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Boating Regulations and the Maryland State Boat Act

The Maryland State Boating Act was enacted in 1960 to work in harmony with the U.S. Coast Guard regulatory scheme. It ensured that revenue generated through regulating boating activity would be earmarked for boating and maritime purposes.

The Maryland State Boat Act Advisory Committee

The Boat Act Advisory Committee is a governor-appointed committee that makes 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 boating user groups, which provides assistance with the regulatory process. The department's Fishing and Boating Services provides staff support.

To learn more, visit *dnr.maryland.gov/boating.*

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Police
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

dnr.maryland.gov

Toll free in Maryland: 877-620-8DNR • TTY users call via the MD Relay

Larry Hogan, Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

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Cover photo by Paula Brumbley

The facilities and services of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin or physical or mental disability. This document is available in alternative format upon request from a qualified individual with disability.

A message from the Boating Law Administrator

Maryland's beautiful and bountiful waterways offer limitless potential for diverse boating experiences. It is the intent of the Maryland Natural Resources Police to make your boating experience both safe and enjoyable. Please help us by boating wisely, cleanly and safely.

When you boat on Maryland waters, BOAT SMART FROM THE START! Boating education and awareness are essential to developing safe boating practices. Prepare before you go; be knowledgeable of Maryland's boating laws; and be aware of the weather and sea conditions, the boaters around you, and the safety of your vessel and your passengers.

Maryland Natural Resources Police

Registration and Numbering Requirements

dnr.maryland.gov/boating

VESSELS REQUIRED TO BE REGISTERED IN MARYLAND

A vessel principally operated in Maryland and equipped with mechanical propulsion must be registered with the Department of Natural Resources. Vessels not federally documented will be issued a Maryland boat number and a Maryland vessel title. Federally documented vessels principally operated in Maryland will not be numbered in Maryland but must display documented use decals.

All vessels with principal operation in Maryland, whether MD numbered or federally documented, must comply with Maryland's vessel excise tax requirements. All vessel excise tax is deposited into 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.

Vessels duly registered in another jurisdiction may enjoy Maryland waters for a cumulative total of 90 days in a calendar year without incurring a vessel excise tax obligation. A vessel may remain longer than 90 days so long as a majority of the year is spent in another single jurisdiction (i.e. Florida for seven months and Maryland for five months).

TITLING

Federal regulation states that ownership of a vessel previously numbered in a title state can be transferred only by assignment of title. Vessels numbered in a non-title state transfer ownership via a bill of sale. Evidence of ownership (state boat record, registration card, etc.) must accompany the application for MD title. Either method of ownership transfer must include the names of the buyer and seller, date of sale, seller's signature, purchase price and vessel description (year, manufacturer, hull identification number and/or current registration number.

A boat trailer is registered separately with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration.

APPLYING FOR A TITLE — REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

New vessel

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

New vessel—Internet purchase of vessel 12 feet and shorter

- Completed application for Maryland Certificate (DNR Form B-240)
- Manufacturers Certificate of Origin
- Hull identification number—pencil tracing or photograph
- Evidence of payment

Used vessel numbered in a title state

- Original Certificate of Title assigned to the purchaser(s) and signed by all owners shown on the front of the title

- Original Bill of Sale if purchase price is not stated in the assignment
- If not currently MD titled—Application for Maryland Certificate (DNR B-240)
- Original lien release or equivalent if title indicates a lien or security interest

Used vessel numbered in a non-title state

- Ownership evidence—vessel registration card or ownership record from state in which the vessel is currently numbered
- Original Bill of Sale
- Original lien release or equivalent if ownership record indicates a lien or security interest

TAX AND FEES

1. A 5 percent vessel excise tax on the total purchase price (vessel, motor and accessories, but not the trailer), with a minimum tax of $5 and maximum tax of $15,300. If more than three 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 greater than 16 feet long, or propulsion more than 7.5 horsepower
   b. Free: Vessel 16 feet or shorter with propulsion less than 7.5 horsepower
4. $15 security interest filing fee

DISPLAY OF NUMBERS AND VALIDATION DECALS

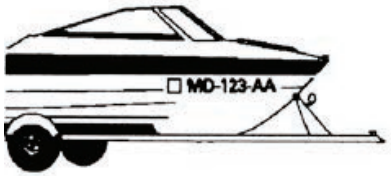
The vessel number issued to a MD titled vessel must be painted on or otherwise permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the vessel (the bow). No other number can be displayed near the vessel number.

Vessel numbers must be displayed as follows:

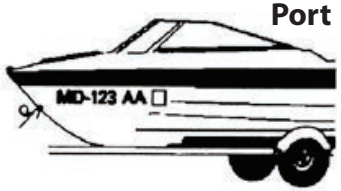
- Reading from left to right
- Plain vertical block characters 3 inches high or larger
- Contrasting color to the boat hull or background
- Placed as high above the waterline as practical on the forward half or hull.
- Letters separated from numbers by hyphens or spaces.

The registration decal set (two 3-by-3-inch decals) and the 3-inch 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 with principal operation 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 percent vessel excise tax is due to the Department of Natural Resources within 30 days of the transfer, trade or sale of a documented vessel with principal operation in Maryland. 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 operated in Maryland.

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

REPORT OF SALE OF VESSELS

Numbered 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—Numbered 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 and Registration
REGIONAL SERVICE CENTERS

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday
(except Essex and Cumberland)

ANNAPOLIS SERVICE CENTER
160 Harry S Trumna Pkwy.
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-260-3220
866-344-8889

ESSEX SERVICE CENTER
1338 Eastern Bvd. A
Essex, MD 21221
667-401-0760
866-535-8319
(WALK-IN ONLY MON/WED/FRI)

CENTRAL SERVICE CENTER
501 W. MacPhail Rd. #2
Bel Air, MD 21014
410-836-4550
866-623-3187

EAST CENTRAL SERVICE CENTER
120 Broadway Ave. # 5
Centreville, MD 21617
410-819-4100
866-439-1708

FREDERICK SERVICE CENTER
1601-A Bowman's Farm Rd.
Frederick, MD 21701
240-236-9950
866-679-0906

CUMBERLAND SERVICE CENTER
13300 Winchester Road, SW
Cumberland, MD 21502
301-777-2134
(WALK-IN ONLY TUES/THURS)
Credit card only at this location

SOUTHERN SERVICE CENTER
11 Industrial Park Drive
Waldorf, Maryland 20602
410-535-3382
866-688-3823

EASTERN SERVICE CENTER
251 Tilghman Rd. #2
Salisbury, MD 21801
410-713-3840
866-812-1678

MARYLAND NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE

Law Enforcement

dnr.maryland.gov/nrp

MARYLAND NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE

The Maryland Natural Resources Police enforces all state natural resource laws, including enforcement provisions of the Maryland State Boat Act on all state waterways. The Natural Resources Police is 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 sides 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. 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.

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 U.S. Coast Guard-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 ACCIDENTS REPORTS

The operator of any boat involved in an accident must stop, render assistance, and offer identification including name, address, and identification of the operator's vessel.

An accident report must be made to the department within 48 hours if:

1. The accident causes the death or disappearance of a person.
2. As a result of the accident, a person receives medical treatment beyond first aid.

All other boating accidents must be reported to the department within 10 days if damage is greater than $2,000 or there is a loss of vessel.

Running aground or hitting a fixed or floating object is considered a boating accident. The operator of the vessel or vessels involved must report the accident

to the Natural Resources Police. Accident reports are required by federal law and furnish information for use in accident prevention.

RENDERING ASSISTANCE

State law requires the operator of a vessel to safely provide assistance to any individual in danger on the water.

RECKLESS AND NEGLIGENT OPERATION

Law prohibits negligent or grossly negligent operation of a vessel that endangers lives and/ or property. For this offense, the U.S. Coast Guard 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 state 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 Skis, etc.).
5. Bow riding or riding on seatback, gunwale or transom.

ALCOHOL AND BOATING

Alcohol and boating do not mix. Approximately 50 percent of all boating accidents are alcohol related. Alcohol is a depressant and affects balance, vision, judgement 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 is:

1. impaired.
2. under the influence of alcohol.
3. 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. under the influence of any controlled dangerous substance, as defined in the Digest of Criminal Laws, Natural Resources Article 8-738.

Any person who operates or attempts to operate a vessel on state waters is deemed to have consented to take a chemical test for intoxication. In addition to any other penalty, a court may prohibit a person from operating a vessel for up to one year for refusing to submit to a chemical test or having a blood alcohol content of 0.08 or greater.

Natural Resources Police Regional Offices
800-628-9944

Western Region
Town Hill Office
11701 Mountain Road Northeast
Flintstone, MD 21530

Allegany and Garrett counties

Western Region
Echo Lake Office
2011 Monument Road
Myersville, MD 21773

Frederick and Washington counties

Southern Region
Broadneck Office
1070 East College Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties

Southern Region
Indian Creek Office
17823 Prince Frederick Road
Hughesville, MD 20637

Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties

Central Region
Gwynnbrook Office
3738 Gwynnbrook Avenue
Owings Mills, MD 21117

Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, Howard, Montgomery counties

Eastern Region
Johnson Office
32144 Mt. Olive Road
Salisbury, MD 21804

Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties

Eastern Region
Hillsboro Office
P.O. Box 157
3001 Starr Road
Queen Anne, MD 21657

Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot counties

Emergencies on the Water
Ch. 16 (156.800 MHz)
Nearest police or Coast Guard boat will assist you.
From cell phone 410-260-8888

Boating Safety Education Requirements
dnr.maryland.gov/nrp

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 education. The law also requires that people convicted of certain boating violations must pass a boating safety education course regardless of the age of the operator.

The 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 or online. The classroom course is 8-10 hours in length and covers the basics of boating and water safety.

As of Oct. 1, 2010, anyone under the age of 16 operating a motorized vessel 11 feet in length or greater without a valid boating safety certificate must be supervised by an individual 18 years of age or older who possesses a valid boating safety certificate or an individual born before July 1, 1972. If an individual under the age of 16 is operating a motorized vessel LESS than 11 feet in length, a person of any age possessing a valid certificate of boating safety can provide supervision.

The online course is offered by Boat Ed at boat-ed.com/maryland, Boater Exam at boaterexam.com/usa/maryland and Boat US at boatus.org/maryland. All three courses are user-friendly and self-directed.

The equivalency examination is for those persons who don't want 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:

The Maryland Natural Resources Police
Safety Education and Outreach Unit
305 Marine Academy Drive, Suite 1
Stevensville, MD 21666
410-643-8502

Other approved courses are available from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadrons. For further information call 800-336-2628.

A certificate of boating safety education is not required if:

1. A person is born BEFORE July 1, 1972.
2. A vessel is operated for commercial purposes.
3. 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.

4. A person is visiting the state for 90 days or less in a vessel from a foreign country.
5. 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.

Equipment Requirements

dnr.maryland.gov/boating

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 Coast Guard 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 feet long
Class 1 - Boats from 16 feet to less than 26 feet
Class 2 - Boats from 26 feet to less than 40 feet
Class 3 - Boats from 40 feet to not more than 65 feet

LIFE JACKETS

General Information

All recreational boats must carry one wearable life jacket (Type I, II, III, or V) for each person on board. Any boat 16 feet and longer (except canoes & kayaks) must also carry one throwable life jacket (Type IV). Life jackets must be Coast Guard approved, in good and serviceable condition, readily available and of appropriate size for the intended user. If an inflatable 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, kayaks, stand-up paddle boards and any other device capable of being used as a means of transportation on the water or ice.

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 13 must WEAR a U.S. 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. Also, a child under the age of 4 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 ability to quickly grab the child from the water.

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 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 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 of FLOTATION AID** is good for calm, inland water or where there is a good chance of quick rescue. It comes in many styles, colors and sizes and is generally the most comfortable 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 or 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.

BOATERS TIP

Some people say they don't wear their life jacket because they're too hot or too bulky, but that's not an excuse anymore. Inflatable life jackets offer options that are U.S. Coast Guard approved, and small and lightweight. They come in two styles: one that looks like a pair of suspenders or a belt pack that looks like a small fanny pack.

Some of these life jackets are designed to inflate if the wearer falls into the water; others require the wearer to pull a cord. Inflatable life jackets are approved only for people 16 and older, and they are not to be worn on personal watercraft or while water-skiing.

Read the operating instructions and the approval label before making your selection. Then be sure to wear it!

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 a:

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

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

VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS

All vessels in Maryland waters that are greater than 2 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 long.
2. Boats participating in organized events, such as regattas or marine parades.

3. Open sailboats less than 26 feet long 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 Jan. 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 an orange distress flag and electric distress SOS signaling device.

The distress flag is a day-signal only. It must be at least 3-by-3 feet with a black square and ball on an orange background. It is most distinctive when attached and waved on a paddle or boathook, or flown from a mast. The electric distress light is only for night use 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 those 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 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 people 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 SYSTEM

All vessels built after April 25, 1940 that 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 Aug. 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 boat's 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 minutes and check engine compartment bilge for gasoline vapors.

All owners are responsible for keeping their boat's 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

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 39.4 feet or more in length are required to carry on board a whistle or horn, and a bell. Any vessel less than 39.4 feet 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.

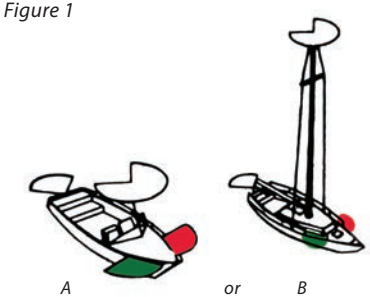
NAVIGATION LIGHTS

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 65.6 feet visible from 2 miles away.

POWER-DRIVEN VESSELS

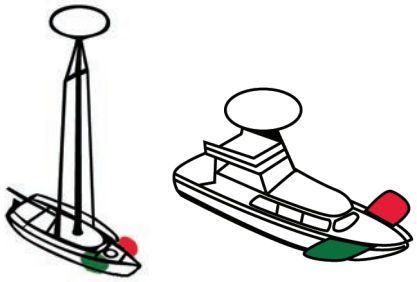
Power-driven vessels of less than 65.6 feet, shall exhibit navigation lights as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1



A *or* *B*

Figure 2



A *or* *B*

Vessels less than 39.4 feet long, including vessels equipped with electric outboard motors, may show the lights in either figure 1 or 2.

SAILING VESSELS AND VESSELS UNDER OARS

Sailing vessels less that 65.6 feet 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

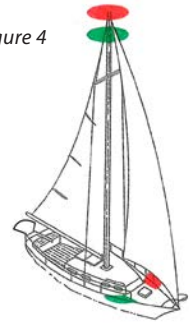


Figure 5

Illustrations courtesy of United States Coast Guard

Sailing vessels less than 23 feet 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 65.6 feet should be displayed.

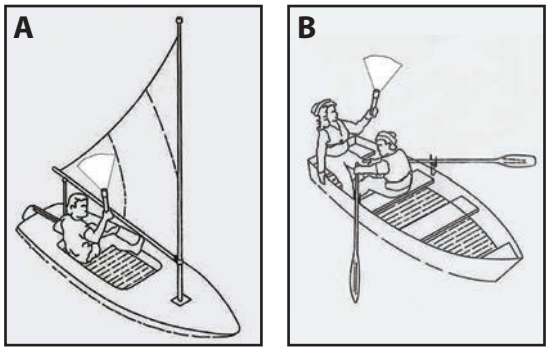
Vessels under oars may display the lights prescribed for sailing vessels, but if not, one must have an electric torch ready at hand or lighted lantern showing a white light to be displayed in sufficient time to prevent collision (see figure 6B).

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

SHAPES AND LIGHTS

To alert other vessels of conditions that 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 39.4 feet need not display the day shape.

Figure 6



Illustrations courtesy of United States Coast Guard

ANCHORED VESSELS

At night, power-driven vessels and sailing vessels at anchor must display anchor lights. An anchor light for a vessel less than 164 feet long 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 23 feet 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.

Vessels operating at night must also operate at a safe speed as well as consider factors such as visibility, weather, sea conditions, background lights that may obscure navigation lights, vessel traffic and other possible hazards.

DIVING ACTIVITIES

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 3.3 feet 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 long. 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 people, equipment, fuel, engine, etc. Always adhere to the information provided on the capacity plate. Do not overload your boat.

POLLUTION REGULATIONS

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.

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. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act prohibits the discharge of oil or hazardous substances that may be harmful into navigable waters. Vessels 26 feet long 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.

The Marine Plastics Pollution Research and Control Act 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 U.S. 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 dishwater, 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

U.S. 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.

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. Vessels 65 feet and under must have a Type I, II or III device. Vessels over 65 feet must have a Type II or III device. All Type I and II devices (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 device 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 who violates any of the above requirements is subject to a fine not to exceed $2,000.

Type I and II devices 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 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.

The Natural Resources Police reserve officers periodically conduct voluntary "Clean Boat Inspections" at marinas throughout the state. Vessels passing inspection receive a "Clean Boat" decal to display on their vessel. Boat owners not meeting the device requirements receive information/instruction on how to bring their vessel(s) into 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 the location of pumpout facilities, is available online at dnr.maryland.gov/boating. To participate in a "Clean Boat Inspection," call your local office of the Natural Resources Police.

NO DISCHARGE ZONES

No Discharge Zones are areas 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 marine sanitation device (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 is sufficient. Locking the door to the head with a padlock or a door handle key lock is another acceptable method.

There are two federally designated No Discharge Zones in Maryland. The first is in Herring Bay on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay in southern Anne Arundel County. The second is 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, contact the Maryland Department of the Environment weekdays at 410-537-3510, and evenings and weekends at 866-633-4686. Violators are subject to fines of up to $1,000. For more information on No Discharge Zones, contact the Maryland Department of Natural Resources at 410-260-8773 or go online to dnr.maryland.gov/boating.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

Prudent boaters carry additional safety equipment. The following items are suggested, depending on the size, location and use of your boat:

VHF Radio	First Aid Kit	Binoculars	Chart and Compass
Cell Phone	Fuel tanks	Searchlight	Tool Kit
Food and Water	Ring Buoy	Fenders	Extra Clothing
Spare Anchor	Mooring Line	Boat Hook	Sun Screen
Spare Fuel			Paddle

SATELLITE EMERGENCY POSITIONING INDICATOR RADIO BEACON (EPIRB)

Satellite Emergency Positioning Indicator Radio Beacons quickly and reliably alert rescue personnel, obtain an accurate position and guide rescue units to the distress scene, even when all other communications fail.

These beacons are part of a worldwide distress system. An international satellite constellation maintains a global "listening" watch for distress signals.

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

VESSEL SAFETY CHECKS

The vessel safety check is one of the many services provided by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, America's Boating Club (i.e., U.S. Sail and Power Squadron), and the Natural Resources Police Reserve Officers. This free courtesy check covers safety equipment carried or installed on a vessel and certain aspects of the vessel's condition. Vessel safety check requirements parallel and sometimes exceed federal requirements. If the vessel meets or exceeds all

requirements, the examiner will award the owner or operator a decal. The safety check 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

	Personal watercraft	Boat less than 16 Feet	Boats 16 feet to less than 26 feet
Boating Safety Education Certificate	✓1	✓1,2	✓1,2
Certificate of Number on Board	✓	✓2	✓2
Validation Decal Displayed	✓	✓2	✓2
Life Jackets: Type I, II, III, or V	✓3	✓4	✓4
Life Jackets: Type IV			✓
Type B-I Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓2	✓2
Ignition Safety Switch	✓		
Backfire Flame Arrestor	✓	✓5	✓5
Ventilation System	✓	✓2	✓2
Muffler	✓	✓2	✓2
Horn, Whistle or Bell	✓	✓	✓
Daytime Visual Distress Signal			✓6
Nighttime Visual Distress Signal	7	✓5	✓6
Navigation Lights	7	✓	✓

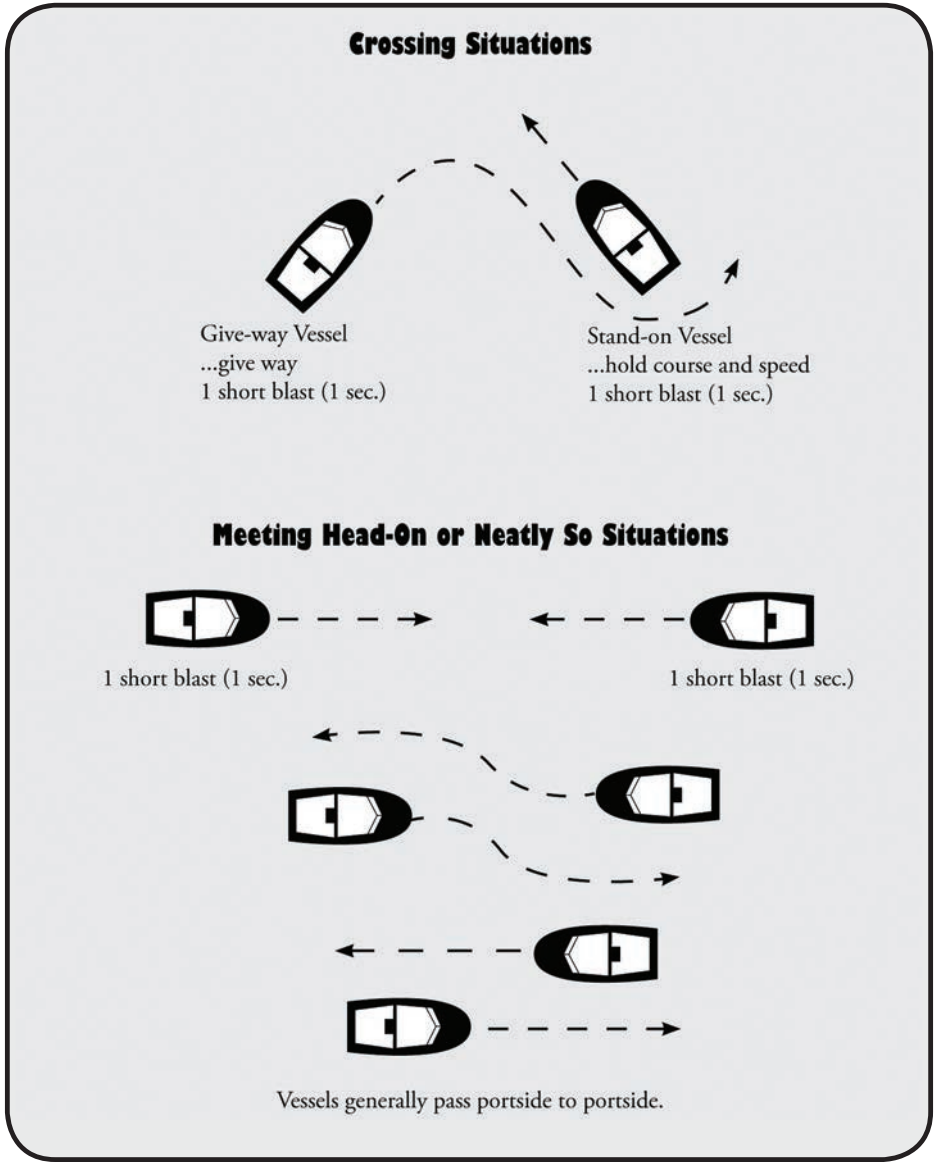
1. Applicable if operator is born on or after July 1, 1972.
2. Except all non-motorized vessels.
3. Everyone onboard a personal watercraft must wear a life jacket.
4. Children under 13 years of age must wear a life jacket while underway on a vessel under 21 feet long. In addition, children under 4 years of age must have a life jacket equipped with a grab strap, inflatable headrest and crotch strap.
5. Required on inboard engines.
6. Required when boating on federally controlled waters. Sailboats less than 26 feet long that are not equipped with propulsion machinery are not required to carry day signals.
7. Certain items are not applicable to personal watercraft because they are not allowed to operate between sunset and sunrise.

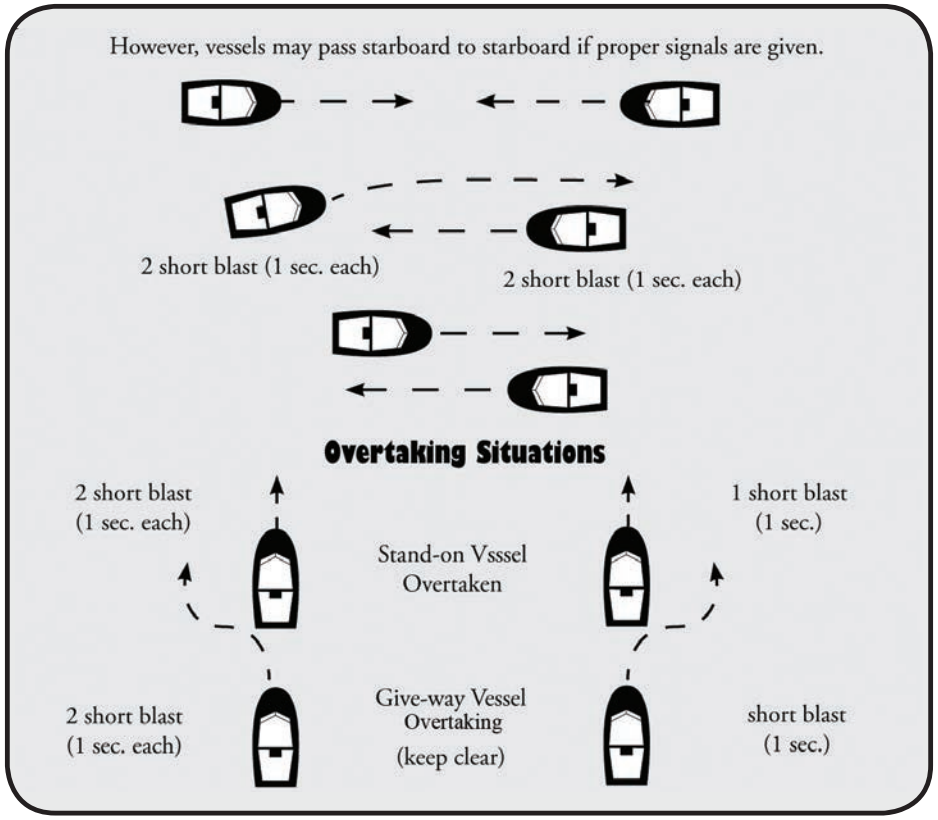
Operating Procedures

dnr.maryland.gov/boating

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. For further information, consult the "NAVIGATION RULES" International-Inland that can be purchased from the U.S. Government Printing Office or most marine stores.





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.

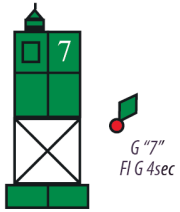
Several aids to navigation are usually used together to help the mariner follow natural and improved channels. Such aids to navigation also provide a continuous system of channel marks for coastal piloting. Individual aids to navigation are used to mark landfall from seaward, and to mark isolated dangers.

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

Non-lateral markers are navigational aids that give information such as the orange and white ones shown on page 24. The buoy with a blue stripe, the mooring buoy, is the only navigation aid that boats may tie up to.

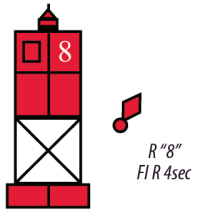
KEEP CLEAR—BIG SHIPS IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY—COLLISION AVOIDANCE CHECKLIST

- 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 navigational communication.
- Keep in mind that few survive collisions with ships.

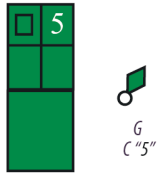


LIGHTED BUOY

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

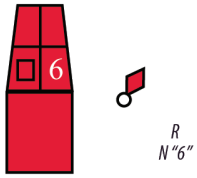


LIGHTED BUOY



CAN

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



NUN

DAYMARK

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

DAYMARK

Non-Lateral Buoys

Mooring Buoy

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

Nautical charts are one of the most important tools used by boaters for planning trips and safely navigating waterways. They 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.

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, Virginia 23704. It can be reached at 703-313-5900. Charts are available in most marine stores.

REGULATIONS FOR SPECIFIC BOATING ACTIVITIES

These regulations govern the use of personal watercraft on all waters of the state:

1. A person must be at least 16 years old to operate a personal watercraft.
2. Personal watercraft may not be operated between sunset and sunrise.
3. Anyone on board a personal watercraft must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved Type I, II, or III life jacket.
4. All personal watercraft 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 personal watercraft may not be used to tow a person on water skis, aquaplanes or other similar devices unless:
   a. It has the capacity to carry three people, which includes the driver, a rear-facing observer and the skier; and
   b. It is specifically designed by the manufacturer for skiing.
6. On all waters of the state, except in a crossing or overtaking situation as described in the Federal Rules of the Road, a personal watercraft may not be operated at a speed in excess of 6 knots within 100 feet of any shore, wharf, pier, bridge abutment, another personal watercraft or people in the water.
7. On Maryland waters of the Atlantic Ocean, a personal watercraft may not be operated within 300 feet of people in the water or surf fishermen.
8. On Maryland waters of the Atlantic Ocean, a personal watercraft may not be operated at a speed in excess of 6 knots within 300 feet of any wharf, pier or jetty.
9. A personal watercraft may not be operated in a negligent manner. (i.e., splashing, playing "chicken", intentionally throwing off a passenger, etc.).
10. All personal watercraft operated and registered in Maryland must have a Department of Natural Resources-approved regulations sticker properly affixed.
11. A person may not operate or give permission to operate a personal watercraft 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: Personal watercraft operating on Deep Creek Lake are subject to additional restrictions. Personal watercraft and hovercrafts may not be operated on the lake, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., on Memorial Day weekend, as well as the weekends and holidays from July 1 through Labor Day. For more information, call 301-387-4111.

PADDLECRAFT: CANOES, KAYAKS, ROWBOATS OR STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDS

Maryland law does not specify age or education requirements for paddle craft operators. However, take reasonable precautions concerning the age and skill levels of anyone in/on a paddle craft. This is particularly important in a kayak or on a paddle board, where the paddler is usually the only person onboard.

In Maryland, canoes, kayaks, rowboats and stand-up paddle boards are not required to be registered. However, if you mount a motor on a paddle craft, all rules for motorized vessels apply. You must register the craft and obtain a Certificate of Number and decals as you would for any other motorized vessel.

All paddle craft (except those engaged in the act of surfing) are considered vessels by the U.S. Coast Guard and must follow all general boating rules and regulations, including:

- All paddle craft must have at least one wearable life jacket of a proper size for each person onboard.
- All paddle craft operators must have a sound-producing device on board such as a whistle, bell or horn.
- At night or in periods of limited visibility, all paddle craft are required to carry at least one lantern or flashlight with a white light that must be visible in all directions. It is prohibited to display visual distress signals while on the water unless assistance is required to prevent immediate or potential danger to persons on board a vessel.

WATER SKIING

In Maryland, water skiing is not allowed between the hours of sunset and sunrise. The towing boat must have at least two people on board, an observer and an operator, both being at least 12 old. In certain marked areas, water skiing is not allowed. Tow lines may not be more than 75 feet long, except when barefoot skiing; in which a towline 100 feet long 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. The use of Controlled Ski Courses on the Upper Severn River, Maynadier Creek and Upper South River is restricted to certified vessels displaying a Department of Natural Resources-issued sticker.

WAKE SURFING

Wake surfers must follow these regulations:

- Due to the large wake created by a wake surfing boat, it must be operated at least 200 feet from shoreline, all marine structures (including piers, docks, bridge structures, abutments, and anchored swimming or water-skiing floats), navigation aids such as regulatory buoys and channel markers, other vessels that are underway, anchored or moored and persons in the water.
- Any portable ballast tank must have a manufacturer's label that gives the tank's maximum capacity in gallons and/or maximum weight in pounds.
- The combined weight of the ballast, passengers, gear and motors must not exceed the maximum weight capacity for that vessel.

JETPACK VESSEL REQUIREMENTS

In addition to adhering to all boating laws, these specific requirements apply to jetpack vessel operation in Maryland. Jetpack vessels MUST:

- Be registered.
- Have an engine cutoff switch.
- Be accompanied by another vessel that is suitable for rescue. The rescue vessel must have an observer at least 16 old on board and display an international orange flag at least 12-by-12 inches in size.

To operate a jetpack vessel you MUST:

- Be at least 16 years old.
- Carry a Certificate of Boating Safety Education with you.
- Wear a helmet and a high-impact rated, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- Display international orange markings such as having a vest or flag.

You may NOT operate a jetpack vessel:

- In a reckless or negligent manner.
- While under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Between sunset and sunrise.
- Within 100 feet in any direction, including vertically, of any bridge, structure, shore, wharf, pier, piling, buoy, vessel or person in the water.
- In or near an area where visibility is restricted.
- In a speed zone or channel, unless the rider maintains contact with the water at all times.
- In a porpoise-like motion where the vessel goes under the water for a lateral distance of more than two feet and then resurfaces, unless the water is at least 25 feet deep.

No jetpack vessel rider may pick up another person or use a tandem harness with a second rider.

Miscellaneous Regulations and Information

dnr.maryland.gov/boating

TRIBUTYLTIN ANTI-FOULING PAINT

Federal and state laws restrict the use of anti-fouling paints that contain tributyltin as an active biocide. Except under specific conditions, paints containing tributyltin cannot be used on recreational vessels. Tributyltin is an ingredient that has been found to be extremely toxic to fish and oyster larvae. Anyone wishing to apply paints containing tributyltin must first obtain a permit from the Maryland Department of Agriculture at 410-841-5710. Permits are not required to apply approved paints from spray cans of 16 ounces or less (commonly referred to as lower unit paint.)

NOISE REGULATIONS/MUFFLERS

A person may not operate or give permission to operate a vessel on Maryland waters that exceeds a maximum noise level of 90 dB(a). On the waters of Deep Creek Lake and from the mouth of the Northeast and Elk rivers to include all tributaries including the Bohemia River and the C&D Canal, a person may not operate a vessel in such a manner to exceed the following vessel noise levels:

1. For engines manufactured before Jan. 1, 1993, the maximum noise level may not exceed 90dB(a)
2. For engines manufactured on or after Jan. 1, 1993, the maximum noise level may not exceed 88dB(a).

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.

A person may not own, operate or give permission to operate on the waters of the state a vessel manufactured after January 1990, that is not equipped with a muffler or system which muffles or suppresses engine noise to the established limits. On the waters of Deep Creek Lake and from the mouth of the Northeast and Elk rivers to include all tributaries including the Bohemia River and the C&D Canal, a vessel must operate with a continuous muffler or noise suppression system and may not operate a device that bypasses, reduces or eliminates the effectiveness of a muffler or engine noise suppression device or system.

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 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 provide assistance when such action is deemed proper.

VESSELS CARRYING PASSENGERS FOR HIRE

1. A vessel is considered to be carrying passengers for hire when something of value is exchanged for the service.
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 the Baltimore Licensing Section of the U.S. Coast Guard at 410-962-5119.

COMMERCIAL FISHING GUIDE LICENSE

Anyone who wants to provide services as a fishing guide must obtain a commercial fishing guide license. For further information, contact any department Licensing and Registration Service Center (page 5.)

REGULATIONS FOR SPECIFIC WATERS

Deep Creek Lake

1. Vessels 26 feet long or larger are prohibited, except pontoon boats, which may not exceed 30 feet.
2. Personal watercraft may not be operated on the lake, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., on Memorial Day week-end, as well as the weekends and holidays from July 1 through Labor Day.
3. Noone 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, call 301-387-4111 or contact:

Lake Manager
Deep Creek Lake Recreation Area
898 State Park Road
Swanton, MD 21561

Severn, South, Magothy and Middle Rivers

Special regulations apply to the Severn, South, Magothy and Middle rivers and their tributaries. Different 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 Department of Natural Resources, Fishing and Boating Services at 410-260-8321 for a brochure on the regulations on these rivers. This information is also available at *dnr.maryland.gov/boating.*

Upper Potomac River

Anyone aboard a vessel, raft, or tube shall wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III, or V life jacket at all times when on the Upper Potomac River and its tributaries between Nov. 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 life jackets 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.

Upper Potomac 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.

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 dnr.maryland.gov. Further information can also be acquired at weather.gov/lwx

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

Maryland's Coastal Bays

The Coastal Bays, also known as the back bays behind Ocean City and Assateague Island, 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 caution.

The bays have very unpredictable boating conditions since they are very shallow with strong currents and tides in many areas. Local knowledge is recommended to operate outside the main channels. Extra care is needed when boating in coastal areas with sensitive habitat, such as submerged aquatic vegetation beds and bird nesting sites.

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 Natural Resources Police at 410-548-7071.

Safety and Survival Tips

dnr.maryland.gov/boating

VESSEL CONDITION

The operator should ensure 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.

People = (Length of boat X 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 7 to 10 times the depth of the water. Do not anchor by the stern. The square stern may be hit by waves, and water will splash into the boat. The motor's weight will add to this problem. Also, you should never anchor in, or otherwise obstruct passage through, channels or areas such as launching ramps or any other high-traffic areas.

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. Evaporating gasoline creates vapors or fumes that are heavier than air. These fumes settle to the bottom of the vessel where they could explode if enclosed areas, such as the bilge, are not ventilated properly to remove fumes. Never fuel at night unless it is an emergency. If you must refuel after dark, use only electric lights. To protect the water, try to refuel away from the water or on a commercial fueling ramp.

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. Also, operating at two-thirds throttle instead of full throttle will help to conserve fuel.

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. Engine maintenance is important. Follow a regular maintenance program. Keep your engine clean and tuned properly. Refer to your owner's manual for a maintenance

schedule. Check the oil and fluid levels before every outing. Change the oil according to the owner's manual. As the engine ages, increase the frequency of oil changes. Clean oil extends engine life.

Tighten battery connections. Clean battery terminals by disconnecting the terminals and removing corrosion with a wire brush. If the battery is weak when you start the engine, recharge it. Inspect the engine for anything that shows signs of wear or requires tightening, such as hoses, belts and bolts. Make sure everything is fitted properly, including the engine cover.

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.

Be observant of weather from all directions. However, closely watch the weather to the WEST, the direction from which most bad weather arrives. To determine the distance you are from an approaching thunderstorm count the number of seconds between the flash of lightning and the clasp of thunder. Divide the number of seconds by five. The result is roughly the distance in miles you are from the storm.

To issue a MAYDAY call on Channel 16 of your VHF radio, transmit "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY." Say, "This is (name of your vessel three times, call letters once)." Repeat once more "MAYDAY" and your vessel name. Then report your location, the nature of your emergency, the kind of assistance needed, the number of people on board and the condition of any injured and describe the seaworthiness of your vessel. If there is no response, repeat the message.

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. These boats tend to be unstable and easily capsized. Capsizing, sinking and falling overboard account for 70 percent of boating fatalities. 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 lead to drowning. Wearing a life jacket increases your chance of survival. 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 percent of body heat is lost from the head.

If alone, use the Heat Escape Lessening Position (HELP). This position protects the body's three major areas of heat loss (groin, head/neck, and rib cage/ armpits). Wearing a life jacket allows you to draw your knees to your chest and your arms to your sides. If there are others in the water with you, huddle together to lessen the loss of body heat as well as to boost morale. Also, rescuers can spot a group more easily than individuals.

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.

SHARING THE WATERWAYS WITH OTHERS

When you paddle on waterways with other vessels, you are at risk because paddle craft are small and difficult to see. Do not assume that other operators see you. Your primary responsibility is to keep a sharp lookout and avoid a collision.

- Always be sure other boaters are aware of your presence.
- Be considerate of other vessels. Operate in a manner that allows everyone to navigate safely.
- Paddle as close to shore as is safe, and avoid channels used by larger craft.
- Keep out of the way of large, deep-draft vessels that can navigate safely

only in the deepest part of a channel.

- When operating in a narrow channel, keep to the starboard (right) side of the channel whenever it is safe and practical to do so.
- If traveling with a group of paddlers, cross any channels as a group at right angles.
- Stay at least 100 yards or further from military and commercial ships, and observe all restrictions in security zones.
- Render assistance to other paddlers in need, unless you would place yourself or your paddlecraft in danger.
- When a powerboat passes, turn the bow of your boat or nose of your paddleboard into the wake to help prevent a capsize.

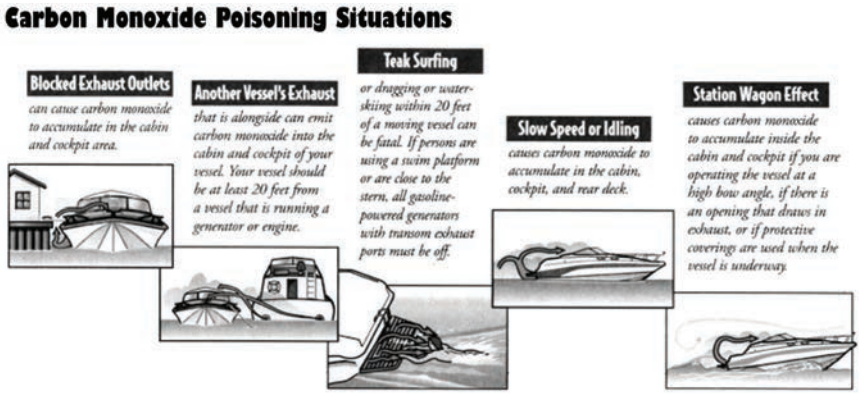
CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Carbon monoxide is a potentially deadly gas produced any time a carbon-based fuel, such as gasoline, propane, charcoal or oil, burns. Sources 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 monxide 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, allow carbon monoxide to infiltrate the boat and 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, visit uscgboating.org.



AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Each year, billions of dollars and millions of hours are spent battling invasive species around the globe. These non-native species that cause economic, environmental or human health related harm. They can be plants, animals or pathogens. They typically grow and reproduce rapidly and often lack natural predators in their introduced environments, allowing their populations to explode. Learn more at dnr.maryland.gov/invasives.

BOATERS, TAKE ACTION

Prevent the transport of invasive species. It is your responsibility to clean ALL recreational equipment before and after use.

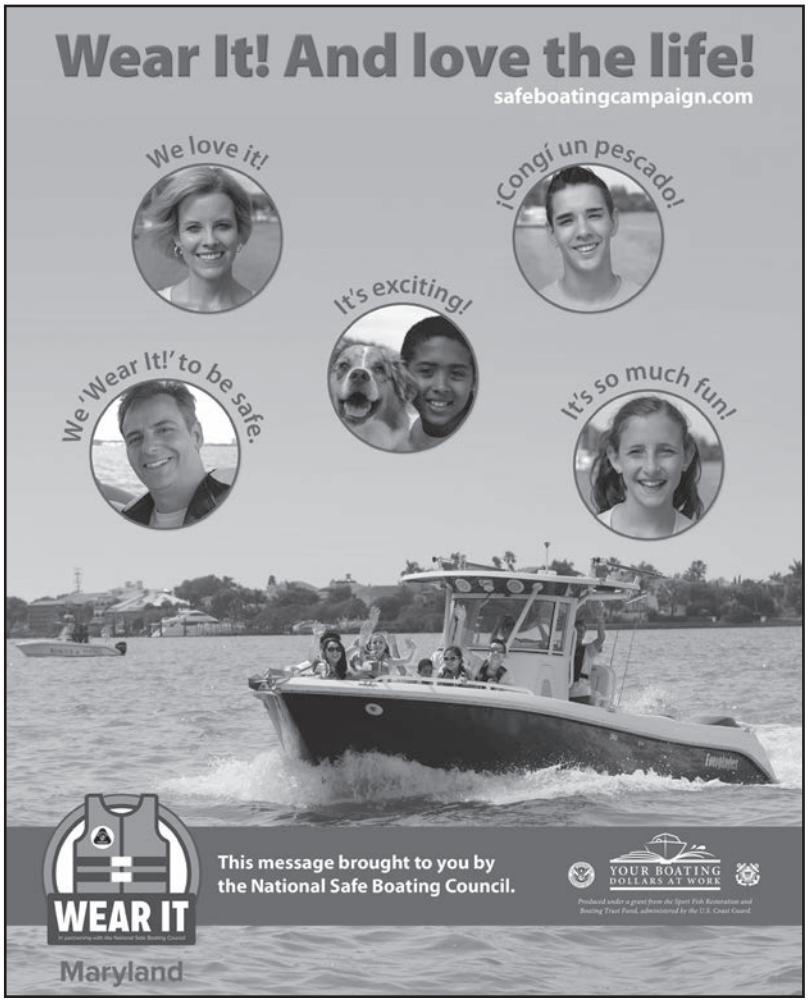
Report Criminal and Suspicious Activity

The Maryland Natural Resources Police is actively engaged in preventing criminal and conservation violations, and are investigating all suspicious activity that may be occurring on state lands and waterways. Citizens can help by reporting suspicious activity to officers.

Be on the lookout and report:

1. Attempts to buy or charter vessels using large cash payments.
2. Asking suspicious questions about marine activity or major facilities.
3. Vessels operating at night without running lights.
4. Loading or unloading vessels at unusual hours or in remote locations.
5. Vessels riding excessively low in the water.
6. Vessels with no registration numbers or name displayed.
7. Suspicious activity around large commercial vessels (freighters, tankers, etc.) including off-loading of people and packages into small boats, or during unusual times.
8. Unusual or suspicious diving activity around marinas, vessels, wharfs, bridges, ports, dams, tunnels, etc.
9. Abandoned/unattended vessels or vehicles in or near unusual locations, major facilities or public areas.
10. Suspicious filming activity near marine critical infrastructure (bridges, power plants, etc.)
11. Subjects wearing unusual clothing for weather conditions.

Maryland Natural Resources Police:
Channel 16 (156.8 MHz) or 800-628-9944
Chesapeake Bay Safety & Environmental Hotline: 877-224-7229



Stay Connected!

With the touch of a screen, boaters can locate ramps and vessel speed zones, hikers can navigate trails, friends can share photos, families can make park reservations, anglers can identify fish, and hunters can check in harvests.

Users can also access regulations and guidelines, and receive news and alerts.

What are you waiting for? Download it for free today!

NOTE: This publication is intended as a guide only. For state laws and regulations, see the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and the Code of Maryland Regulations, Title 08. Maryland laws and regulations can be found at the following websites:

Laws: *lawlib.state.md.us* | **Regulations:** *dnr.maryland.gov*