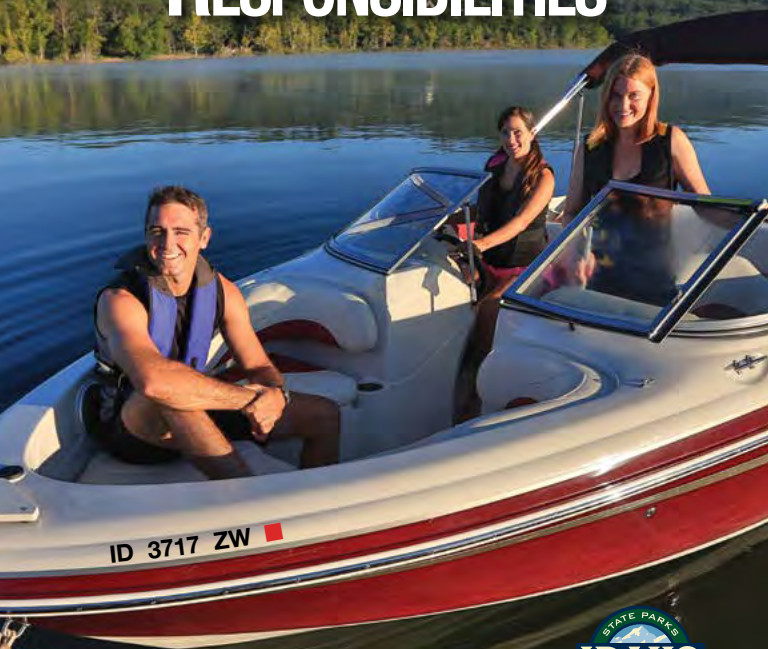


# THE HANDBOOK OF IDAHO BOATING LAWS AND RESPONSIBILITIES





## A Course on Responsible Boating

Boater education is a good idea for all Idaho boaters. Not only will you learn how to boat safely, but becoming certified also can save you money on your boat or PWC insurance. You have **two** ways to be certified.



### 1. Over the Internet...

Learn what you need to know to be a safe boater or personal watercraft (PWC) operator online! The complete course with exciting visuals awaits you on the Internet. Interactive graphics help you learn and retain information on boating safely in Idaho. Successfully complete the online test, and you will receive your boater education certificate by mail.

Start today at [www.boat-ed.com/idaho](http://www.boat-ed.com/idaho)  
or at [www.boatidaho.gov](http://www.boatidaho.gov).

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### 2. In a classroom...

Share the learning experience with other interested students and a qualified instructor. Classes are offered by the county sheriff's office, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadrons, and community education organizations. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation can help you find a classroom course in your area. For more information:

Call **208-334-4199**  
or visit [www.boatidaho.gov](http://www.boatidaho.gov).

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# THE HANDBOOK OF IDAHO BOATING LAWS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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## Stay Up to Date on New Boating Laws...

- For state boating law information, access the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation's website at **[www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov](http://www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov)** or **[www.boatidaho.gov](http://www.boatidaho.gov)**, or you may contact the county sheriff or call the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation at **208-334-4199**.
- For federal boating laws, visit the U.S. Coast Guard's boating safety website at **[www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)**.



*Information in this handbook does not replace what is specifically legal in Idaho, which is found in the Idaho Safe Boating Act.*

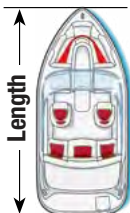
# Before Going Out

Before going out on the water, take steps to make the outing safe and enjoyable.

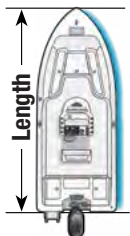
## Vessel Length Classes

- A vessel's length class determines the equipment necessary to comply with federal and state laws.
- Vessels are divided into length classes:
  - Less than 16 feet
  - 16 feet to less than 26 feet
  - 26 feet to less than 40 feet
  - 40 feet to less than 65 feet
- Length is measured from the tip of the bow in a straight line to the stern. This does not include outboard motors, brackets, rudders, bow attachments, or swim platforms and ladders that are not a molded part of the hull.

### Inboards



### Outboards



## Vessel Capacity

- Always check the capacity plate, which is usually found near the operator's position or on the vessel's transom. This plate indicates the maximum weight capacity and maximum number of people that the vessel can carry safely. It also indicates the maximum horsepower.
- Personal watercraft (PWC) and some other vessels are not required to have a capacity plate. Always follow the recommended capacity in the owner's manual and on the manufacturer's warning decal.

## Fueling a Vessel

Never fuel at night unless it is an emergency. If you must refuel after dark, use only electric lights. Try to refuel away from the water or on a commercial fueling ramp.

**■ Before beginning to fuel:**

- Dock the boat securely and ask all passengers to exit.
- Do not allow anyone to smoke or strike a match.
- Check all fuel lines, connections, and fuel vents.
- Turn off anything that might cause a spark—engines, fans, or electrical equipment.
- Shut off all fuel valves and extinguish all open flames, such as galley stoves and pilot lights.
- Close all windows, ports, doors, and other openings to prevent fumes from entering the boat.
- Remove portable fuel tanks and fill them on the dock.

**■ While filling the fuel tank:**

- Keep the nozzle of the fuel-pump hose in contact with the tank opening to prevent producing a static spark.
- Avoid spilling fuel into the boat's bilge or the water.
- Never fill a tank to the brim—leave room to expand.
- Wipe up any spilled fuel.

**The most important safe fueling practice...**

If your vessel is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes after fueling and before starting your engine to remove gas vapors in the bilge.

**■ After fueling:**

- Open all windows, ports, doors, and other openings.
- Before starting the engine, sniff the bilge and engine compartment for fuel vapors.

**Additional Safety Procedures for PWC**

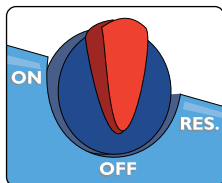
- Do not tip the PWC in order to fill it all the way up. If the tank is overfilled, the fuel may expand and spill into the water.
- After fueling, open the door of the engine compartment and sniff to check for any evidence of gas fumes. Do this before starting the engine. If you do smell gas fumes, determine the source and make repairs immediately.



## Fuel Selector Switch on a PWC

This switch can help you avoid becoming stranded without fuel.

- Use the “Off” position when the PWC’s engine is turned off.
- Use the “On” position while you are underway.
- Use the “Reserve” position if you run out of fuel while underway. This will allow you to return to shore. Don’t forget to switch back to “On” after refueling.



## Preventing Theft

Defend against theft of your vessel and equipment.

- Store your vessel so that it is not easily accessed.
  - Store your vessel and trailer in a locked garage or storage area.
  - Park another vehicle in front of the trailer, or lock the trailer to a fixed object in a well-lit area.
  - Secure the vessel and trailer to a fixed object with a good-quality chain and lock. If moored, secure the vessel to the dock with a steel cable and lock.
  - Remove a trailer wheel if parked for an extended time.
  - Purchase a quality trailer hitch lock and use it.
- Chain and lock the motor and fuel tanks to the vessel.
- Mark or engrave all equipment with an identifier such as your driver’s license number.
- Photograph or videotape the interior and exterior of your vessel, showing all installed equipment and additional gear and equipment. Make a complete inventory of your equipment, vessel, and trailer.
- Remove expensive electronics or other valuables if the vessel is left unattended.
- Cover your vessel and always remove the keys.
- Title and register your vessel.



## Filing a Float Plan

Before going out on a vessel, it is always a good idea to leave a float plan with a relative or friend, or at least with a local marina. A float plan should:

- Describe the vessel, including its registration number, length, make, horsepower, and engine type.
- State where you are going, the detailed route, your planned departure time, and your expected return time.
- Give the name, address, and telephone number of each person on board and an emergency contact.

## Pre-Departure Checklist

You can help ensure a good time while operating your vessel by performing this pre-departure check.

- ✓ Check the weather forecast for the area and time frame during which you will be boating.
- ✓ Make sure that the steering and throttle controls operate properly and all lights are working properly.
- ✓ Check for any fuel leaks from the tank, fuel lines, and carburetor.
- ✓ Check the engine compartment for oil leaks.
- ✓ Check hose connections for leaks or cracks, and make sure hose clamps are tight.
- ✓ Drain all water from the engine compartment, and be sure the bilge plug is replaced and secure.
- ✓ Check to be sure you have a fully charged engine battery and fire extinguishers.
- ✓ If so equipped, make sure the engine cut-off switch (ECOS) and wrist lanyard are in good order.
- ✓ Make sure you have the required personal flotation devices (PFDs), and check that they are in good condition.
- ✓ Leave a float plan with a reliable friend or relative.

# On the Water

Safe navigation on Idaho waterways is everyone's responsibility. All operators are equally responsible for taking action necessary to avoid collisions.

## Encountering Other Vessels

Even though no vessel has the "right-of-way" over another vessel, there are some rules that every operator should follow when encountering other vessels. It is the responsibility of both operators to take the action needed to avoid a collision. The next page shows what to do when encountering another vessel.

**To prevent collisions, every operator should follow the three basic rules of navigation.**

- Practice good seamanship.
- Keep a sharp lookout.
- Maintain a safe speed and distance.

## Encountering Vessels With Limited Maneuverability

- When operating a power-driven vessel, you must give way to:
  - Any vessel not under command, such as an anchored or disabled vessel
  - Any vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver, such as a vessel towing another or laying cable, or one constrained by its draft, such as a large ship in a channel
  - A vessel engaged in commercial fishing
  - A sailboat under sail unless it is overtaking
- When operating a vessel under sail, you must give way to:
  - Any vessel not under command
  - Any vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver
  - A vessel engaged in commercial fishing

## Navigation Rules

There are two terms that help explain these rules.

- **Stand-on vessel:** The vessel that should maintain its course and speed
- **Give-way vessel:** The vessel that must take early and substantial action to avoid collision by stopping, slowing down, or changing course

### Power vs. Power



### Meeting Head-On

**Power vs. Power:** Neither vessel is the stand-on vessel. Both vessels should keep to the starboard (right).

**Power vs. Sail:** The powerboat is the give-way vessel. The sailboat is the stand-on vessel.

### Crossing Situations

**Power vs. Power:** The vessel on the operator's port (left) side is the give-way vessel. The vessel on the operator's starboard (right) side is the stand-on vessel.

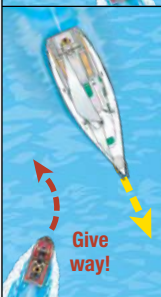
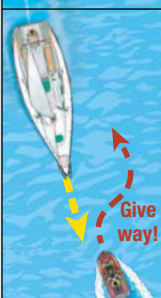
**Power vs. Sail:** The powerboat is the give-way vessel. The sailboat is the stand-on vessel.

### Overtaking

**Power vs. Power:** The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.

**Power vs. Sail:** The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.

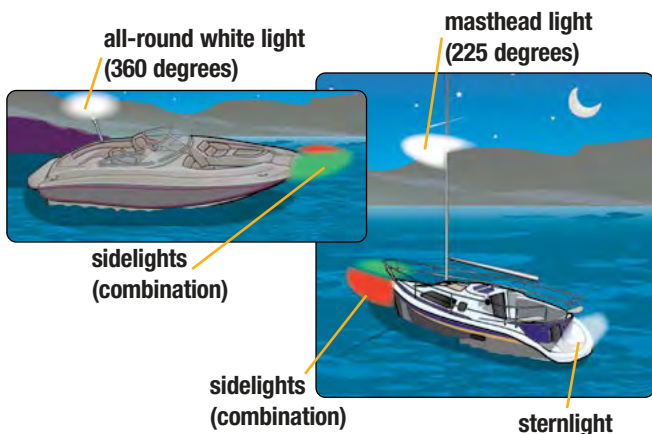
### Power vs. Sail



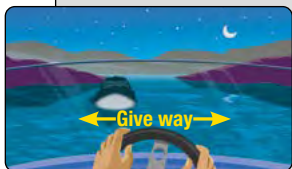
## Nighttime Navigation

Be on the lookout for the lights of other vessels when boating at night. Several types of lights serve as navigation aids at night. There are four common navigation lights.

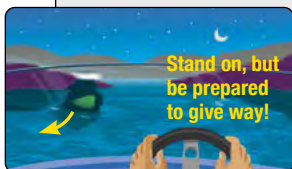
- **Sidelights:** These red and green lights are called sidelights (also called combination lights) because they are visible to another vessel approaching from the side or head-on. The red light indicates a vessel's port (left) side; the green indicates a vessel's starboard (right) side.
- **Sternlight:** This white light is seen from behind or nearly behind the vessel.
- **Masthead Light:** This white light shines forward and to both sides and is required on all power-driven vessels. A masthead light must be displayed by all vessels when under engine power. The absence of this light indicates a sailboat under sail.
- **All-Round White Light:** On power-driven vessels less than 39.4 feet in length, this light may be used to combine a masthead light and sternlight into a single white light that can be seen by other vessels from any direction. This light serves as an anchor light when sidelights are extinguished.



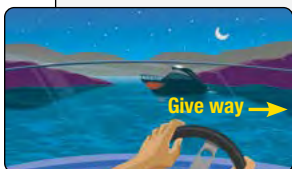
## Encountering Vessels at Night



When you see only a white light, you are overtaking another vessel. It is the stand-on vessel whether it is underway or anchored. You may go around it on either side.



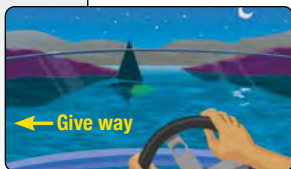
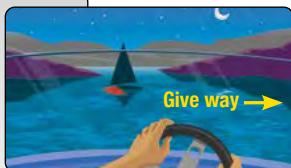
When you see a green and a white light, you are the stand-on vessel. However, remain alert in case the other vessel operator does not see you or does not know the navigation rules.



When you see a red and a white light, you must give way to the other vessel. Slow down and allow the vessel to pass, or you may turn to the right and pass behind the other vessel.

## Encountering a Sailboat at Night

When you see **only a red light** or **only a green light**, you may be approaching a sailboat under sail and you must give way. The sailboat under sail is always the stand-on vessel.



## U.S. Aids to Navigation System (ATON)

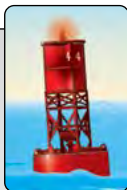
Buoys and markers are the “traffic signals” that guide vessel operators safely along some waterways. They also identify dangerous or controlled areas and give directions and information. As a recreational boat or PWC operator, you will need to know the lateral navigation markers and non-lateral markers of the U.S. Aids to Navigation System (ATON).

### Lateral Markers

These navigation aids mark the edges of safe water areas; for example, directing travel within a channel. The markers use a combination of colors and numbers, which may appear on either buoys or permanently placed markers.

#### **Red colors, red lights, and even numbers**

indicate the right side of the channel as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream.

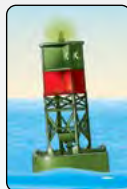


#### **Green colors, green lights,**

**and odd numbers** indicate the left side of the channel as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream.

#### **Red and green colors and/or lights**

indicate the preferred (primary) channel. If green is on top, the preferred channel is to the right as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream; if red is on top, the preferred channel is to the left.



**Nuns** are red cone-shaped buoys marked with even numbers.



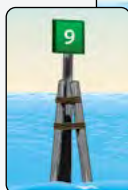
**Cans** are green cylindrical-shaped buoys marked with odd numbers.



**Lighted Buoys** use the lateral marker colors and numbers discussed above; in addition, they have a matching colored light.



**Daymarks** are permanently placed signs attached to structures, such as posts, in the water. Common daymarks are red triangles (equivalent to nuns) and green squares (equivalent to cans). They may be lighted also.



## Red Right Returning

is a reminder of the correct course when returning from open waters or heading upstream.

## Non-Lateral Markers

Non-lateral markers are navigation aids that give information other than the edges of safe water areas. The most common are regulatory markers that are white and use orange markings and black lettering. These markers are found on lakes and rivers.



### Information

Squares indicate where to find food, supplies, repairs, etc., and give directions and other information.



### Controlled

Circles indicate a controlled area such as speed limit, no fishing or anchoring, ski only or no skiing, or “slow, no wake.”



### Exclusion

Crossed diamonds indicate areas off limits to all vessels such as swimming areas, dams, and spillways.



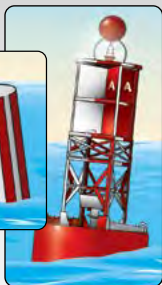
### Danger

Diamonds warn of dangers such as rocks, shoals, construction, dams, or stumps. Always proceed with caution.



## Other Non-Lateral Markers

**Safe Water Markers** are white with red vertical stripes and mark mid-channels or fairways. They may be passed on either side.



**Inland Waters Obstruction Markers** are white with black vertical stripes and indicate an obstruction to navigation. You should not pass between these buoys and the nearest shore.

## Mooring Buoy

Mooring buoys are white with a blue horizontal band and are found in marinas and other areas where vessels are allowed to anchor.



## Weather Emergencies

Weather can change very rapidly and create unexpected situations for boat operators. Even meteorologists have trouble predicting rapid weather changes. You should always monitor weather developments. One way is to use a VHF radio.

## What to Do if Caught in Severe Weather

### ■ Prepare the boat to handle severe weather.

- Slow down, but keep enough power to maintain headway and steering.
- Close all hatches, windows, and doors to reduce the chance of swamping.
- Stow any unnecessary gear.
- Turn on your boat's navigation lights. If there is fog, sound your foghorn.
- Keep bilges free of water. Be prepared to remove water by bailing.
- If there is lightning, disconnect all electrical equipment. Stay as clear of metal objects as possible.

### ■ Prepare your passengers for severe weather.

- Have everyone put on a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)–approved PFD. If passengers are already wearing their PFDs, make sure they are secured properly.
- Have your passengers sit on the vessel floor close to the centerline for their safety and to make the boat more stable.

### ■ Decide whether to go to shore or ride out the storm.

- If possible, head for the nearest shore that is safe to approach. If already caught in a storm, it may be best to ride it out in open water rather than try to approach the shore in heavy wind and waves.
- Head the bow into the waves at a 45-degree angle. PWC should head directly into the waves.
- If the engine stops, drop a “sea anchor” on a line off the bow to keep the bow headed into the wind and reduce drifting while you ride out the storm. In an emergency, a bucket will work as a sea anchor.
- If the sea anchor is not sufficient, anchor using your conventional anchor to prevent your boat from drifting into dangerous areas.

## Surviving Cold Water Immersion

Sudden immersion in cold water is one of the greatest hazards to Idaho's boaters. Experts consider water temperatures below 70° Fahrenheit to be cold. In Idaho, this would include all our waterways.

### ■ Cold water shock is often more dangerous than hypothermia.

- Many of the victims who have lost their lives in boating accidents didn't die as a result of poor swimming skills or the effects of hypothermia—they died from the immediate effects of cold water shock as a result of immersion in cold water. Unlike hypothermia, the effects of cold water shock can lead to death in just a few minutes and in some cases, in seconds.
- When the body is suddenly immersed in cold water, it can trigger a **cold shock** response—an automatic reflex that can cause immediate, involuntary gasping that can last up to a minute. If the victim is under the water, water can be inhaled into the lungs. This also can lead to hyperventilation or can trigger cardiac arrest, especially in people with heart disease. If a person isn't wearing a PFD while boating, it is very difficult to put on a PFD once a boat has capsized. It is critical that everyone on board is already wearing a PFD.

### ■ Hypothermia is the body's response when the core body temperature falls below normal, such as when a person falls into cold water.

- Falling into cold water speeds the loss of body heat 25 times faster than being in cold air and can result in hypothermia in 30 to 90 minutes.
- Hypothermia affects the entire body, from the body's core to the brain, heart, lungs, and other vital organs. Even a mild case of hypothermia diminishes a victim's physical and mental abilities, thus increasing the risk of accidents. Severe hypothermia may result in unconsciousness and possibly death.

- Nearly all boaters who die in water-related accidents had no intention of going into the water. The most important practice in cold water survival is taking steps to prevent going into the water.
  - Never risk anyone's life by going out in bad weather or severe water conditions.
  - Be certain you have the skills you need for the waterways you use. Overestimating your own skills or underestimating the forces of cold, moving water can be a deadly oversight.
  - Wear a bright-colored, high-visibility PFD. Attach a whistle to it for emergency signaling.
  - Monitor the weather, and dress appropriately. Consider both the water and the air temperature.
    - During the coldest seasons, wear a wetsuit or drysuit.
    - For the rest of the year, wear wool or synthetic cloth in layers to retain body heat.
  - Always travel with others. Take a friend along, and boat or paddle in a group.
  - Let someone know where you will be boating and when you expect to return.
- **If you enter cold water unexpectedly:**
  - Stay with the boat. It's easier for rescuers to spot the boat than a person in the water.
  - Be sure everyone is wearing a PFD that is securely fastened.
  - Try to right the boat and reboard it. Signal for help even though you may feel safe and at ease.
  - Don't remove your clothes—they may provide flotation and insulation.
  - Do not swim unless there is absolutely no chance of rescue and you are absolutely certain you can make it to shore. If you do swim, make sure you are wearing a PFD or use some other flotation aid.

# Specifically for PWC

Although a PWC is considered an inboard vessel and comes under the same rules and requirements of any other vessel, there are specific considerations for the PWC operator.

## Steering and Stopping a PWC

### steering control



### steering nozzle

- PWC are propelled by drawing water into a pump and then forcing it out under pressure through a steering nozzle at the back of the unit. This “jet” of pressurized water is directed by the steering control—when the steering control is turned, the steering nozzle turns in the same direction. For example, if the steering control is turned right, the nozzle turns right and the jet of water pushes the back of the vessel to the left, which causes the PWC to turn right.

### **Remember—no power means no steering control...**

Most PWC and other jet-drive vessels must have power in order to maintain control. If you allow the engine on a PWC or other jet-propelled vessel to return to idle or shut off during operation, you may lose all steering control. Many PWC will continue in the direction they were headed before the engine was shut off, no matter which way the steering control is turned. New PWC allow for off-throttle steering.

- **Most PWC do not have brakes.** Always allow plenty of room for stopping. Just because you release the throttle or shut off the engine does not mean you will stop immediately. Even PWC that have a braking system do not stop immediately.

## Engine Cut-Off Switch (ECOS)

- Most PWC and powerboats come equipped by the manufacturer with an important device called an emergency engine cut-off switch (ECOS). If properly worn, this is a safety device that is designed to shut off the engine if the operator is thrown from the proper operating position. The USCG requires that operators of vessels equipped with an ECOS use the device at all times.

- A lanyard is attached to the ECOS and the operator's wrist or PFD. The ECOS shuts off the engine if the operator falls off the PWC or out of the powerboat. If your vessel does not come equipped with an ECOS, you should have one installed.



- In many states, it is illegal to ride your PWC without attaching the lanyard properly between the switch and yourself.

### Remember...

Beginning April 2021, a new federal rule requires operators of recreational vessels less than 26 feet in length to use the ECOS if the vessel is equipped with such a device. Operators must use the ECOS whenever the vessel is operating on plane or above displacement speed.

Be sure to check with the state boating agency where you are boating to determine how this new USCG rule applies locally. For more information on this requirement, visit

[www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/engine-cut-off-switch-faq.php](http://www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/engine-cut-off-switch-faq.php).

## Reboarding a Capsized PWC

After a fall, the PWC could be overturned completely. You should be familiar with the proper procedure to right the PWC and to reboard from the rear of the craft.

- Most manufacturers have placed a decal at the rear or bottom of the craft that indicates the direction to roll your PWC to return it to an upright position. If no decal exists, check your owner's manual or ask the dealer. If you roll it over the wrong way, you could damage your PWC.
- Practice reboarding with someone else around to make sure you can handle it alone. Don't ride your PWC if you are very tired because reboarding will be difficult. Also, avoid riding where there are strong currents or winds, which could hamper your reboarding efforts.



## Courtesy When Encountering Other Vessels

- Jumping the wake of a passing boat, or riding too close to another PWC or boat, creates risks and is restricted or even prohibited in some states. The vessel making the wake may block the PWC operator's view of oncoming traffic and also conceal the PWC operator from approaching vessels.
- Excessive noise from PWC often makes them unwelcome with other vessel operators and people on shore. Be a courteous PWC operator.
  - Vary your operating area, and do not keep repeating the same maneuver.
  - Avoid congregating with other PWC operators near shore, which increases annoying noise levels.
  - Avoid making excessive noise near residential and camping areas, particularly early in the morning.
  - Avoid maneuvers that cause the engine exhaust to lift out of the water because that increases noise levels.
  - Do not modify your engine exhaust system if it increases the noise. Improperly modified exhausts will not make your PWC faster and may raise the noise to an illegal level.

## Environmental Considerations

When operating your PWC, consider the effect you may have on the environment.

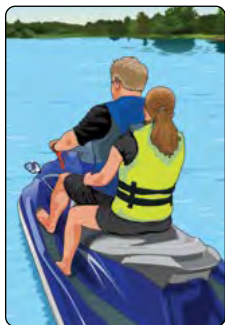
- Make sure that the water you operate in is at least 30 inches deep. Riding in shallow water can cause bottom sediments or aquatic vegetation to be sucked into the pump, damaging your PWC and the environment.
- Avoid causing erosion by operating at slow speed and by not creating a wake when operating near shore or in narrow streams or rivers.



- Do not dock or beach your PWC in reeds and grasses. This could damage fragile environments.
- Take extra care when fueling your PWC in or near the water. Oil and gasoline spills are very detrimental to the aquatic environment. Fuel on land if possible.
- Never use your PWC to disturb, chase, or harass wildlife.

### Other PWC Considerations

- Remember that everyone on board a PWC must *wear* a PFD.
- Keep hands, feet, loose clothing, and hair away from the pump intake area. Before cleaning debris away from the pump intake, be sure to shut off the engine.
- Keep everyone clear of the steering nozzle unless the PWC is shut off. The water jet can cause severe injuries.
- Frequently inspect your PWC's electrical systems (e.g., starter and engine gauge connections) to ensure there is no potential for electrical spark. Gas fumes could collect in the engine compartment and an explosion could occur. After fueling, sniff the engine compartment for any evidence of gas fumes.
- Never exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity for your PWC.
- Know your limits, and ride according to your abilities.





## Before Going Out

All operators are required to obey laws that regulate your vessel's registration and operation.

## Registering Your Vessel

- You must have an Idaho Certificate of Number and validation stickers to operate your vessel legally on Idaho waters. The only exceptions are:
  - Manually propelled vessels (for example, canoes, rafts, and kayaks)
  - Float tubes (without a motor)
  - Sailboards
  - Vessels properly registered in another state and using Idaho waters for 60 or fewer consecutive days
  - Vessels documented with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- All sailboats, whether power-driven or under sail, need to be registered.
- The original Certificate of Number or registration renewal must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is operated.*
- The registration number and validation stickers must be displayed as follows.

[illegible]

- The registration number and validation stickers must be displayed as follows.
  - Number must be painted, applied as a decal, or otherwise affixed to both sides of the bow, as high above the waterline as possible.
  - Number must read from left to right on both sides of the bow.
  - Number must be in at least three-inch-high vertical **BLOCK** letters.
  - Number's color must contrast sharply with the vessel's background.



**Spaces or hyphens should appear here.**

### Validation Sticker



- Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen equal to the letter width; for example, **ID 3717 ZW** or **ID-3717-ZW**.
- No other numbers may be displayed on either side of the bow.
- One sticker must be affixed to each side of the vessel. It must be within six inches of and in line with the registration number and may be placed to either side of the registration number. Expired stickers must be removed or covered completely by the new sticker.

## Where to Register

The Certificate of Number (registration card) and validation stickers for first-time Idaho registrations are obtained by visiting an Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) office, county Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office, or at the boat dealer where boat purchase is completed.

### Registration or Renewal Questions?

For registration or renewal questions, visit the IDPR website at **[www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov](http://www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov)**, or call IDPR at **1-888-922-6743**. You may also visit any IDPR, county DMV, or vendor location.

## Fees to Register Your Vessel

Vessels up to 12 feet in length . . . . .	\$20.00
Vessels 12 feet in length or longer . . . . .	\$20.00 plus \$2.00/foot over 12 feet
Idaho Invasive Species Fund . . . . .	\$10.00
Vessels owned by a non-profit organization . . . . .	\$2.00

*An administrative fee of \$1.50 may be added to each registration.*

## Other Facts About Titling and Registering

- The following vessels *must be titled*:
  - Any vessel, model year 2000 or newer, with a permanently attached mode of propulsion (for example, inboards, stern drives, personal watercraft (PWC), and sailboats)
  - Any non-exempt vessel, model year 2000 or newer, over 12 feet in length regardless of method of propulsion (for example, a year 2000, 13-foot boat with outboard motor)
- The Certificate of Number and validation stickers expire on December 31 of each year. Renewal notices are sent to the owners of previously registered vessels via email. You may renew on the Internet, at a county DMV office, or at a registration vendor.
  - **On the Internet:** Go to [www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov](http://www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov), and click on “Registrations, Renewals, and Passes.” Renewals completed online will be immediately validated, and customers will receive a temporary Certificate of Number via email. Permanent Certificate of Number and validation stickers will be fulfilled via mail. Customers will also have the option to set up automatic registration renewals.
  - **At a county DMV or registration vendor:** Visit a county DMV office or registration vendor, and receive face-to-face customer service. (For a complete list of participating vendors and DMV locations, please visit the website at [www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov](http://www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov).) Renewals completed at a county DMV or vendor will be immediately validated, and customers will receive either a temporary or a permanent Certificate of Number. All temporary Certificates of Number will be followed-up by a permanent certificate fulfilled via mail.
- If you change your address; if you sell, abandon, or destroy your vessel; or if your vessel is stolen, you must contact IDPR within 15 days.
- If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Number or validation stickers, you must apply to IDPR for a duplicate and submit a processing fee.
- Larger recreational vessels owned by U.S. citizens may (at the option of the owner) be documented by the USCG. Call the USCG at 1-800-799-8362 for more information.

## Buying or Selling a Vessel

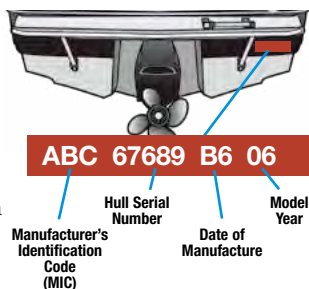
The procedure for transferring ownership of a vessel is outlined here. The steps are essentially the same whether the buyer is purchasing the vessel from a marine dealer or from an individual.

- If a registered vessel is sold or transferred to another person, the buyer must apply for a new Certificate of Number.
  - If the Idaho registration is still valid, the buyer must apply anyway and pay a small fee for the registration to be transferred to his or her name.
  - If the registration has expired or the purchased vessel is new, the buyer must purchase a new registration.
  - The registration number stays with the vessel as long as it is registered in Idaho—the number is never assigned to another vessel.
- If a registered vessel is sold or otherwise transferred to another person, the seller is required to report the transaction to the IDPR within 15 days from the date of sale.

## Hull Identification Number (HIN)

The Hull Identification Number (HIN) is a unique, 12-digit number assigned by the manufacturer required for vessels built after 1972.

- These numbers:
  - Distinguish one vessel from another.
  - Are engraved in the fiberglass or on a metal plate permanently attached to the transom, or are printed on inflated rafts and kayaks.
- You should write down your HIN and put it in a place separate from your vessel in case warranty problems arise or your vessel is stolen.



## Operator Age and Education Requirements

- Although there is no statewide law specifying a minimum age to operate a vessel, all operators must be competent and are held responsible for knowing the navigation rules. In addition, there are local age regulations, for example, in Benewah, Bonner, and Kootenai counties. Be sure to contact the counties and cities where you plan to boat about their local ordinances.
- Idaho law requires boater education under these conditions.
  - PWC rental businesses must provide education to each person who will ride and operate the PWC. The operator of the PWC must carry a verification wallet card. The IDPR provides the education materials to rental businesses.
  - In addition to penalties, boat operators are required to pass a boating course if they are convicted of operating under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
  - Boat operators who are repeat offenders of any boating law or rule also are required to pass a boating course.

## Marine Events

If an event is being held on Idaho waters, you must apply for a permit from the county sheriff who has jurisdiction over the waters at least 30 days prior to the event.



## Local Regulations

County and city governments may have additional regulations governing the operation of vessels on waters within their jurisdictions. Contact the local sheriff's department to learn of any special restrictions in the county where you will be boating.

## Enforcement

- The boating laws of Idaho are enforced primarily by sheriffs and deputy sheriffs of the county having jurisdiction over the waterway. All Idaho peace officers have the authority to stop and board vessels in order to check for compliance with federal and state laws.
- The USCG has enforcement authority on federally controlled waters. Visit the IDPR website at **[www.boatidaho.gov](http://www.boatidaho.gov)** or call the IDPR headquarters at **208-334-4199** for the list of federally controlled waters in Idaho.
- It is illegal to refuse to follow the directive of a person with law enforcement authority. An operator who has received a visual or audible sign from a law enforcement officer must bring his or her vessel to a stop.



## Courtesy Vessel Inspection

Idaho boat enforcement officers will perform a courtesy safety check of your vessel and equipment free of charge. You can contact your county sheriff to arrange for a safety check. If your vessel meets all state requirements, you will receive an Idaho inspection sticker.



# Required Equipment

When preparing to go out on a vessel, the operator must check that the legally required equipment is on board.

## Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

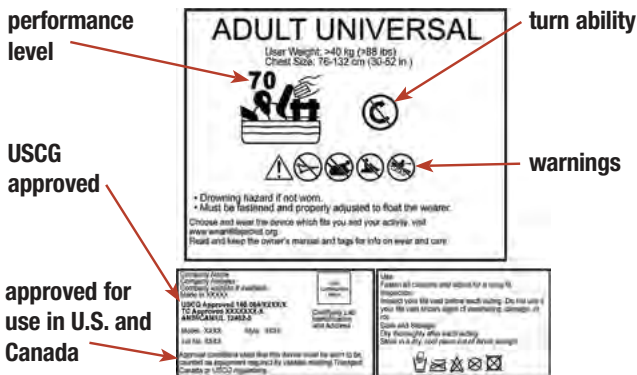
- All recreational vessels must have at least one wearable personal flotation device (PFD), sometimes called a life jacket, that is USCG approved and of the proper size for each person on board or being towed. Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.
- In addition to the above requirement, vessels 16 feet in length or longer (except canoes and kayaks of any length) must have one USCG-approved throwable device on board and readily accessible.
- Children 14 years of age or younger, on board vessels 19 feet or less, must *wear* an approved PFD when the vessel is underway.
- If a person chooses to wear a PFD that is not USCG approved (when not specifically required), a properly fitting USCG-approved PFD must be carried on board the vessel to meet the state and federal carriage requirements.
- Seaplanes, sailboards, and certain racing vessels are exempt from the above PFD requirements. Fly-fishing float tubes do not require PFDs on lakes with less than 200 surface acres. Fly-fishing pontoons do require PFDs on all Idaho waters.
- Each person riding on a PWC must *wear* a USCG-approved wearable PFD.
- Each person being towed behind a vessel must *wear* a USCG-approved PFD.
- All PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition, the correct size for the intended wearer, readily accessible, and labeled “USCG-approved.”

## PFD Label

Every USCG-approved PFD has a label that contains important information. While boating, you may encounter old- or new-style PFD labels.

Not all PFDs available are USCG approved. Regardless if the PFD label is in the old or new style, there must be a USCG approval number, and the PFD must be used in accordance with the labeling information to meet the legal requirements.

- The older legacy labels have a type number (Types I–V).
  - The type number indicates the conditions and the intended use for which the PFD is designed.
  - PFDs with these labels may still be used in the country where they are approved as long as they are in serviceable condition.
- The new labels have a performance level icon that contains a number, typically ranging from 50 to 150.
  - A lower number means the PFD is intended for near-shore activities in calm waters. PFDs designed for near-shore use offer greater mobility and comfort. However, they will not turn most unconscious persons face up.
  - A higher number means the PFD is intended for offshore activities. PFDs designed for offshore use offer greater flotation, turning ability, and stability.
  - PFDs with these labels are approved for use in both the U.S. and Canada.



## Warnings

Some PFDs are **not** approved for certain activities:



Water-skiing



PWC or wakeboarding



Tubing



Whitewater paddling

## Turn Ability



The PFD will turn an unconscious person face up. Test before use.



The PFD will not turn an unconscious person face up.



## Navigation Lights

The required navigation lights must be displayed between sunset and sunrise and during periods of restricted visibility.

### Power-Driven Vessels When Underway

**If less than 65.6 feet long**, these vessels must exhibit the lights as shown in illustration 1. Remember, power-driven vessels include sailboats operating under engine power. The required lights are:

- Red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least two miles away—or if less than 39.4 feet long, at least one mile away—on a dark, clear night.
- A masthead light and a sternlight visible from a distance of at least three miles away—or if less than 39.4 feet long, an all-round white light or both a masthead light and a sternlight visible from at least two miles away—on a dark, clear night. The all-round white light (or the masthead light) must be at least 3.3 feet higher than the sidelights.

### Unpowered Vessels When Underway

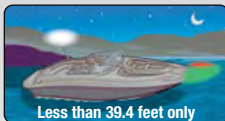
Unpowered vessels are sailboats or vessels that are paddled, poled, or rowed.

- **If less than 65.6 feet long**, these vessels must exhibit the lights as shown in illustration 2. The required lights are:
  - Red and green sidelights visible from at least two miles away—or if less than 39.4 feet long, at least one mile away.
  - A sternlight visible from at least two miles away.
- **If less than 23.0 feet long**, these vessels should:
  - If practical, exhibit the same lights as required for unpowered vessels less than 65.6 feet in length.
  - If not practical, have on hand at least one lantern or flashlight shining a white light as in illustration 3.

### All Vessels When Not Underway

**All vessels** are required to display a white light visible from all directions whenever they are moored or anchored outside a designated mooring area between sunset and sunrise.

## 1. Power-Driven Vessels Less Than 65.6 Feet



The masthead light and sternlight may be combined as an all-round white light on vessels less than 39.4 feet long.

## 2. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 65.6 Feet



An alternative to the sidelights and sternlight is a combination red, green, and white light, which must be exhibited near the top of the mast.

## 3. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 23.0 Feet



Vessel operators should never leave shore without a flashlight. Even if you plan to return before dark, unforeseen developments might delay your return past nightfall.

## Fire Extinguishers

**Effective April 20, 2022**, any non-rechargeable (disposable) fire extinguisher that is older than 12 years should be removed from service. Refer to the date of manufacturing stamped on the bottle; for example, "05" means "2005."

- Federal law requires all vessels, including PWC, to have a Type B USCG-approved fire extinguisher on board if one or more of the following conditions exist.
  - Any inboard engine
  - Closed compartments where portable fuel tanks may be stored
  - Double bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not filled completely with flotation material
  - Closed living spaces

- Closed storage compartments in which flammable or combustible materials may be stored
- Permanently installed fuel tanks
- Approved types of fire extinguishers are labeled—"Marine Type USCG Approved"—followed by the type and size symbols and the approval number.
- Additionally, all vessels are required to have a Type B USCG-approved fire extinguisher on board if one or more of the following conditions exist.
  - The length of the vessel is 26 feet or more.
  - The vessel is carrying passengers for hire.
- When required by the USCG, fire extinguishers must be on board the vessel and readily accessible—where they can be easily reached. When deciding on a place to store a fire extinguisher, make sure to consider how easy it is to reach in the event of a fire. It is recommended that the fire extinguisher be conspicuously and securely mounted on its intended hanger or bracket.

The following information is **effective April 20, 2022**.

- Vessels that have a **model year** of 2018 and newer may carry only 5-B or 20-B rated fire extinguishers with date stamp.
- Vessels with a model year between 1953 and 2017 may carry either:
  - Unexpired 5-B or 20-B rated fire extinguishers **or...**
  - B-I or B-II rated fire extinguishers that are in good and serviceable condition.

**Model Year** means the period beginning June 1 of a year and ending on July 31 of the following year and being designated by the year in which it ends.

Use this chart to determine the size and quantity required for your vessel.

Length of Vessel	Without Fixed System	With Fixed System*
Less than 26 ft.	one 5-B	none
26 ft. to less than 40 ft.	two 5-B (or one 20-B)	one 5-B
40 ft. to less than 65 ft.	three 5-B (or one 20-B and one 5-B)	two 5-B (or one 20-B)
*refers to a permanently installed fire extinguisher system		

*Note: One 20-B portable fire extinguisher may be substituted for two 5-B portable fire extinguishers. For vessels with a model year between 1953 and 2017, one 20-B/B-II portable fire extinguisher may be substituted for two 5-B/B-I portable fire extinguishers.*

- Extinguishers must not be expired or appear to have been previously used. They must be maintained in good and serviceable condition. Good and serviceable condition means that the fire extinguisher on board:
  - Is charged and indicates it is charged if the extinguisher has a pressure gauge reading or indicator **and...**
  - Has a pin lock that is firmly in place **and...**
  - Does not show visible signs of significant corrosion or damage **and...**
  - Has a discharge nozzle that is clean and free of obstructions.

## Backfire Flame Arrestors

Backfire flame arrestors are designed to prevent the ignition of gasoline vapors in case the engine backfires.

- Two types of backfire flame protection systems are acceptable:
  - A backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor. Flame arrestors must be approved by the USCG (must comply with SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 standards) and be marked accordingly. Periodically clean the flame arrestor(s) and check for any damage.
  - An arrangement of the carburetor or engine air induction system that safely disperses any flames from a backfire to the atmosphere outside the vessel.
- Paper or automotive filters are not USCG approved and are dangerous to use.

## Ventilation Systems

The purpose of ventilation systems is to remove flammable gases, greatly reducing the chance of a life-threatening explosion.

- All gasoline-powered vessels, constructed in a way that would entrap fumes, must have at least two ventilation ducts fitted with cowls to remove the fumes.
- If your vessel is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes both after fueling and before starting the engine.
- If your vessel is not equipped with a power ventilation system (for example, a PWC), open the engine compartment and sniff for gasoline fumes before starting the engine.

## Mufflers and Noise Limits

- All vessel engines must have an effective, permanently installed muffling system that cannot be bypassed.
  - Vessels built before January 1, 1995, must not exceed 90 dB(A) using the stationary test.
  - Vessels built on or after January 1, 1995, must not exceed 88 dB(A) using the stationary test.
  - While operating on lakes and rivers wider than 500 feet, it is unlawful to exceed 75 dB(A) as measured from shore.
- Contact your local sheriff's department for a free screening of your vessel's noise.

## Sound-Producing Devices

In periods of reduced visibility or whenever a vessel operator needs to signal his or her intentions or position, a sound-producing device is essential.

- Vessels less than 39.4 feet (12 meters) in length, which includes PWC, must have some way of making an efficient sound signal. Examples are a handheld air horn, an athletic whistle, an installed horn, etc. A human voice is not acceptable.
- Vessels that are 39.4 feet (12 meters) or more in length must have a sound-producing device that can produce an efficient sound signal. The sound signal should be audible for one-half mile and should last for 4 to 6 seconds.

## Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

Visual distress signals (VDSs) allow vessel operators to signal for help in the event of an emergency.

- In Idaho, VDSs are not required unless you are on **federally controlled waters**. Visit [www.boatidaho.gov](http://www.boatidaho.gov) or call **208-334-4199** for the list of federally controlled waters in Idaho.

**Federally Controlled Waters:** Vessels must observe federal requirements on these waters:

- Coastal waters
- The Great Lakes
- Territorial seas
- Waters that are two miles wide or wider and are connected directly to one of the above

- Vessels on federally controlled waters must be equipped with VDSs that are USCG approved, in serviceable condition, and readily accessible.
- All vessels, regardless of length or type, are required to carry night signals when operating between sunset and sunrise. Most vessels must carry day signals also; exceptions to the requirement for day signals are:
  - Recreational vessels less than 16 feet in length
  - Non-motorized open sailboats less than 26 feet in length
  - Manually propelled vessels
- If pyrotechnic VDSs are used, they must be dated. Expired VDSs may be carried on board, but a minimum of three unexpired VDSs must be carried in the vessel.
- The following combinations of signals are examples of VDSs that could be carried on board to satisfy USCG requirements:
  - Three handheld red flares (day and night)
  - One handheld red flare and two red meteors (day and night)
  - One handheld orange smoke signal (day), two floating orange smoke signals (day), and one electric light (night only)
- It is prohibited to display VDSs while on the water unless assistance is required to prevent immediate or potential danger to persons on board.

VDSs are classified as day signals (visible in bright sunlight), night signals (visible at night), or both day and night signals. VDSs are either pyrotechnic (smoke and flames) or non-pyrotechnic (non-combustible).



### Day

Handheld Orange Smoke (Pyrotechnic)  
 Floating Orange Smoke (Pyrotechnic)  
 Orange Flag (Non-Pyrotechnic)

### Night

Electric Light (Non-Pyrotechnic)

### Day and Night

Red Meteor (Pyrotechnic)  
 Red Flare (Pyrotechnic)

Although an arm signal does not meet VDS equipment requirements, wave your arms to summon help if you do not have other distress signals on board.



# On the Water

In addition to the laws mentioned previously, here are some other Idaho regulations that apply when vessel operators are on the water.

## Unlawful Operation

In Idaho, these dangerous operating practices are illegal.

- **Negligent Operation** of a vessel is the failure to exercise the care necessary to protect the rights, safety, or property of others. Some examples of negligent operation are:
  - Boating in an area where buoys or other markers clearly mark a swimming area or some other restricted area
  - Becoming airborne while crossing the wake of another vessel at an unsafe distance from the vessel creating the wake
  - Weaving through congested waterway traffic
  - Swerving at the last possible moment in order to avoid a collision
  - Causing danger or damage from the wake of your vessel
  - Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife with your vessel
- **Riding on the Bow, Deck, or Gunwale** is allowing passengers to ride on the bow, gunwale, transom, seat backs, seats on raised decks, or any other place where there may be a chance of falling overboard.

### **Remember—vessel owners are responsible...**

As the owner of a vessel, you are liable if you consent to allow others to operate your vessel and they do so in an illegal or unsafe manner. It is presumed the vessel is being operated with your consent when it is under the control of your spouse, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, or other immediate member of your family.

- **Failure to Regulate Speed** is operating at speeds that are too fast for the operator to bring the vessel to a stop within an assured clear distance ahead. It is illegal to exceed any posted speed limits. Specifically, the following acts are illegal:
  - Operating at a speed greater than **“no wake speed”** (maximum of five miles per hour) while within 100 feet of a dock, a swimmer, or a person in the water except when:
    - Safely pulling a water-skier from a dock
    - Safely dropping a water-skier at or near a dock
    - The swimmer or other person in the water is the vessel's skier

**“No Wake Speed”** or **“Idle Speed”** is the slowest speed at which it is still possible to maintain steering, not to exceed five miles per hour.

- Operating at a speed and proximity to another vessel that requires the other operator to swerve at the last moment to avoid a collision
- **Overloading or Overpowering** is exceeding the carrying capacity or power limitations stated on the capacity plate installed by the vessel manufacturer, even if the vessel is a kayak or an inflatable raft.
  - You must not exceed the maximum allowed number of persons, maximum allowed pounds of persons, or maximum allowed combined pounds of persons and equipment.
  - If your vessel is powered by an outboard motor, you must not exceed the allowed horsepower.





## Alcohol and Drugs

Idaho law prohibits anyone from operating or being in actual physical control of any vessel while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances. Alcohol and drugs cause impaired balance, blurred vision, poor coordination, impaired judgment, and slower reaction times.

■ Idaho law states that a person is considered to be “under the influence” if he or she:

- Is 21 years of age or older and has a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or higher **or...**
- Is under 21 years of age and has a BAC of 0.02% or higher.

■ Idaho law establishes the following penalties.

- Those convicted of operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs may:
  - Receive a maximum fine of \$1,000 and/or a sentence of six months in the county jail **and...**
  - Be required to attend and successfully complete a course on safe boating **and...**
  - Lose their privileges to operate a vessel for up to two years.
- A person causing great bodily harm, permanent disability, or permanent disfigurement to another person while operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs is guilty of a felony and will:
  - Be sentenced to the State Board of Corrections for up to five years, with a minimum of 30 days, **and...**
  - Be fined up to \$5,000 **and...**
  - Have his or her privileges to operate a vessel suspended for a minimum of one year, not to exceed two years, after release from prison.



Just remember this simple rule:

***Don't Drink and Boat!***

- By operating a vessel on Idaho waters, you have consented to be tested for the presence of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances if requested by a peace officer. Any person refusing to submit to testing for the presence of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances will be assessed a civil penalty of \$200.

## Obstructing Navigation

- It is illegal to:
  - Anchor a vessel in the traveled portion of a river or channel in a way that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.
  - Moor or attach a vessel to a buoy (other than a mooring buoy), beacon, light, or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities.
  - Move, displace, tamper with, damage, or destroy any navigational aid.
  - Fail to obey the navigation rules.
  - Fish or sunbathe on docks where vessels are being launched or are otherwise in use by boaters.
- If you are operating a power-driven vessel in narrow channels or on fairways of the Western Rivers and are heading upstream (against the direction of the current), all vessels coming toward you from the opposite direction have the right-of-way and you must give way as necessary to permit safe passing.

## Homeland Security Restrictions

Recreational boaters have a role in keeping our waterways safe and secure.

- Observe and avoid all security zones, including restricted areas near dams, power plants, etc. Do not stop or anchor beneath bridges or in the channel. Violators can expect a swift and severe response.
- Keep a sharp eye out for anything that looks peculiar or out of the ordinary. Report all activities that seem suspicious to the local authorities or USCG.

## Boating Accidents and Casualties

- An operator involved in a boating accident must:
  - Stop his or her vessel *immediately* at the scene of the accident *and...*
  - Render aid to other persons affected by the accident *and...*
  - Give, in writing, his or her name, address, and identification (registration number) to the other vessel's operator and/or passengers.
- The operator or owner of a vessel involved in an accident must notify immediately, by the quickest means possible, the sheriff of the county in which the accident took place if a person is injured, dies, or disappears or damage to the vessel or other property exceeds \$1,500.
- Written reports of accidents involving only property damage must be made within 10 days of the accident. However, you must file an accident report within 48 hours in cases involving a death, disappearance, or injury.
- Boating accident report forms can be found at any sheriff's department office or by calling the IDPR at **208-334-4199**.

## Diver-Down Flag

- Scuba divers or snorkelers should display a diver-down flag that marks their diving area.
- Vessels must reduce speed to "no wake speed" while within 100 feet of the flag.
- Two types of flags are used to indicate diving activity.



**Divers Flag**



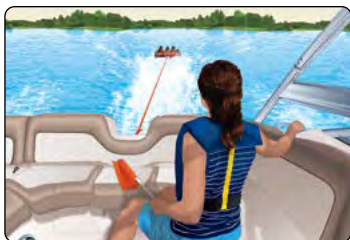
**Alfa Flag**

A rectangular red flag with a white diagonal stripe is used on Idaho state waters.

A blue-and-white International Code Flag A (or Alfa flag) must be displayed on vessels on federally controlled waters.

## Skier-Down Flag

Idaho law states that vessels towing person(s) on water skis or other similar devices must carry and use a red or orange skier-down flag, at least 12 x 12 inches in size, whenever the towed person(s) is in the water.



## Aftermarket Lights

Aftermarket lights for vessels have become popular. These lights are intended to enhance the nighttime experience by providing a series of colored lights in the water. Unfortunately, in most instances, these lights are not legal to use when the boat is underway because colored lights can often be mistaken for law enforcement vessels or worse, distract or confuse other boat operators. The legally required red and green lights on the bows of boats and the white sternlights are designed so boat operators are able to determine the direction boats are moving at night.

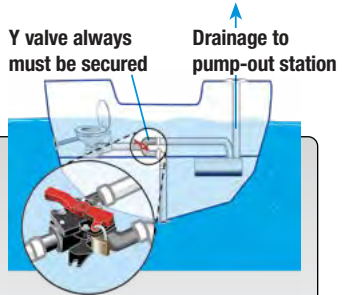
When aftermarket lights are used in conjunction with the legally required navigation lights, it can become a dangerous situation very quickly. In addition, it is not legal to have dock lights on while operating a boat. The purpose of dock lights is to assist boat operators when docking a boat in a slip at night. If these lights are displayed when operating a boat on the water, other boater operators can get easily confused because of the interference with legally required navigation lights, producing a potentially dangerous situation.

## Discharge of Trash

- It is illegal to dump refuse, garbage, or plastics into federally controlled or state waters. Store trash in a container on board, and place it in a proper receptacle on shore.
- Federal law requires you to display a 4 x 9-inch placard (sign) on any vessel 26 feet or longer. It must notify passengers and crew about discharge restrictions.

## Discharge of Sewage and Waste

- You are not required to have an installed toilet on your vessel. Many people use portable toilets and dispose of the waste at a public launch that has a pump-out station equipped for portable toilets.
- For long outings, equip your vessel with toilet facilities.
- If your vessel does have an installed toilet, federal law requires a USCG-certified marine sanitation device (MSD) that is working properly.



### Types of MSDs

- Types I and II MSDs are usually found on large vessels. Waste is treated with special chemicals to kill bacteria before the waste is discharged. Types I and II MSDs with Y valves that would direct the waste overboard must be secured so that the valve cannot be opened. This can be done by placing a lock or non-reusable seal on the Y valve or by taking the handle off the Y valve.
- Type III MSDs provide no treatment and are either holding tanks or portable toilets. Collected waste should be taken ashore and disposed of in a pump-out station or onshore toilet.

## Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

- It is illegal to discharge oil or hazardous substances.
- You are not allowed to dump oil into the bilge of the vessel without means for proper disposal.
- You must dispose of oil waste at a reception facility. On recreational vessels, a bucket or bailer is adequate for temporary storage.
- If on federal waters, and your vessel is 26 feet or longer, you must display a 5 x 8-inch placard near the bilge pump switch stating the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

## Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Eurasian watermilfoil and New Zealand mud snails are some of the invasive species of concern in Idaho. Often spread between waterways by hitching a ride on vessels and trailers, these non-native species can damage the environment and hurt the economy.

- Due to the increasing threat of invasive species, the Idaho legislature passed The Idaho Invasive Species Act of 2008.
  - Possession or transport of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is prohibited by law. This includes things like weeds on a boat or snails in bilge water.
  - Watercraft inspection stations have been established in locations throughout the state to ensure boats are free of AIS. All watercraft (including canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards) are required to stop if an open station is encountered. Inspection is quick and easy if the watercraft is clean, drained, and dry.
  - Anyone who violates the regulations in the act may be fined up to \$3,000, imprisoned in county jail for up to 12 months, or both. A person may receive additional civil penalties of up to \$10,000.
- Help prevent the spread of invasive species in Idaho by using this checklist every time you exit a body of water.
  - **Clean** any visible mud, plants, or animals from your boat.
  - **Drain** all water, including from the lower outboard unit, ballast, livewell, etc. Dispose of debris and bait in the trash.
  - **Dry** all areas of your boat and equipment.

Please visit [www.invasivespecies.idaho.gov](http://www.invasivespecies.idaho.gov) or call 1-877-336-8676 for more information.

**CLEAN • DRAIN • DRY**

# Specifically for Paddleboards

The use of paddleboards on lakes and rivers is growing in popularity. The USCG classifies paddleboards as vessels.

## Requirements for Paddleboards

When using a paddleboard beyond the narrow limits of a swimming, surfing, or bathing area, certain requirements apply.

- Paddleboard users must comply with recreational boating laws and rules.
- Paddleboards must have:
  - A PFD for each person on board
  - A sound-producing device such as a whistle
  - Navigation lights when used between sunset and sunrise—this may be a flashlight or headlamp with a white light
  - An Idaho Invasive Species Fund sticker



# Specifically for PWC

PWC operators must obey the laws that apply to other vessels as well as obey additional requirements that apply specifically to the operation of personal watercraft.

## Requirements for PWC

- Each person riding on or being towed behind a PWC must *wear* a USCG–approved wearable PFD that is impact rated for the maximum speed of the PWC.
- An operator of a PWC equipped with a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch (ECOS) must attach the lanyard to his or her person, clothing, or PFD.
- It is illegal to operate a PWC between sunset and sunrise or during periods of restricted visibility (such as fog) unless the PWC comes equipped by the manufacturer with the required navigation lights.
- PWC must be operated in a reasonable and prudent manner at all times. For example, it is illegal to:
  - Weave your PWC through congested traffic.
  - Jump the wake of another vessel at an unsafe distance from the other vessel.
  - Swerve at the last moment to avoid a collision in order to splash another vessel or person.
  - Operate in a way that requires another vessel to swerve at the last possible moment to avoid a collision.
- A PWC operator should give way to any powerboat towing a skier by altering course and/or reducing speed to five miles per hour.
- It is illegal to chase, harass, or disturb wildlife with a PWC.





# Specifically for Skiing

Vessel operators towing a person(s) on water skis, an aquaplane, or other similar device must also obey these laws.

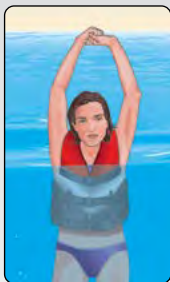
## Requirements for Towing Skiers

- Each person being towed behind a vessel must *wear* a USCG–approved PFD.
- It is illegal to tow a water-skier between one hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise.
- Every vessel towing a person(s) on water skis or a similar device must have a competent person, in addition to the vessel operator, continuously observing the towed person(s).
- If the towing vessel is a PWC, the PWC must be rated by the manufacturer for at least three people—the operator, the observer, and the retrieved skier.
- It is illegal to exceed “no wake speed” (maximum of five miles per hour) while within 100 feet of a dock, a swimmer, or a person in the water, except when:
  - You are safely pulling a water-skier from a dock **or...**
  - You are safely dropping a water-skier at or near a dock **or...**
  - The swimmer or person in the water is the vessel’s skier.
- Vessels towing a person(s) on water skis or a similar device must carry on board a red or orange skier-down flag. The observer must display the flag whenever the skier is in the water.
- Vessel operators are responsible for the actions of any person they are towing.

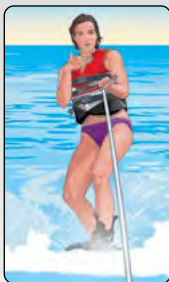


## Hand Signals for Skiers

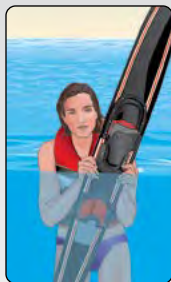
Knowing proper hand signals will help the skier(s) communicate with their boat operator or the observer.



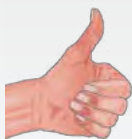
**Skier OK**



**Stop**



**Skier down—watch!**



**Speed up**



**Slow down**



**Speed OK**



**Turn left**



**Turn right**

## Wakesurfing Behind a Boat

- To wakesurf, a person rides on a device similar to a surfboard in the wake just behind a boat.
  - The wakesurfer holds onto a tow (ski) rope only until he or she is up out of the water. Then, the rope is tossed into the boat.
  - The boat travels at slow speeds of 9 to 14 miles per hour.

- To create the larger wake that a wakesurfer needs, the boat carries artificial ballast, such as portable ballast tanks or other heavy objects that are spread throughout the boat.

■ Persons involved in wakesurfing must follow these regulations.

- A boat involved in wakesurfing must be operated at a speed no greater than “no wake” or five miles per hour when within 100 feet of docks, other vessels, and other swimmers or other 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 vessel’s maximum weight capacity.
- Be a responsible boat operator and respect shoreline properly owners:
  - Stay more than 200 feet away from docks and shorelines.
  - Minimize repetitive passes.
  - Keep music at reasonable levels.

### Idaho Boaters:

## WAKE RESPONSIBLY

#### 1 Stay at least 200 feet away

from the shoreline, docks, or other structures.

#### 2 Keep music at reasonable levels.

Sound travels well over water. If it's loud enough to hear at 180 feet back, it's likely loud enough for homeowners to hear, too.

#### 3 Minimize repetitive passes

on any one portion of shoreline. Once you've run the same line for a while, move on to another area.

**DISRESPECTFUL BOATING CAN CLOSE WATERWAYS**

Brought to you by the WSIA and the Idaho Departments of Parks & Recreation.



**wsia**  
WAKE SURFING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION



## Avoiding Propeller Strike Injuries

Most propeller strike accidents result from operator error. Victims include swimmers, scuba divers, fallen water-skiers, and boat operators or passengers. Most propeller accidents can be prevented by following basic safe boating practices.

- Maintain a proper lookout. The primary cause of propeller strike accidents is operator inattention.
- Make sure the engine is off so that the propeller is not rotating when passengers are boarding or leaving a boat.
- Never start a boat with the engine in gear.
- Slow down when approaching congested areas and anchorages. In congested areas, always be alert for swimmers and divers.
- Learn to recognize warning buoys that mark swimming and hazardous areas.
- Keep the boat away from marked swimming and diving areas. Become familiar with the red and white or blue-and-white diver-down flags signaling that divers are below the surface.
- Make sure that passengers are seated properly before getting underway. Some operators of larger boats with several passengers have caused injuries by putting the engine in gear while people were still swimming or diving from the boat.
- Never ride on a seat back, gunwale, transom, or bow.

### Devices That Reduce Propeller Strikes

There are several new technologies designed to reduce propeller strikes. The effectiveness of the devices varies, depending on the boat and the operating environment. For more information, visit the USCG's boating safety website at [www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/](http://www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/).

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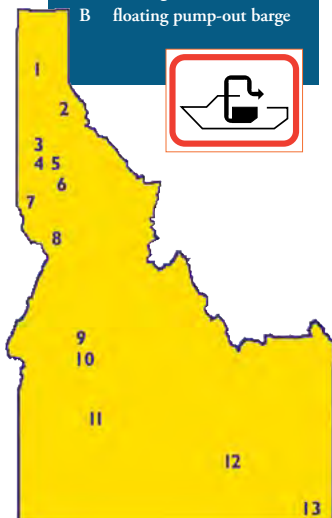
# Idaho Boat Pump-Out and Sanitation Sites

**Map #**      **Body of Water/  
Facility**      **Services**

- 1 Priest Lake**  
Bishop's Marina . . . . . R  
Blue Diamond Marina . . . R  
Priest Lake Marina  
(KalisPELL Bay) . . . . . P
- 2 Lake Pend Oreille**  
Bottle Bay Marina  
Dover Bay Marina  
Garfield Bay Boat Launch  
Holiday Shores Marina  
Hope Marine Services  
MacDonald's Hudson  
Bay Marina . . . . . ▲  
Kramer Marina  
Sandpoint City Beach  
Park/Marina (Windbag)  
Sandpoint Marina
- 3 Lake Coeur d'Alene**  
Boardwalk Marina  
Carlin Bay Resort  
Conkling Bay Resort  
Eleventh Street Marina  
Harrison Docks  
Rockford Bay  
Silver Beach Marina  
Third Street Docks
- 4 Chatcolet Lake**  
Heyburn State Park . . . . . R
- 5 St. Joe River**  
Aqua Park
- 6 Dworshak Reservoir**  
Big Eddy Marina . . . . . R  
Dent Acres . . . . . R  
Grandad . . . . . R  
Magnus Bay . . . . . FR
- 7 Snake River**  
Hells Gate State Park
- 8 Salmon River**  
Crumps Chevron . . . . . P  
Newin Ranch, North Fork P
- 9 Payette Lake**  
Mile High Marina

## Services Legend

- P porta-potty  
▲ pump-out also equipped  
for portables  
R pump-outs with  
restrooms  
FR floating restrooms  
B floating pump-out barge



**Map #**      **Body of Water/  
Facility**      **Services**

- 10 Lake Cascade**  
Vanwick Boat Ramp. . . . . P
- 11 Lucky Peak Reservoir**  
Spring Shores Marina  
(West Ramp) . . . . . ▲
- 12 American Falls Reservoir**  
Seagull Bay Boat Club
- 13 Bear Lake**  
Garden City Marina

# Idaho Required Equipment Checklist



	PWC	Boat Less Than 16 Ft.	Boat 16 Ft. to Less Than 26 Ft.	Human Powered: Any Length
Certificate of Number on Board	✓	✓	✓	
Validation Stickers Displayed	✓	✓	✓	
Wearable PFD	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓ <sup>2</sup>
Throwable Device			✓	
Type 5-B Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓	
ECOS	✓			
Backfire Flame Arrestor	✓	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>	
Ventilation System	✓	✓	✓	
Muffler	✓	✓	✓	
Horn, Whistle, or Bell	✓	✓	✓	✓
Daytime VDSs			✓ <sup>4</sup>	
Nighttime VDSs	5	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>	
Navigation Lights	5	✓	✓	6

1. Each person riding on or being towed behind a PWC must *wear* a USCG–approved PFD at all times.
2. Those 14 years of age or younger must *wear* an approved PFD at all times when underway in a vessel 19 feet or less in length.
3. Required on inboard and stern drives only.
4. Required on federally controlled waters. Visit [www.boatidaho.gov](http://www.boatidaho.gov) for the list of federally controlled waters in Idaho.
5. It is illegal to operate a PWC between sunset and sunrise or during periods of restricted visibility (such as fog), unless the PWC comes equipped by the manufacturer with the required navigation lights.
6. At least one lantern or flashlight between the hours of sunset and sunrise.

Note: Visit [www.boatidaho.gov](http://www.boatidaho.gov) for an electronic version of the complete list of requirements.



# Idaho

**For more information  
on boating in Idaho, contact:**

**The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation**

**Boating Program**

**P.O. Box 83720**

**Boise, ID 83720-0065**

**208-334-4199**

**[www.boatidaho.gov](http://www.boatidaho.gov)**