



THE HANDBOOK

OF OKLAHOMA BOATING LAWS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



2021 Edition

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THE HANDBOOK **OF OKLAHOMA BOATING LAWS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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Oklahoma Highway Patrol - Troop W Information 48

Boating Terms

In this handbook, these boating terms are used.

- **Operate** means to navigate or be in actual physical control of a vessel or otherwise use a vessel or motor.
- **Vessel** means every device, other than a seaplane, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water (including personal watercraft).
- **Wake** means the track of waves left by a vessel or other object moving through the water, when such waves are greater than the natural waves in the immediate area of the vessel, are cresting and showing white water, or may cause injury or damage to person or property.

Stay abreast of new boating laws...

Call the Oklahoma Highway Patrol - Troop W at **918-681-4959**

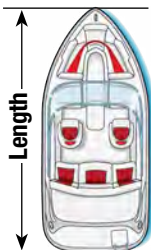
Before Going Out

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

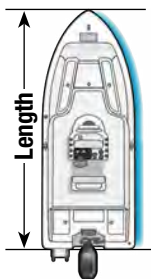
Vessel Length Classes

- 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.
- 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.

The most important safe fueling practice...

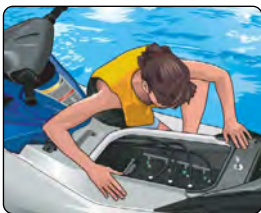
If your vessel is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes both after fueling and before starting your engine to remove gas vapors in the bilge.

■ **After fueling:**

- Wipe up any spilled fuel.
- Open all windows, ports, doors, and other openings.

Additional Safety Procedures for PWC

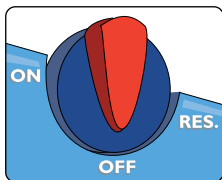
- Do not tip the PWC in order to fill it all the way up. If the tank is overfilled, the fuel may expand and spill into the water.
- After fueling, open the door of the engine compartment and sniff to check for any evidence of gas fumes. Do this before starting the engine. If you do smell gas fumes, determine 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-lighted 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 assure 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 and wrist lanyard are in good order.
- ✓ Make sure you have the required number of 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 Oklahoma waterways is everyone's responsibility. All operators are equally responsible for taking action 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

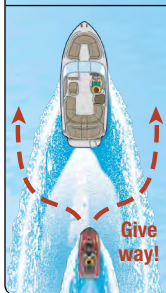
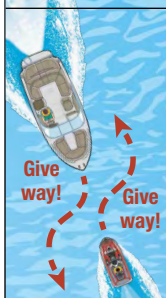
- When operating a power-driven vessel, you must give way to:
 - Any vessel not under command, such as an anchored or disabled vessel
 - Any vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver, such as a vessel towing another or laying cable, or one constrained by its draft, such as a large ship in a channel
 - 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.

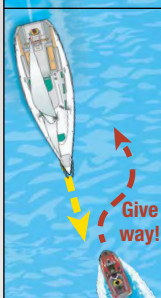
Power vs. Sail: The powerboat is the give-way vessel. The sailboat is the stand-on vessel.

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.

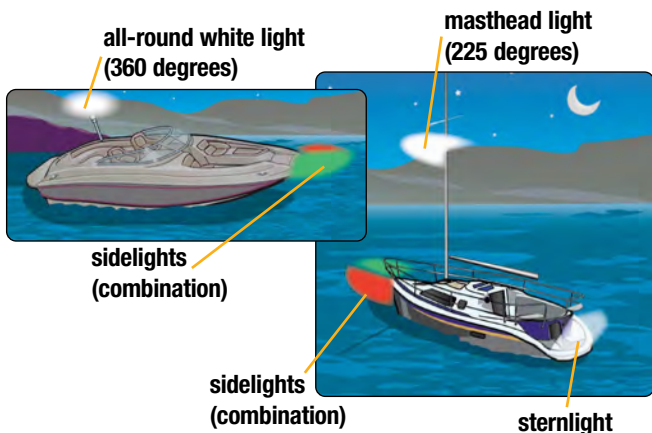
Power vs. Sail



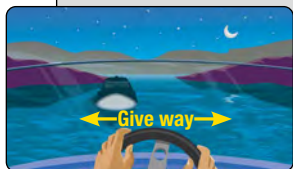
Nighttime Navigation

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

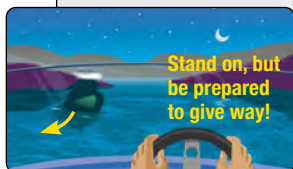
- **Sidelights:** These red and green lights are called sidelights (also called combination lights) because they are visible to another vessel approaching from the side or head-on. The red light indicates a vessel's port (left) side; the green indicates a vessel's starboard (right) side.
- **Sternlight:** 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.



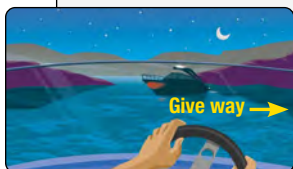
Encountering Vessels at Night



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.



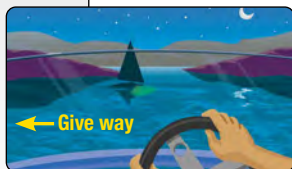
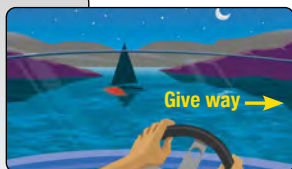
When you see a green and a white light, you are the stand-on vessel. However, remain alert in case the other vessel operator does not see you or does not know the navigation rules.



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)

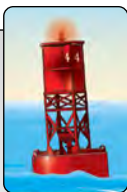
Buoys and markers are the “traffic signals” that guide vessel operators safely along some waterways. They also identify dangerous or controlled areas and give directions and information. As a recreational boat or PWC operator, you will need to know the lateral navigation markers and non-lateral markers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

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

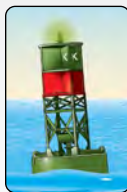
indicate the right side of the channel as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream.



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.



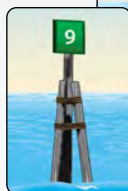
Cans are green cylindrical-shaped buoys marked with odd numbers.



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.

Western Rivers System

This system of markers is used on the Mississippi River and its tributaries above Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and on some other rivers that flow toward the Gulf of Mexico. The major difference from the U.S. Aids to Navigation System's lateral markers is that navigation markers on the Western Rivers System are not numbered. The numbers that are displayed below the daymark shape are not associated with the right or left side of the channel. On the Western Rivers System, these numbers indicate distance from a river mouth.



Non-Lateral Markers

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

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.





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.



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 tune a VHF radio to the frequencies listed on the next page.

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 fog horn.
- 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 USCG–approved life jacket (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.

National Weather Service Telephone Numbers

- Oklahoma City Office: **405-360-5928**—for western and south central areas of Oklahoma
- Tulsa Office: **918-838-7838**—for eastern and southeastern areas of Oklahoma
- Amarillo, TX Office: **806-335-1121**—for Oklahoma panhandle counties

VHF Frequencies Broadcasting NOAA Weather Reports

162.400 MHz	162.450 MHz	162.500 MHz	162.550 MHz
162.425 MHz	162.475 MHz	162.525 MHz	

The most commonly used VHF channels on U.S. waters are:

Channel 6 Intership safety communications.

Channel 9 Communications between vessels (commercial and recreational), and ship to coast.

Channel 13 Navigational use by commercial, military, and recreational vessels at bridges, locks, and harbors.

Channel 16 Distress and safety calls to USCG and others, and to initiate calls to other vessels.

Channel 22 Communications between the USCG and the public. Severe weather warnings, hazards to navigation, and other safety warnings are broadcast on this channel.

Channels 24–28 Public telephone calls (to marine operator).

Channels 68, 69, and 71 Recreational vessel radio channels and ship to coast.

Specifically for PWC

Although a personal watercraft (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.

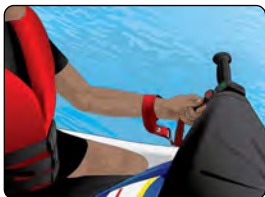
Remember—no power means no steering control...

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 Switches

- Most PWC and powerboats come equipped by the manufacturer with an important device called an emergency engine cut-off switch. This is a safety device that is designed to shut off the engine if the operator is thrown from the proper operating position.
- A lanyard is attached to the switch and the operator's wrist or PFD. The safety switch 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 engine cut-off switch, 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.



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 would 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 life jacket (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, titling, and operation.

Registering Your Vessel

- You must have an Oklahoma Certificate of Registration and validation decals to operate your vessel legally on Oklahoma waters. The only exceptions are:
 - Canoes, kayaks, and pedal boats
 - Vessels registered in other states using Oklahoma waters for 60 days or less
 - Vessels documented by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) using Oklahoma waters for 60 days or less
 - Vessels used exclusively and solely for racing purposes
- See where to obtain application forms for your Certificate of Registration and validation decals on page 25.
- *The current Certificate of Registration must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer at all times.*
- The registration number and validation decals 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 water line as possible.
 - Number must read from left to right on both sides of the bow.
 - Number must be in **BLOCK** characters that are at least three-inches high and one-half inch in stroke width.
 - Number's color must contrast sharply with its background.

[illegible]



Validation Decal



- Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen: **OK 6789 CD** or **OK-6789-CD**.
- No other numbers may be displayed on either side of the bow.
- Decals must be affixed on both sides of the bow, behind (the stern) and in line with the number.

Registering and Titling Outboard Motors

Outboard motors over 10 horsepower must be titled and have a current Certificate of Registration.

- Application for a title and registration of an outboard motor is made separately from the boat and also must be made within 30 days of the purchase or transfer. Titling and registering a boat and its outboard motor requires completion of two application forms—one for the boat and one for the motor.
- Owners of registered motors are issued a motor registration decal that should be displayed on the upper back side of the motor beginning from the left (as viewed if you are standing behind the motor) and wrapping around to the rear.
- *The current Certificate of Registration for an outboard motor must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer at all times.*
- The owner of an outboard motor chooses to have the motor registered for a one-year or a three-year period. Registration expires on June 30 of the year indicated on the motor registration decal.



Other Facts About Titling and Registering

- Titling of vessels is mandatory in Oklahoma. You must apply for a title within 30 days of the purchase or transfer of a vessel. You may operate your vessel within the first 30 days of ownership, prior to applying for your title and registration, if you carry on board the original bill of sale.
- An owner chooses to have their vessel registered for a one-year or a three-year period. Registration expires on June 30 of the year indicated on the validation decals. Renewal notices are mailed to all owners of registered vessels before the date of expiration. You may renew the registration by mail or in person at a motor license agent or Oklahoma Tax Commission (OTC) office.
- If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Registration or decal, you must apply to the OTC 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.
 - Documented vessels must comply with the laws of the state of Oklahoma.
 - Both the current Certificate of Registration and Certificate of Documentation must be carried on board the vessel.

Fees for Registering a Vessel

The annual registration fee is based on the manufacturer's factory delivered price. If the manufacturer's price is missing, the price will be determined from marine dealers' publications used to establish prices.

<i>If the value of vessel is...</i>	<i>Initial annual fee is...</i>
\$150 or less.....	\$1.00
Over \$150	\$1.00 plus \$1.00 for every \$100 or portion of \$100 above a value of \$150

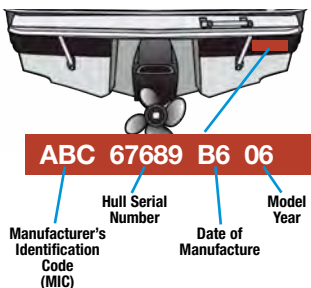
Applications for Titles and Registration

Registration and title application forms can be obtained:

- From the Oklahoma Tax Commission, Motor Vehicle Division, 2501 North Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73194
- From one of the 300 statewide motor license agent offices
- By calling **405-521-3221**
- Over the Internet at **www.oktax.state.ok.us**

Hull Identification Number

- The Hull Identification Number (HIN) is a unique 12-digit number assigned by the manufacturer to vessels built after 1972. HINs are engraved in the fiberglass or on a metal plate permanently attached to the transom.



- Write down your HIN and put it in a place separate from your vessel in case warranty problems arise or your vessel is stolen.
- Homemade vessels and vessels or motors without HIN or serial numbers may be assigned a number only by the Dept. of Public Safety (DPS) Marine Enforcement Section of the Highway Patrol Division.
 1. The owner submits the proper documents to the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) of the Tax Commission.
 2. MVD reviews the documents and issues the applicant written instructions to be provided to the DPS.
 3. DPS inspects the vessel and completes a form to be submitted, along with the other documents, to a motor license agent office or the MVD for issuance of a title and registration. A copy of the Certificate of Registration must be carried with the vessel and/or motor when in operation.

Who May Operate a Vessel

The following operator age and boater education requirements apply to vessels on Oklahoma public waters.

- **A child under 12 years of age** may *not* operate a vessel powered by a motor or combination of motors over 10 horsepower, a PWC, or a sail-powered vessel 16 feet or more in length.
- **A child 12 years of age or older but not yet 16 years of age** may operate a vessel powered by a motor or combination of motors over 10 horsepower, a PWC, or a sail-powered vessel 16 feet or more in length *only if* all of the following conditions are met.
 - He or she has successfully completed an approved boating safety education course or passed a proctored equivalency examination *and* has received a Boating Safety Education Certificate *and...*
 - He or she is supervised by a competent person who is at least 18 years of age.
 - *If the vessel is other than a PWC:* The supervising person must be on board and in position to take immediate control of the vessel.
 - *If the vessel is a PWC:* The person must supervise *visually* within 500 yards of the PWC.
- All vessel operators must carry on board one of the following:
 - An original Boating Safety Education Certificate as proof the operator meets the education requirements *or...*
 - A photo ID that shows the operator is 16 years or older.
- These operators are exempt from the Oklahoma boater education requirement:
 - Non-residents who have successfully completed another state's boating safety education course or equivalency examination that is approved by the Department of Public Safety
 - Children who are operating a PWC in a "no wake" zone while under the supervision of an adult

Marine Events

- Contact the agency that has jurisdiction over the waters—the Oklahoma Dept. of Tourism and Information, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Grand River Dam Authority, or USCG—in advance of the event.
- After approval is granted, notify the Marine Enforcement Section of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Division, in writing, at least 15 days prior to the event.

Local Regulations

The Grand River Dam Authority places additional rules and regulations on those boating on the Grand Lake of the Cherokees, Lake Hudson, and W. R. Holway Reservoir. Learn what the local regulations are *before* you go boating.

Grand River Dam Authority

Call the Grand River Dam Authority at **918-256-5545** or read the regulations for their lakes at **www.grda.com**.

Enforcement

The boating laws of Oklahoma are enforced by the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Marine Enforcement Section troopers; USCG officers; and any other authorized law enforcement officers. Officers have the legal authority to stop and board your vessel in order to check that you are complying with state and federal laws.



Courtesy Boat Inspection

Troop W troopers offer inspections free of charge! Have your vessel examined for the required safety equipment, current registration, and proper display of numbers and decals. Having an inspection before you launch will help ensure your family's safety and reduce the chance of a costly fine for violations. If you pass an inspection, you will be issued a safety inspection sticker to display proudly on your vessel.



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 vessels must carry one wearable USCG–approved PFD for each person on board.
- In addition to the above requirement, vessels 16 feet in length or longer must have one USCG–approved throwable device on board and readily accessible.
- Children under 13 years of age must *wear* a PFD whenever underway on a vessel less than 26 feet in length.
- Each person on a PWC or sailboard must *wear* an approved PFD.
- Anyone being towed on water skis or similar devices must *wear* an approved PFD. Ski belts are not approved PFDs.
- Besides being USCG–approved, all PFDs must be:
 - *In good and serviceable condition.*
 - *Readily accessible.* Readily accessible means you must be able to put the PFD on in a reasonable amount of time in an emergency. PFDs should not be stowed in plastic bags or in locked compartments, and they should not have other gear stowed on top of them.
 - *Of the proper size for the intended wearer.* Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.

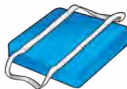
Wearable PFDs



Throwable Devices



Ring Buoy



Cushion

PFD Label

Every USCG–approved PFD has a label that contains important information. While boating, you may encounter PFDs with either old or new labels.

- The older, legacy labels have a type number (Types I–V).
 - The type number indicates what kind of activity is appropriate for the PFD.
 - PFDs with these labels may still be used in the country where they are approved as long as they are in good 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. This type of PFD offers greater mobility and comfort.
 - A higher number means the PFD is intended for offshore activities. This type of PFD offers greater flotation, turning, and stability.
 - PFDs with these labels are approved for use in both the U.S. and Canada.
- Regardless of the label, there should be a USCG approval number. This means that the PFD is safe and meets legal requirements.

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">ADULT UNIVERSAL</p> <p>User Weight: >40 kg (>88 lbs) Chest Size: 76-132 cm (30-52 in.)</p> <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">70</p>  </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">      </div> <p>• Drowning hazard if not worn. • Must be fastened and properly adjusted to float the wearer.</p> <p>Choose and wear the device which fits you and your activity, visit www.wearlifelinejacket.org. Read and keep the owner's manual and tags for info such as rearming, wear, and care.</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>Company Name Company Address Company website if available Made in XXXXX</p> <p style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">USCG Approved 160.064/XXXXX/X</p> <p style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">ANSI/CAN/UL 12402-5</p> <p>Model: XXXX Style: XXXX Lot No. XXXX</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;">Lab Certification Mark</div> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Certifying Lab Identification</p> </div> </div> <p>Approval conditions state that this device must be worn to be counted as equipment required by vessels meeting Transport Canada or USCG regulations.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fasten all closures and adjust for a snug fit. <p>Inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspect your life vest before each outing. Do not use if your life vest shows signs of weathering, damage, or rot. <p>Care and Storage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dry thoroughly after each outing. Store in a dry, cool place out of direct sunlight. </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  </div>
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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.
- An all-round white light or both a masthead light and a sternlight. These lights must be visible from a distance of 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

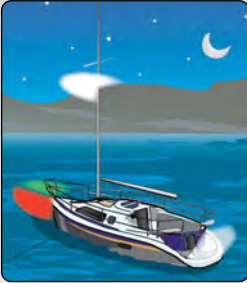
Unpowered vessels are sailboats or vessels that are paddled, poled, or rowed.

- **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.

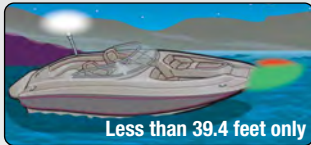
All Vessels When Not Underway

All vessels are required to display a white light visible in 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.



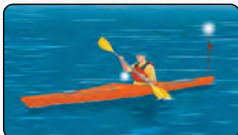
Less than 39.4 feet only

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



To prevent a collision, 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

- **All vessels using flammable liquid as fuel** are required to have a Type B fire extinguisher(s) on board.
- Approved types of fire extinguishers are identified by the following marking on the label—"Marine Type USCG Approved"—followed by the type and size symbols and the approval number.
- Extinguishers should be placed in an accessible area. Check extinguishers regularly to make sure they are charged, and be sure you know how to operate them.
- Any vessel with a fixed fire extinguisher system must have a record of service on board which indicates that the carbon dioxide cylinders have been serviced and weighed within the past year.

Use this chart to determine the type and quantity required.

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

For carriage requirements, one 5-B is equivalent to one B-I, and one 20-B is equivalent to one B-II.

Backfire Flame Arrestors

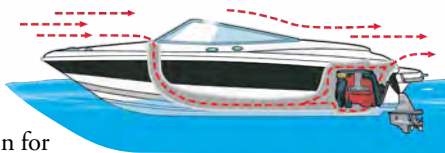
Backfire flame arrestors are designed to prevent the ignition of gasoline vapors in case the engine backfires.

- All powerboats (except outboards) that are fueled with gasoline must have an approved backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor.
- Backfire flame arrestors must be:
 - In good and serviceable condition *and...*
 - USCG-approved (must comply with SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 standards).
- Periodically clean the flame arrestor(s) and check for damage.

Ventilation Systems

The purpose of ventilation systems is to avoid explosions by removing flammable gases. Properly installed ventilation systems greatly reduce 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 your 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

Vessel operators may not hear sound signals or voices if the engine is not adequately muffled.

- All vessel engines must have a factory-installed muffler or exhaust water manifold for noise reduction, or another effective muffling system.
- You are prohibited from:
 - Using cutouts
 - Removing mufflers or muffler baffles
 - Cutting or punching holes in mufflers
 - Modifying the original muffler or muffling system in a way that increases the noise level

Sound-Producing Devices

- Vessels less than 26 feet in length, *which includes PWC*, are required to carry on board a whistle or horn or some other means to make an efficient sound signal.
- Vessels that are 26 feet or more in length are required to carry on board a whistle or horn *and* a bell.
- No vessel may be equipped with a siren except vessels used by law enforcement officers.
- You may not cause or permit the sounding of any sound-producing device while your vessel is within any harbor limits or in areas of congested waterway traffic.

You should learn to recognize these sound signals.

- A short blast lasts one second.
- A prolonged blast lasts 4–6 seconds.

Restricted Visibility

- ***One prolonged blast*** every two minutes is the signal used by powerboats when underway.
- ***One prolonged blast plus two short blasts*** every two minutes is the signal used by sailing vessels.

Warning

- ***One prolonged blast*** is a warning signal (for example, when coming around a blind bend or exiting a slip).
- ***Five short blasts*** signal danger or signal that you do not understand or that you disagree with the other boater's intentions.

Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

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

- Vessels on federally controlled waters must be equipped with visual distress signals 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 that are less than 16 feet in length
 - Non-motorized open sailboats that are less than 26 feet in length
 - Manually propelled vessels
- If pyrotechnic VDSs are used, a minimum of three must be carried in the vessel.



Day

Handheld Orange Smoke (Pyrotechnic)

Floating Orange Smoke (Pyrotechnic)

Orange Flag (Non-Pyrotechnic)

Night

Electric Light (Non-Pyrotechnic)

Day and Night

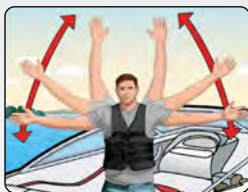
Red Meteor (Pyrotechnic)

Red Flare (Pyrotechnic)

Federally Controlled Waters

Vessels must observe federal requirements on these waters:

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



Arm Signal

Although this 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, there are other Oklahoma regulations that apply when vessel operators are on the water.

Unlawful Operation **Reckless Operation**

It is illegal to fail to exercise the care necessary to prevent the endangerment of life, limb, or property of any other person when operating a vessel or manipulating water skis, parasails, surfboards, or similar devices. Examples are:

- Boating in restricted areas without regard for other boaters or persons, posted speeds and wake restrictions, diver-down flags, etc.
- Failing to stop or yield to an authorized emergency vessel making an audible or visible signal
- Operating, or giving permission to operate, a vessel when wind warnings have been posted or other hazardous weather conditions exist that pose a risk to persons or property

Careless Operation

It is illegal to operate, or give permission to operate, a vessel in a manner that is not careful and prudent. Examples of careless operation are:

- Parking, mooring, or beaching a vessel within or at the edge of a marked swimming area
- Causing danger or damage from the wake of your vessel

Overloading or Overpowering

It is illegal to load a vessel with passengers or gear beyond the recommended capacity or to power a vessel beyond the recommended horsepower. The recommended capacity and horsepower are those shown on the capacity plate installed by the manufacturer or those recommended by the USCG.

Improper Speed or Distance

You must maintain a proper speed and distance while operating a vessel or while towing a person on water skis or any similar device. It is illegal to:

- Operate, or give permission to operate, a vessel at speeds greater than are reasonable or proper given the existing waterway traffic, persons in the water, and weather conditions.
- Exceed any posted speed limits.
- Operate, or give permission to operate, a vessel at greater than **“slow, no wake speed”** or **“idle speed”** in a posted “no wake” zone.

“Idle Speed” or “Slow, No Wake Speed”

When you see these buoys or signs, you must reduce speed to slowest possible speed necessary to maintain steerage. Your vessel should not create a wake at this speed.

- Operate, or give permission to operate, a vessel at greater than “slow, no wake speed” or “idle speed” within 150 feet of any boat ramp, a dock or pier, or an anchored or moored vessel.
- Operate a vessel on public waters at speeds greater than 10 miles per hour while within 50 feet of another vessel.

Hazardous Condition

It is illegal to operate a vessel in a condition that causes a hazard to those on board. For any of the following problems, peace officers may instruct the operator to return to mooring and remain there until the problem is fixed.

- There are insufficient personal flotation devices, fire extinguishers, backfire flame arrestors, or navigation lights.
- The vessel is overloaded or overpowered.
- Any other unsafe condition exists.

Riding on the Bow, Deck, Gunwale, or Seat Backs

It is illegal to allow anyone to ride where there may be a chance of falling overboard. It is unlawful to:

- Sit or ride on the gunwales or the back on any seat on a boat while underway at a speed greater than idle speed.
- Sit or ride on the covered bow or front or back deck of a boat while underway at greater than idle speed unless the boat has side walkways or walk-through access to areas that are surrounded by life rails, deck rails, bow rails, or other enclosures extending at least 24 inches above the deck.
- Extend an arm or leg over the edge of the boat above or below the railing, or stand on the covered bow of a boat traveling at greater than idle speed.

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.
- Obstruct a pier, wharf, boat ramp, or access to a facility.

Homeland Security Restrictions

Help keep 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 suspicious activities to the local authorities or the USCG.

Firearms in a Vessel

- It is illegal to transport a shotgun, rifle, or pistol in a vessel or fire a weapon from a vessel unless you are hunting animals or fowl in compliance with existing state and federal laws.
- Those convicted of violating this law may receive a fine of up to \$100 and/or imprisonment for up to six months.
- A person possessing a valid concealed handgun license from Oklahoma or a reciprocal state authorized by the Oklahoma Self-Defense Act is not guilty of transporting a pistol in violation of this law when a handgun is concealed upon or about their person in compliance with the provisions in the Oklahoma Self-Defense Act.

Diver-Down Flags

- Scuba divers or snorkelers must display a diver-down flag that marks their diving area. If the flag is flown from a vessel, at least one flag must be flown that is at least 3.3 feet (one meter) above the highest point of the vessel and visible from all directions.



A rectangular red flag, sized at least 20 x 24 inches, with a four-inch white diagonal stripe

A blue-and-white International Code Flag A (or Alfa flag) used on state, federally controlled, or international waters

- Vessels must remain at least 150 feet away from the flag unless the vessel is engaged in the rescue of a person in that area.
- A diver-down flag may not be closer than 100 yards to any functional boat ramp.

Inner Tubes, Floating Chairs, or Similar Devices

These items must not be more than 50 feet from shore when being used by a swimmer. You should avoid swimming and playing in areas of high boating traffic such as boat ramps and marinas.

Alcohol and Drugs

It is illegal to operate or be 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.

- Oklahoma law states that a person is considered to be “under the influence” if he or she:
 - Has an alcohol concentration of 0.08% or higher as measured in the person’s breath or blood **or...**
 - Is under the influence of any other intoxicating substance to a degree which makes him or her incapable of safely operating the vessel **or...**
 - Is under the influence of alcohol and any other intoxicating substance to a degree which makes him or her incapable of safely operating the vessel.
- Oklahoma law establishes the following penalties.
 - On a first conviction of operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the violator will receive a fine of up to \$1,000.
 - On a subsequent conviction of operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the violator will receive a fine of up to \$2,500 and not less than \$1,000.
- By operating a vessel on Oklahoma waters, you have consented to be tested for the presence of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances if arrested by a peace officer. Failure to submit to testing for the presence of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances will be admissible as evidence in trial.

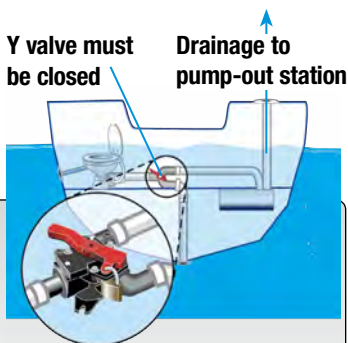
Accidents and Casualties

- An operator involved in a boating accident must:
 - Stop his or her vessel *immediately* at the scene of the accident ***and...***
 - Assist anyone injured or in danger from the accident, unless doing so would seriously endanger his or her own vessel or passengers ***and...***
 - Give, in writing, his or her name, address, and vessel identification to anyone injured and to the owner of any damaged property.
- An accident report form must be submitted to the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety Marine Enforcement Section if the accident results in:
 - Death or disappearance of a person ***or...***
 - Injury to a person requiring medical treatment beyond first aid ***or...***
 - Property damage (including damage to vessels) in excess of \$2,000.
- Reports of deaths or disappearances must be made by the quickest means possible to the local police department, county sheriff's office, or highway patrol office.
- An operator involved in a boating accident must submit to testing for the presence of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances if he or she:
 - Is under arrest for boating under the influence ***and...***
 - Is believed to have caused the death or serious physical injury of a person while intoxicated.
- If an operator 16 years old or older, operating in a reckless manner, causes an accident resulting in the death of another person (either immediately or within one year of the accident), the operator will be guilty of negligent homicide.

Discharge of Sewage and Waste

- State law prohibits vessels from discharging any sewage, treated or untreated, into the fresh waters of Oklahoma.
- If you have a recreational vessel with installed toilet facilities, it must have an operable marine sanitation device (MSD) on board. All installed devices must be USCG-certified.

Typical Marine Sanitation Device



Types of MSDs

- Types I and II MSDs treat waste with special chemicals to kill bacteria before the waste is discharged. Types I and II MSDs with Y valves must be secured so that the valve cannot be opened.
- 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.

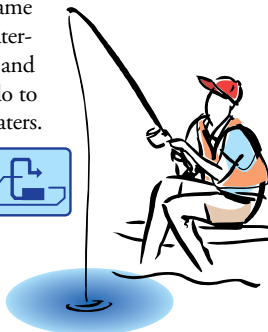
Remember when you caught your first fish?

Our children will not experience that same thrill unless we keep this country's waterways pollution free. Using pump-out and dump stations is something we can all do to protect our waters.

**Keep our water clean—
use pump-out stations**



For information on pump-out and dump station locations, call **1-800-ASK-FISH.**



Discharge of Trash

It is illegal to dump refuse, garbage, or plastics into federally controlled or state waters. Many forms of litter can kill birds, fish, and marine mammals.

- You must store trash in a container while on board and place it in a proper receptacle after returning to shore.
- If boating on federally controlled waters and your vessel is 26 feet or longer, you must display a Garbage Disposal Placard that is at least 4 x 9 inches and notifies passengers and crew about discharge restrictions.

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 an approved reception facility. On recreational vessels, a bucket or bailer is adequate for temporary storage prior to disposing of the oil waste at an approved facility.
- If boating on federally controlled waters and your vessel is 26 feet or longer, you must display a 5 x 8-inch placard made of durable material, fixed in a conspicuous place in the machinery spaces or at the bilge pump control station, stating the Federal Water Pollution Control Act's law.

If your vessel discharges oil or hazardous substances in the water:

- Immediately call the National Response Center at **1-800-424-8802**.
- Also call the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality at **1-800-522-0206**.



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 on Oklahoma waters.

Requirements Specific to PWC

- Each person riding on or being towed behind a PWC must *wear* a USCG–approved PFD (life jacket).
- If the PWC is equipped with a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch, the lanyard must be attached to the person, clothing, or PFD of the operator at all times while the PWC is being operated.
- It is illegal to operate a PWC between sunset and sunrise unless the PWC is equipped with the required navigation lights.
- PWC must be operated in a reasonable and prudent manner at all times. It is illegal to operate in a reckless manner. Examples of illegal operation are:
 - Operating a PWC at greater than “slow, no wake speed” or “idle speed” within 150 feet of:
 - Any boat ramp
 - A dock or pier
 - An anchored or moored vessel
 - Operating a PWC within 50 feet of a moving vessel
 - Weaving your PWC through congested traffic
 - Intentionally waiting until the last moment to swerve and avoid a collision (“playing chicken”)
- It is illegal to chase, harass, or disturb wildlife with your PWC.

Specifically for Skiing

Vessel operators towing a person(s) using a parasail or on water skis, a surfboard, or a similar device have additional laws they must follow.

Requirements for Towing Skiers

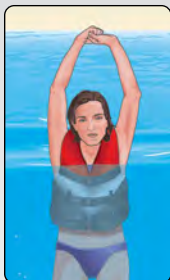
- Each person being towed must *wear* a USCG–approved personal flotation device.
- It is illegal for a vessel to tow a person(s) on water skis, a surfboard, a parasail, or a similar device unless one of the following conditions is met.
 - A person at least 8 years old, in addition to the vessel operator, is on board observing the towed person(s) **or...**
 - The vessel is equipped with an approved rearview mirror or mirrors so that the operator of the vessel can observe the progress of the person(s) being towed while facing forward.
 - If the vessel is not a PWC, one wide-angle convex rearview mirror must be installed.
 - If the vessel is a PWC, **two** wide-angle convex rearview mirrors must be installed.
- Persons being towed are considered passengers of the towing vessel. Vessels towing water-skiers or participating in a similar activity must be able to retrieve all persons being towed safely without exceeding the recommended capacity.
- It is illegal to operate a PWC or similar device capable of being remote-controlled by the skier unless such device is factory-equipped with an engine cut-off switch capable of shutting off the engine in the event the skier becomes detached from the personal watercraft device.



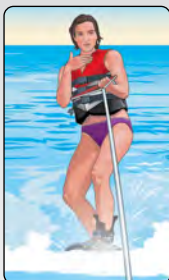
- It is illegal for vessels to tow skiers or surfboards, parasails, or any other device between sunset and sunrise or when visibility is restricted so as to endanger life or property.
- Vessels towing water-skiers or participating in a similar activity must operate in a careful and prudent manner. A reasonable distance from other vessels, people, and property must be maintained so as not to endanger life or property. It is illegal to cause the person being towed to collide with any object or person.

Hand Signals for Skiers

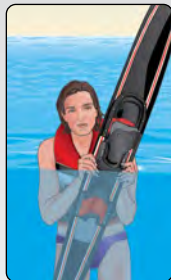
Knowing proper hand signals will help the skier(s) communicate with their boat operator or the observer.



Skier OK



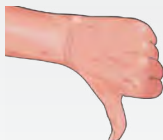
Stop



Skier down—watch!



Speed up



Slow down



Speed OK



Turn left



Turn right

Avoiding Propeller Strike Injuries

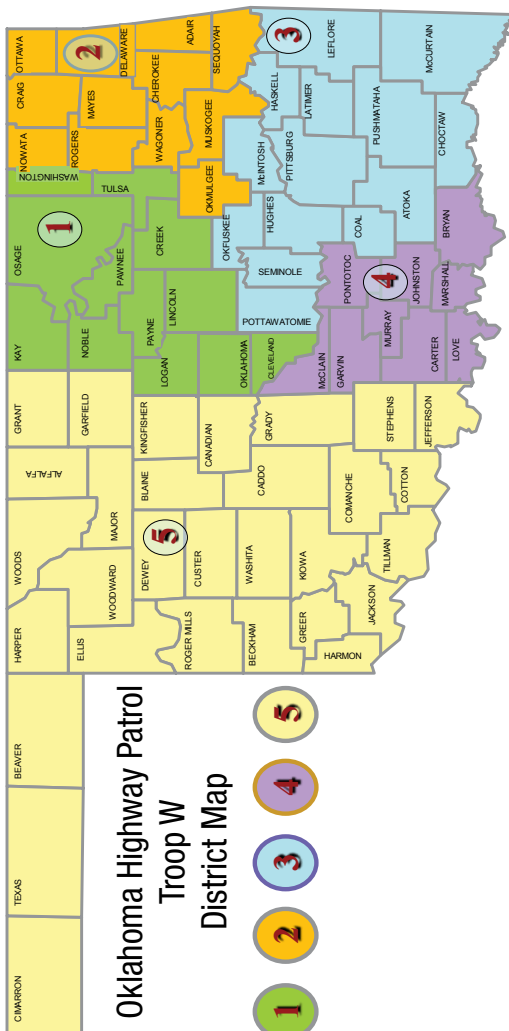
Most propeller strike accidents result from operator error. Victims include swimmers, scuba divers, fallen water-skiers, and boat operators or passengers. Most propeller accidents can be prevented by following basic safe boating practices.

- 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 U.S. Coast Guard's boating safety website: <http://uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/index.php?m=rb>.

Oklahoma Highway Patrol Information



Other Important Information

- Oklahoma Highway Patrol Troop W HQ
651 N. 43rd Street East
Muskogee, OK 74403
Phone: 918-681-4959
- For emergencies, contact the local Highway Patrol Headquarters, County Sheriff's Office, or Municipal Police Department.
- Cellular phone users can report emergencies to the Oklahoma Highway Patrol by dialing *55.

Oklahoma Required Equipment Checklist



PWC

**Boat Less
Than 16 Ft.**

**Boat 16
Ft. to Less
Than 26 Ft.**

Boating Safety Education Certificate on Board	✓ 1	✓ 1	✓ 1
Certificate of Registration on Board	✓	✓	✓
Validation Decals Displayed	✓	✓	✓
Wearable PFDs	✓ 2	✓ 3	✓ 3
Throwable Device			✓
Type 5-B Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓
Engine Cut-Off Switch	✓		
Backfire Flame Arrestor	✓	✓ 4	✓ 4
Ventilation System	✓	✓	✓
Muffler	✓	✓	✓
Horn, Whistle, or Bell	✓	✓	✓
Daytime Visual Distress Signals			✓ 5
Nighttime Visual Distress Signals	✓ 5	✓ 5	✓ 5
Navigation Lights	✓	✓	✓

1. Applicable if operator is 12 to 15 years of age.
2. Those on PWC must wear a PFD at all times.
3. Children under 13 years of age must wear a PFD whenever underway on a vessel less than 26 feet in length.
4. Required on inboard and stern drives only.
5. Required only if operating on federally controlled waters.

Oklahoma Department of Public Safety

Highway Patrol Division Marine Enforcement Section

The Marine Enforcement Section (Troop W) of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Division serves as the boating safety education, enforcement, and marine investigation arm of the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety.



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Enforcing all state and federal laws, special rules, and regulations pertaining to boating safety
- Teaching boating safety education programs to schools, civic clubs, and other interested agencies and persons
- Performing emergency search, rescue, and recovery missions statewide in all man-made or natural disaster situations
- Providing training opportunities for other marine law enforcement agencies
- Conducting courtesy inspections of all vessels for proper equipment, registration, and overall safety
- Investigating and submitting reports on all boating accidents and drownings
- Presenting boating safety programs and exhibits at fairs, boat shows, and other public events
- Investigating marine theft and fraud within the territorial boundaries of Oklahoma



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