vessel's operation, limit the number of tests for the vessel to four in any 7- day period and limit the test for the vessel to a total test period of 30 minutes on the water.

### **Reciprocation**

Boats with a valid Maryland number are allowed to temporarily use the waters of another state and vessels from another state with a valid number may use our waters. A boat must be numbered in the state of principal use. Boats must adhere to rules, regulations and carriage requirements of the state in which it is being operated.

### **Penalties**

The penalty for violating most parts of the Maryland Boat Act, or of the regulations made pursuant thereto shall not be more than \$500.00 for the first offense.

Generally, enforcement personnel must observe a violation before an arrest may be made. However, any citizen may file charges with a court commissioner, against an offender. The Natural Resources Police will aid anyone to do so, when such action is deemed proper.

## **Vessels Carrying Passengers for Hire**

1. A vessel is considered to be carrying passengers for hire when the carriage of any person or persons by a vessel for a valuable consideration, whether directly or indirectly flows to the owner, charterer, operator, agent or any persons interested in the vessel.
2. Vessels carrying more than six passengers for hire must be inspected and certified by the U.S. Coast Guard.
3. The operator of a passenger-carrying vessel must be in the possession of a license issued by the U. S. Coast Guard. For further information contact Baltimore Licensing Section of the U.S. Coast Guard at (410) 962-5119.

## **Commercial Fishing Guide License**

Any person who desires to accept direct or indirect consideration for providing services as a fishing guide shall obtain a commercial fishing guide license. For further information contact any DNR Licensing and Registration Service Center.

## **Regulations For Specific Waters**

### **Deep Creek Lake**

1. Vessels 26 feet in length or larger are prohibited, except pontoon boats, which may not exceed 30 feet.
2. Personal Watercraft and Hover Crafts may not be operated on the lake between 11 am and 4 pm on the Saturday, Sunday and holiday of Memorial Day weekend, as well as the Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays from July 1 through Labor Day.
3. No person may operate a vessel in excess of minimum wake speed within 100 feet of the shoreline anywhere on the lake, except to begin towing a skier from a pier or shore directly away from the restricted area.

For further information on Deep Creek Lake regulations, contact: Lake manager, Deep Creek Lake Recreation Area, 898 State Park Road, Swanton, MD 21561 (301) 387-4111.

### **Upper Potomac River**

Any person aboard a vessel, raft, or tube shall wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III, or V PFD at all times when on the Upper Potomac River between November 15 and the following May 15. This regulation is in addition to class III, IV, V, and VI White Water Stream segment regulations which require PFDs to be worn at all times by persons underway.

Minimum wake zones exist around all Maryland public boat launching ramps on the slack water areas. These minimum wake zones encompass an area 200 yards upstream and 100 yards downstream, extending across the river to the opposite shore.

Boats may not be operated within an area 200 yards upstream of all dams on the Upper Potomac River with the exception of Dam #1 where the distance restriction is 100 yards

On the slack water areas above Dams 3, 4, and 5 on the Upper Potomac River, a motorboat may not tow more than two tubes or similar devices when the towline is attached directly to the device.

*Please see inside back cover for information on upper Potomac River Advisories.*

## Maryland's Coastal Bays

The Coastal Bays, also known as the back bays behind Ocean City and Assateague, are a very popular area for boating, particularly during the summer months. Many of the primary waterways, especially the northern bays, are often congested and require cautious and responsible boating. The bays have very unpredictable boating conditions since they are very shallow with strong currents and tides in many areas. Local knowledge is required to operate outside the main channels. Extra care needs to be taken when boating in coastal areas with sensitive habitat such as submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) beds and water bird nesting locations. Running aground can harm the bay's environment as well as cause expensive damage to a vessel. For more information, contact the Maryland Coastal Bays Program at (410) 213-2297 or the local Natural Resources Police (410) 548-7070.

## **Safety and Survival Tips** **[www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/regulations/)**

### **Vessel Condition**

The operator should assure that a vessel is in top operating condition and that there are no tripping hazards or sharp edges exposed. The vessel should be free of fire hazards and have clean bilges.

### **Loading Your Vessel**

Keep the load low and evenly distributed. Do not exceed the capacity label. If there is no capacity label use the following formula to determine the maximum number of persons you can safely carry in calm water.

$$\text{People} = \frac{(\text{Length of boat} \times \text{Width})}{15}$$

### **Anchoring**

To anchor, bring the bow into the wind and/or current and put the engine in neutral. When the vessel comes to a stop, lower, do not throw, the anchor over the bow. The anchor line should be 5 to 7 times the depth of the water. Do not anchor by the stern.

### **Fueling Precautions**

Fill portable tanks off the vessel. Close all hatches and other openings before fueling. Extinguish smoking materials. Turn off engines and all electrical equipment, radios, stoves and other appliances.

Wipe up any spilled fuel immediately. Open all hatches to air out the vessel. Run the blower for at least four minutes, and then check the bilges for fuel vapors before starting the engine. Never start the engine until all traces of fuel vapors are eliminated. Your nose is the best known vapor detector.

### **Fuel Management**

Practice the "One-Third Rule" by using one-third of the fuel going out, one-third to get back and one-third in reserve.

## **Marine Rated Parts**

Do not use automotive parts to replace such items as starters, distributors, alternators, generators, carburetors, fuel pumps, etc. because they are not ignition protected and could cause a fire or explosion.

## **Weather**

Check the weather reports before leaving shore, and remain watchful for signs of bad weather. Listen to National Weather Service Weather Radio. If a Small Craft Advisory is posted, head to safety immediately, as the winds may become too strong to operate your vessel safely.

## **Float Plan**

Tell a responsible friend or relative where you are going and when you plan to return. Make sure they have a complete description of your vessel and other information that will make identification of your vessel easier should the need arise. Always contact the person you left your float plan with immediately upon your return.

## **Small Boats and Water Activities**

Many hunters and anglers do not think of themselves as boaters, but use semi-v hull vessels, flat-bottom jon boats or canoes to pursue their sports. These boats tend to be unstable and easily capsized. Capsizing, sinking, and falling overboard account for 70% of boating fatalities and these facts mean you must have a greater awareness of the boat's limitations and the skill and knowledge to overcome them.

Standing in a small boat raises the center of gravity, often to the point of capsizing. Standing for any reason or even changing position in a small boat can be dangerous, as is sitting on the gunwales or seat backs. A wave or sudden turn may cause a fall overboard or capsizing because of the raised center of gravity.

## **Staying Afloat**

It is common belief that someone dressed in heavy clothing or waders will sink immediately if they fall overboard. This is not true. Air trapped in clothing provides considerable flotation, and bending at the knees will trap air in waders, providing additional flotation. To stay afloat, remain calm, do not thrash about or try to remove clothing or footwear. This leads to exhaustion and increases the loss of air that keeps you afloat. Keep your knees bent, float on your back and paddle slowly to safety.

## **Cold Water Survival**

Sudden immersion in cold water can induce rapid, uncontrolled breathing, cardiac arrest, and other life threatening situations that can result in drowning. Wearing a life jacket will help reduce this condition. If you must enter the water, button up your clothing, wear a life jacket, cover your head if possible and enter the water slowly.

Hypothermia is the loss of body heat and immersion in water speeds the loss of heat. If your boat capsizes, it will likely float on or just below the surface. Outboard powered vessels built after 1978 are designed to support you even if full of water or capsized. To



reduce the effects of hypothermia get in or on the boat. Try to get as much of your body out of the water as possible. If you can't get in the boat a life jacket will enable you to keep your head out of the water. This is very important because about 50% of body heat is lost from the head.

It may be possible to revive a drowning victim who has been under water for considerable time and shows no signs of life. Numerous documented cases exist where victims have been resuscitated with no apparent harmful effects after long immersions. Start CPR immediately and get the victim to the hospital as soon as possible.

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide is a potentially deadly gas produced any time a carbon-based fuel, such as gasoline, propane, charcoal or oil, burns. Sources on your boat include gasoline engines and generators, cooking ranges, space heaters and water heaters. Cold or poorly tuned engines produce more carbon monoxide than warm, properly tuned engines.

Carbon monoxide is colorless, odorless and tasteless and mixes evenly with the air. It enters your blood stream through the lungs and displaces the oxygen your body needs. Early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning - irritated eyes, headache, nausea, weakness and dizziness - are often confused with seasickness. Prolonged exposure can lead to death.

Carbon monoxide can collect within a boat in a variety of ways. Exhaust leaks, the leading cause of death by carbon monoxide, can allow carbon monoxide to migrate throughout the boat and into enclosed areas. Even properly vented exhaust can re-enter a boat if it's moored too close to a dock or another boat, or if the exhaust is pushed back by prevailing winds. Exhaust can also re-enter boats when cruising under certain conditions, especially with canvas enclosures in place.

Regular maintenance and proper boat operation are the best defenses against injury from carbon monoxide. To find out more about how you can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning on recreational boats, contact the United States Coast Guard at [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Situations

### Blocked Exhaust Outlets

can cause carbon monoxide to accumulate in the cabin and cockpit area.



### Another Vessel's Exhaust

that is alongside can emit carbon monoxide into the cabin and cockpit of your vessel. Your vessel should be at least 20 feet from a vessel that is running a generator or engine.



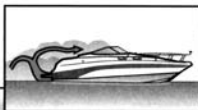
### Teak Surfing

or dragging or water-skiing within 20 feet of a moving vessel can be fatal. If persons are using a swim platform or are close to the stern, all gasoline-powered generators with transom exhaust ports must be off.



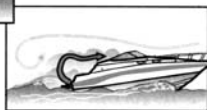
### Slow Speed or Idling

causes carbon monoxide to accumulate in the cabin, cockpit, and rear deck.



### Station Wagon Effect

causes carbon monoxide to accumulate inside the cabin and cockpit if you are operating the vessel at a high bow angle, if there is an opening that draws in exhaust, or if protective coverings are used when the vessel is underway.





## Upper Potomac River Safety and Advisories

Recreational use of the upper Potomac River, including adjacent creeks and streams can at times be extremely dangerous. When conditions on the upper Potomac River become unsafe for boating and other recreational uses, based on information received from the National Weather Service and the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, the Maryland Natural Resources Police issue an "Upper Potomac River Advisory". This is to advise that use of the Upper Potomac River including adjacent creeks and streams should be avoided.

These advisories do not apply to professionally guided river trips or teams of experienced white water paddlers. There are always risks involved with river travel at any level. Also, there is no guarantee that any particular rapid or section of river may not be dangerous at lower levels.

These advisories are provided to the public by local media and on the DNR Internet site listed below. Further information can also be acquired at the following web address: [www.nws.noaa.gov.er.lws](http://www.nws.noaa.gov.er.lws) <<http://www.nws.noaa.gov.er.lws>>.

The latest information on Potomac River conditions between Cumberland and Little Falls, call the National Weather Service at 1-703-260-0305.

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## Maryland Boating Information on the Internet

The Department of Natural Resources has developed a site on the Internet especially for boaters. You can access information on boat registration, boating safety, public boating facilities, the Clean Marina Initiative, boating advisories, and much more.



Check it out at: [www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/)

**Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resources Police**

580 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis MD 21401



**[www.dnr.maryland.gov](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov)**