

*the*  
**HANDBOOK!**  
OF  
**RHODE ISLAND**  
**BOATING LAWS AND**  
**RESPONSIBILITIES**



Sponsored by



The Department of Environmental Management's Division of Law Enforcement is responsible for the safety education of Rhode Island boaters. The Boat Rhode Island safe boating program is nationally recognized and approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. Many insurance companies offer a discount for successful completion. **Boating safety education** has been **required by law since 2001** for many Rhode Island boaters. You have **two** ways to study boating safety with the



**BOAT**  
**RHODE ISLAND**  
**Safe Boating Program**

**1.**

### **Over the Internet...**

Learn what you need to know to be a safe boat operator online! The complete study course with exciting visuals awaits you on the Net. Interactive graphics help you learn and retain information on boating safely in Rhode Island. Go to the website below to find out how to prepare online for your boating safety certification.

**Start today at [www.boat-ed.com/rhodeisland](http://www.boat-ed.com/rhodeisland)**

**2.**

### **In a classroom...**

Share the learning experience with other boaters and a qualified instructor at one of the many safe boating courses being offered at various facilities around the state by the U.S. Power Squadrons, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and other private organizations. For links to these courses go to [www.dem.ri.gov/programs/law/boating-safety-topics.php](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/law/boating-safety-topics.php)

# RHODE ISLAND

## *Environmental Police*

### **A Message to the Rhode Island Boater**

The popularity of boating in Rhode Island grows each year by leaps and bounds. In fact, some claim that enjoying Narragansett Bay and our ponds and rivers by boat is the major pastime for Rhode Islanders.

Even though your boat is intended to be a means of enjoyment, it has the potential to be extremely dangerous. Safety is, therefore, paramount. The Environmental Police, the Harbor Masters, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadrons, and the U.S. Coast Guard join in their efforts to promote your safety while on Rhode Island or other waters.

You can play a major role in ensuring boating safety simply by completing a boating course. No matter what your experience level, a boating course is what you need to “stay on course.” You’ll find out about boats and equipment, navigation, safety, emergency measures, and your duties as a skipper, as well as legal requirements.

Courses are available through the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadrons, and commercial providers. You can study online or request a “home study” course to help you prepare for the proctored certification exam. For more information, you can call us at **401-222-2284**. Take a course. It will make your boating experience even more enjoyable.

The Department of Environmental Management/Environmental



Police wants you and your boating partners to have a safe and fun boating experience. Also remember to boat responsibly. **DON'T DRINK AND BOAT.**



# RHODE ISLAND

*Division of Law Enforcement's  
Environmental Police*



## The Mission

The mission of the Division of Law Enforcement's Environmental Police is to protect our natural resources and ensure compliance with all environmental conservation laws through law enforcement and education.



Photo courtesy of Michael Stulz

## About the Division

Environmental Police Officers are responsible for patrolling and enforcing environmental, criminal, and vehicle laws on state property and within the state parks and management areas. Environmental Police Officers are responsible for patrolling over 88,143 acres of state land, 92 saltwater and freshwater boat launching and fishing areas, 300 miles of rivers and streams, and 417 miles of coastline, including the territorial waters of the state, which extend out three miles. Along with their responsibilities to enforce state environmental laws, Officers are cross-deputized by such agencies as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and U.S. Customs Service to assist in enforcing each agency's laws within the state.

*the*

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# HANDBOOK!

OF

## RHODE ISLAND

## BOATING LAWS

AND

## RESPONSIBILITIES

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## Where to Find Additional Information

This handbook is a guide to Rhode Island's boating laws for recreational boaters. The publication *BOAT RHODE ISLAND: A Course on Responsible Boating* gives additional information on safe boating practices for recreational boaters.



- To stay abreast of new boating laws, contact the Department of Environmental Management/Environmental Police at **401-222-2284** or **[www.dem.ri.gov/programs/law/boating-safety-topics.php](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/law/boating-safety-topics.php)**.
- For federal boating laws, visit the U.S. Coast Guard's boating safety website at **[www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)**.

# Before Going Out

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

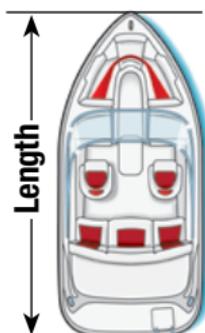
## Vessel Length Classes

- 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.

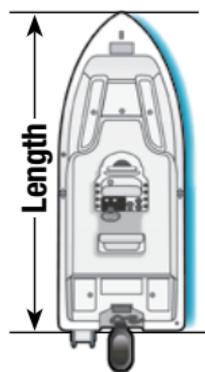
## Vessel Capacity

- 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/or maximum number of people that the vessel can carry safely.
- 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.

### Inboards



### Outboards



## 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...**

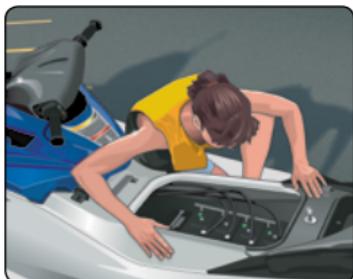
If your vessel is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes both after fueling and before starting your engine to remove gas vapors in the bilge.

### ■ After fueling:

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

## Additional Safety Procedures for PWC

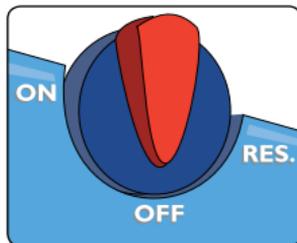
- Do not tip the PWC in order to fill it all the way up. If the tank is overfilled, the fuel may expand and spill into the water.
- After fueling, open the door of the engine compartment and sniff to check for any evidence of gas fumes. Do this before starting the engine. If you do smell gas fumes, determine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

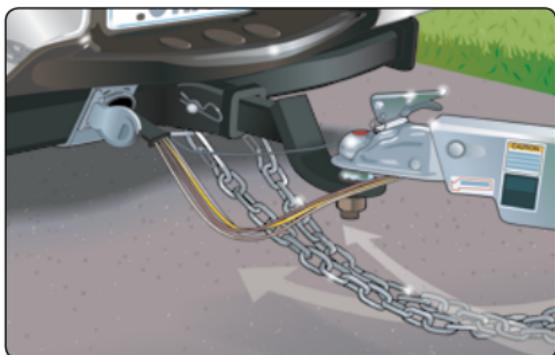
Defend against theft of your vessel and equipment.

- 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-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.

## Trailing Your Vessel Safely

### ■ Before leaving home:

- Secure all gear in the vessel and arrange it so that the weight is evenly distributed in the vessel.
- Properly secure the vessel with several tie-down straps and/or safety lines to prevent it from shifting.
- Tilt and secure the engine to increase clearance.
- Crisscross the safety chains when attaching them to the towing vehicle.
- Make sure the trailer brakes and lights are working.



### ■ On the road:

- Think farther ahead on the road than usual: anticipate changes in traffic flow in advance; make wider turns at corners and curves; allow extra time and distance for stopping and for passing other vehicles; and remember the length added by your trailer.
- Be aware that there may be lower speed limits for vehicles with trailers.

**■ Launching your vessel from a trailer:**

- Prepare your vessel well away from the boat ramp.
- Back the vessel into the water until the lower unit of the engine can be submerged while on the trailer.
- Once the engine is warmed up, back the trailer further until the vessel floats. Then back slowly off the trailer.

**■ Retrieving your vessel:**

- Back the trailer into the water so that approximately two-thirds of the rollers or bunks are submerged.
- Move the vessel onto the trailer far enough to attach the winch line to the bow eye of the vessel. Finish pulling it onto the trailer by cranking the winch.
- Tow the vessel off the ramp out of the way of others.
- While at the ramp area, remove all weeds from the vessel, remove the drain plug, and drain live wells.

## 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.


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 Get Safe. Get Certified.

### FLOAT PLAN

Complete this form before going out on your boat, and leave it with a reliable person who will notify the Coast Guard and local authorities if you do not return as scheduled. If you are delayed and it is not an emergency, inform the person with your float plan to avoid an unnecessary search.

1. Name of person filing this plan: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Description of boat: Registration number: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Make: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Trim: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Names of persons on board: Age: Address: Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Description of engine: Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Horsepower: \_\_\_\_\_ # of engines: \_\_\_\_\_ Fuel capacity: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Survival equipment on board. Check as appropriate:  
 Life Jackets (PFDs)  Flares  Flashlight  Signal mirror  Anchor(s)  Raft or dinghy  
 Smoke Signals  Horn  Water  Paddles  Food
6. Radio  Yes  No Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequencies: \_\_\_\_\_ Call sign: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Trip expectations  
 Leaving from: \_\_\_\_\_ Going to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Departing on: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ am  pm  
 \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_ am  pm
8. Other pertinent information: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Description of automobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Trailer license #: \_\_\_\_\_ License Plate #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Where parked: \_\_\_\_\_
10. If not returned by: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ am  pm  
 Call: \_\_\_\_\_  
 U.S. Coast Guard telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Local authority: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 serviceable condition.
- ✓ Leave a float plan with a reliable friend or relative.

# On the Water

Safe navigation on Rhode Island waterways is everyone's responsibility. All operators are equally responsible for taking action as 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. See "Navigation Rules" to learn about 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.

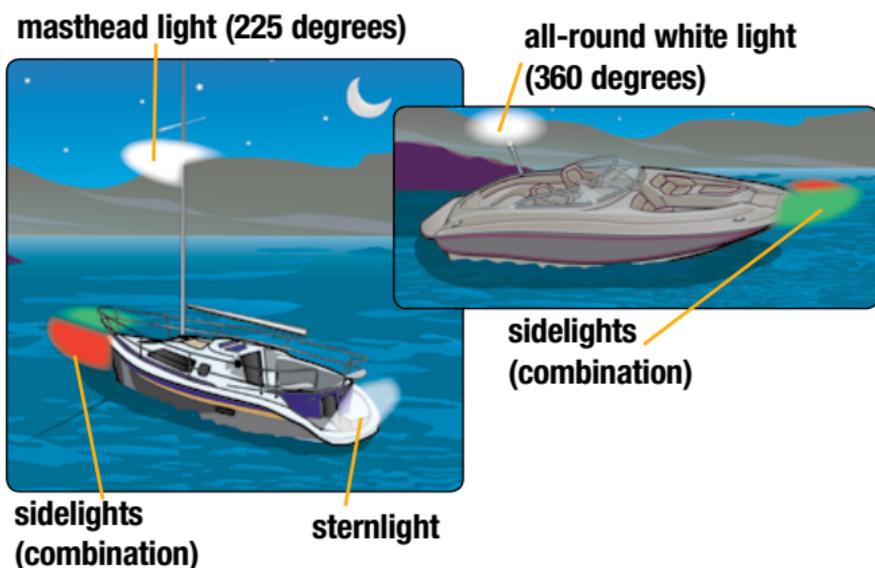
- **Stand-on vessel:** The vessel that should maintain its course and speed
- **Give-way vessel:** The vessel that must take early and substantial action to avoid collision by stopping, slowing down, or changing course

Power vs. Power		Power vs. Sail
	<p><b>Meeting Head-On</b></p> <p><b>Power vs. Power:</b> Neither vessel is the stand-on vessel. Both vessels should keep to the starboard (right).</p> <p><b>Power vs. Sail:</b> The powerboat is the give-way vessel. The sailboat is the stand-on vessel.</p>	
	<p><b>Crossing Situations</b></p> <p><b>Power vs. Power:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Power vs. Sail:</b> The powerboat is the give-way vessel. The sailboat is the stand-on vessel.</p>	
	<p><b>Overtaking</b></p> <p><b>Power vs. Power:</b> The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.</p> <p><b>Power vs. Sail:</b> The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.</p>	

## 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 only 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.



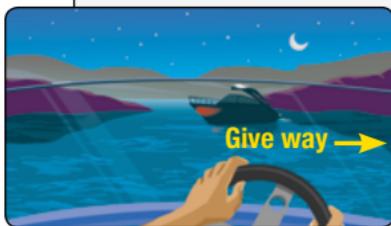
## Encountering Vessels at Night



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.



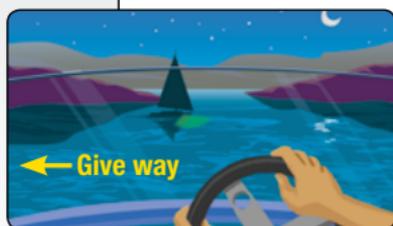
When you see a green and a white light, you are the stand-on vessel. However, remain alert in case the other vessel operator does not see you or does not know the navigation rules.



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.

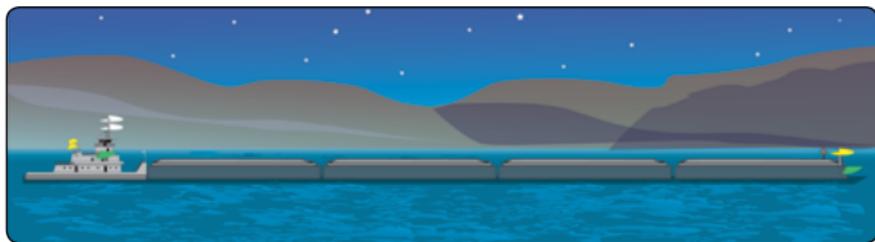
## Encountering a Sailboat at Night

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. A sailboat under sail is always the stand-on vessel!



## Encountering Large Vessels at Night

- Learn to recognize commercial vessel lights. There may be an unlit space of several hundred yards between the bow and stern lights. The lighting of larger vessels is detailed in the U.S. Coast Guard's publication, *Navigation Rules*.
- Give commercial vessels a wide berth. They lack maneuverability and are incapable of avoiding other vessels in their path.



## 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.

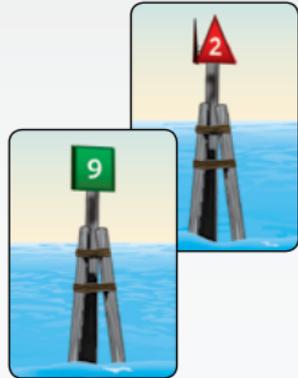


**Cans** are green cylindrical-shaped buoys marked with odd numbers.



**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 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.

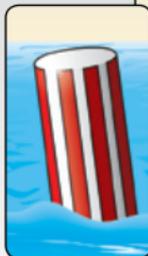
## Other Non-Lateral Markers

**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.



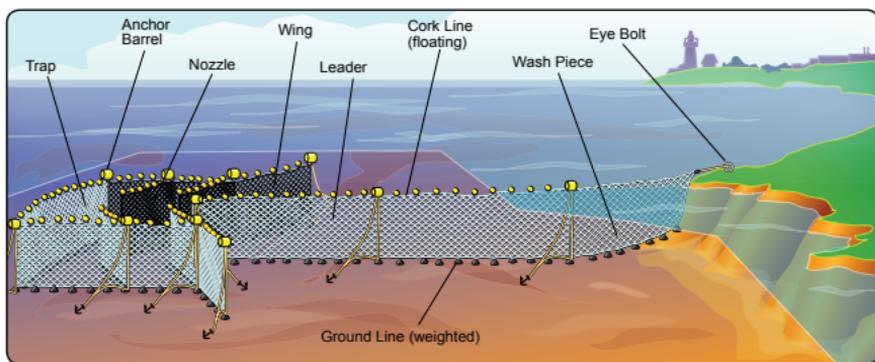
## Mooring Buoy

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



## Floating Fish Traps

- Commercial fishermen employ floating fish traps in New England waters. Floating fish traps are a maze of vertical nets that are anchored to the water bottom and stretched to the water's surface by attached floats. These traps can be dangerous to recreational boaters.
- Boaters should learn to recognize and avoid fish traps.
  - Look for a network of floating barrels, buoys, or floats.
  - Do not pass between the buoys.
  - Give wide berth to nets in order to avoid their long anchor lines.
- Check your nautical charts for areas where fish traps may be located.
- Contact RIDEM Division of Fish & Wildlife at **401-423-1920** or go to [www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/fishwild/rimf17.pdf](http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/fishwild/rimf17.pdf) for maps and information on fish traps in Rhode Island waters.



These traps can also be anchored off shore as well as secured to 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 channels 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 PFD (life jacket). 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.

**VHF Radio Channels**

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 U.S. Coast Guard and others, and to initiate calls to other vessels.

**Channel 22** Communications between the U.S. Coast Guard 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.

**Marine weather forecasts** are broadcast on most local AM/FM radio stations and on VHF radio frequencies. Real-time weather information for Narragansett Bay is available at [tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/ports/index.shtml?port=nb](https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/ports/index.shtml?port=nb).

## Other Boating Emergencies

A safe boater knows how to prevent and respond to other boating emergencies. Most boating fatalities are the result of capsizing and falling overboard and not collisions.

- Recent U.S. Coast Guard statistics show eight out of ten boaters who drowned were boating in vessels less than 21 feet long.
- Boating accidents are five times more likely to be fatal if the water is colder than 60° Fahrenheit.

### Falling Overboard

- **To prevent persons from falling overboard:**
  - Don't sit on the gunwale, bow, seat backs, motor cover, or any other area not designed for seating.
  - Don't sit on pedestal seats when underway at greater than idle speed.
  - Don't stand up in or lean out from the boat.
  - Don't move about the boat when underway.
- **If someone on your boat falls overboard:**
  - Reduce speed and toss the victim a throwable PFD.
  - Turn your boat around and slowly pull alongside the victim, approaching the victim from downwind or into the current, whichever is stronger.
  - Turn off the engine. Pull the victim on board over the stern, keeping the weight in the boat balanced.

## Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia

### Capsizing or Swamping

- The serious effects of cold water immersion and hypothermia usually occur in water that is less than 60° Fahrenheit.
  - Victims who fall overboard in cold water suffer initial cold water shock in the first minute. This causes them to take a series of big breaths involuntarily, called hyperventilation. If the victim's head goes under the water, he or she can inhale more than quart of water and drown immediately.

- Victims who survive the first few minutes of cold water shock and hyperventilation will progress to the second stage of cold water immersion. This stage is called “cold incapacitation” or swim failure.
  - Hypothermia is the final stage of cold water immersion.
- To reduce the risks and effects of cold water immersion and hypothermia:
- Be a smart boater and wear a life jacket, called a personal flotation device (PFD). Unexpected falls overboard or capsizing can occur suddenly, leaving no time to put on a PFD. Wearing a PFD will help you avoid drowning as a result of cold water immersion and initial cold water shock.
  - Consider only the water temperature when estimating the risks of cold water immersion and hypothermia. The air temperature does not affect these risks.
  - Dress in several layers of clothing under your PFD or wear a wetsuit or drysuit.
  - If you do capsize, swamp, or fall overboard:
    - Get as much of your body out of the water as possible.
    - Try to stay with your boat. You are more likely to be seen, and the boat can help keep you afloat.
    - Do not take your clothes off unless necessary. Clothes can help you float and provide insulation.
    - Do not thrash or move about. Excess motion consumes energy and increases loss of body heat.
    - Draw your knees to your chest and your arms to your sides, protecting the major areas of heat loss.
    - If others are in the water with you, huddle together with your arms around their shoulders.

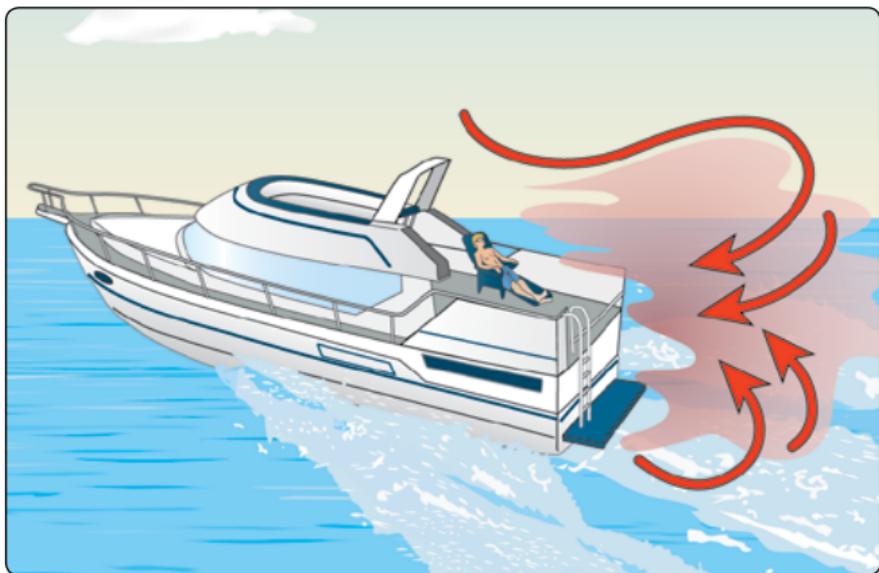


- **To reduce the risk of capsizing or swamping:**
  - Don't overload your boat. Balance the load.
  - Slow your boat appropriately when turning.
  - Secure the anchor line to the bow, never to the stern.
  - Don't boat in rough water or in bad weather.
- **If you capsize or swamp your boat, or if you have fallen overboard and can't get back in:**
  - Stay with the boat.
  - Try to reboard or climb onto it in order to get as much of your body out of the cold water as possible.
- **If the boat sinks or floats away, don't panic.**
  - If wearing a PFD, remain calm and await help.
  - If you aren't wearing a PFD, look around for one or for other buoyant items to use as a flotation device.
  - In cold water, float rather than tread.

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that can be deadly. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, keep air flowing through the boat and take extreme caution when running a generator at a dock or at anchor.

- Whenever people are using a swim platform or are in the water close to the stern, turn off all gasoline-powered generators with transom exhaust ports.
- Swimmers should never enter the cavity between the swim platform and the stern of the boat.
- When boating, be careful running downwind as exhaust gases may blow back on board. On cabin cruisers, be aware that exhaust gases can blow back into the stern when traveling into the wind.



## 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 control



### steering nozzle

## Steering and Stopping a PWC

- 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 engine cut-off switch and the operator's wrist or PFD. The 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 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 personal watercraft, 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 (life jacket).
- 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.
- See "Requirements Specific to PWC" for other requirements specific to PWC.



## Specifically for Paddlesports

Paddling along the coast or down a river can be an enjoyable and safe activity. But, according to statistics, paddlers in small crafts, such as canoes, kayaks, and rafts, are more than twice as likely to drown as those operating other types of vessels.

Paddlers need to consider themselves “boaters.” They must adhere

to the same laws as operators of any other type of vessel and should follow the same safety practices.



Photo courtesy of High Mountain Sports, [www.highmountainsports.com](http://www.highmountainsports.com)

### Preparing for Safety

As a paddler, you can take steps to make sure you come home safely.

- Always wear a PFD (life jacket).
- Make sure you have the skills needed to operate a small, unstable craft safely and to reboard the craft from the water. These skills are best learned through hands-on training.
- Never paddle alone. Bring along at least one other boater. Three crafts with two paddlers each is recommended. If unfamiliar with the waterway, be sure to paddle with someone who is knowledgeable about it.
- Never overload the craft. Tie down gear, and distribute weight evenly.
- Maintain a low center of gravity and three points of contact. Keep your weight centered in the craft. Leaning a shoulder over the edge of the craft can destabilize it enough to cause it to capsize.
- Stay seated. Standing up or moving around in a small craft also can cause it to capsize.



- Leave a float plan with a friend or relative. Map a general route with a timetable when embarking on a long trip.
- Know the weather conditions before you head out. While paddling, watch the weather and stay close to shore. Head for shore if the waves increase.

### Being Responsible

A responsible paddler shows respect for others and for the environment by doing the following.

- Use courtesy at boat ramps. Paddlers should practice the same ramp etiquette as any other boater.
- Choose a route that does not interfere with other boating traffic.
- Avoid environmentally sensitive areas. Even vessels with no motors can damage these areas.

### Paddling on Coastal Waters

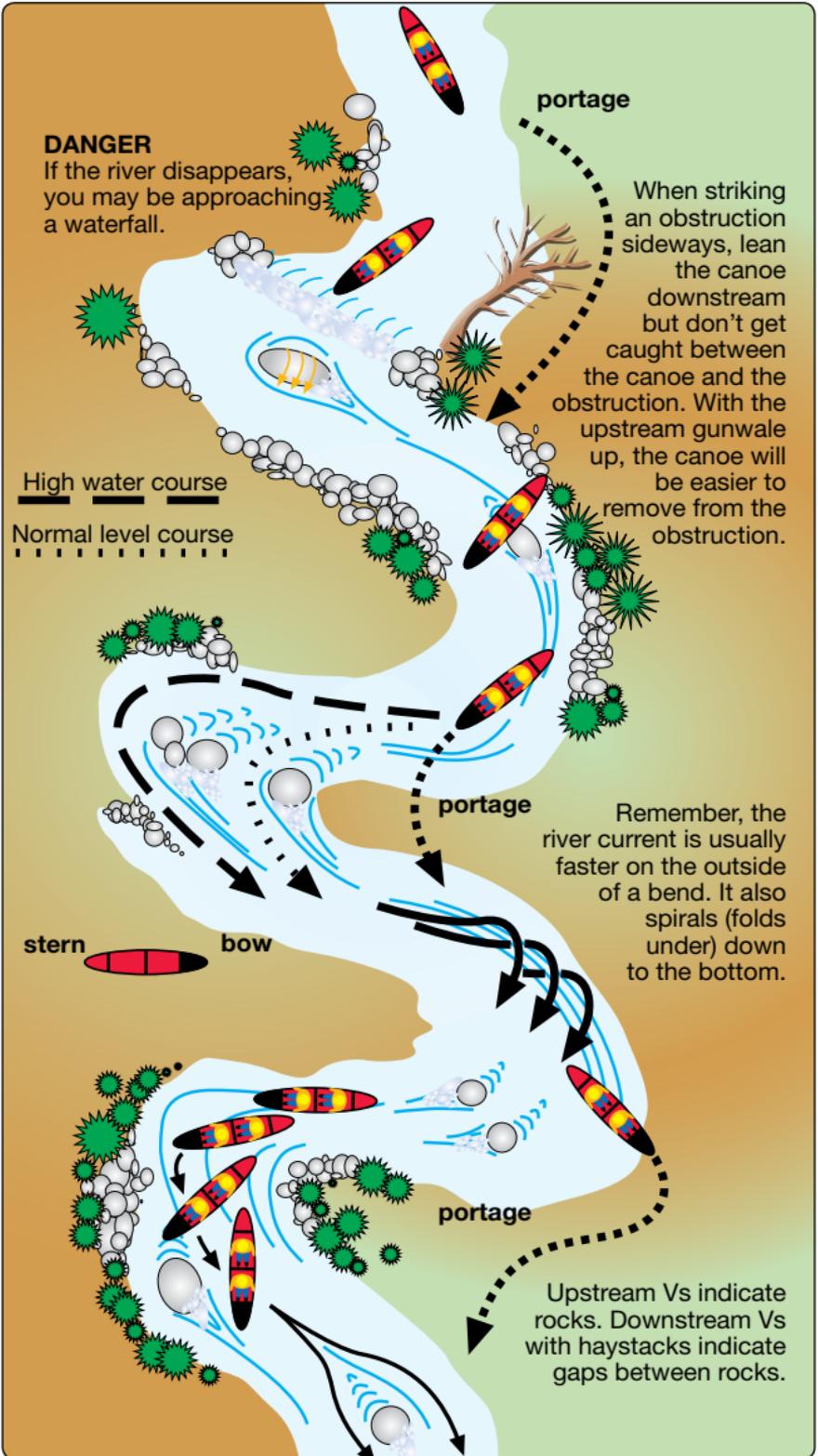
Coastal paddling has its own challenges and dangers. Coastal paddlers are likely to encounter a variety of other vessels. If you paddle on coastal waters, follow these guidelines.

- Always wear a PFD.
- Make yourself visible, particularly in poor visibility weather conditions such as fog. Wear bright clothing and consider installing a visibility/safety flag on your craft (similar to a bicycle flag). You must carry a whistle and also should carry a white light.
- Stay alert at all times. Be aware of your surroundings, staying well clear of powerboats and any commercial traffic. Stay out of navigable channels. Follow the navigation rules.

- Before paddling on the coast, make sure you understand the special challenges you may encounter.
  - Dress properly for cold water, which can be deadly.
  - Know the tidal currents in the area. Wind, waves, and currents could carry you out to open sea.
  - Become familiar with the surf patterns in the area so that you know where you can beach your craft safely.
  - Watch for fog, and head to shore if you see it developing. Fog makes it difficult to find your way and will make it almost impossible for other boats to see you.

## Paddling on Rivers

- Always wear a PFD. Also wear a helmet when paddling on rapid waters.
- Don't overload the craft with passengers or gear.
- Fasten down all ropes so that there is no danger of becoming entangled in case you overturn.
- If capsized, stay at the upstream end of the craft. If carried by the current, float on your back, keeping your toes up and your feet together. Never try to stand up unless the water is too shallow to swim.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions. Get out of the water before a storm hits.
- Before paddling on a river, make sure you understand the special challenges you may encounter.
  - Consult a map of the river before your trip, and know where any low-head dams are located. Water going over a low-head dam creates a strong recirculating current at the base of the dam, which can trap you against the face of the dam under the water. Always carry your craft around a low-head dam.
  - When approaching rapids, go ashore well upstream and check them out before continuing. In dangerous conditions, carry your craft around rapids.
  - Be alert for strainers, which are river obstructions that allow water to flow through but block vessels and could throw you overboard and damage or trap your craft.







### Validation Decal



### Spaces or hyphens should appear here.

- The registration number (sequence of letters and numbers) and decals must be displayed as follows.
  - Number must be painted, applied as a decal, or otherwise affixed to the forward half of each side of the vessel 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, bold, **BLOCK** letters.
  - Number's color must contrast sharply with its background.
  - Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen: **RI 3717 ZW** or **RI-3717-ZW**.
  - Only current decals shall be displayed. No other numbers may be displayed.
  - Decals must be affixed to the right of, and in line with, the registration number on each side of the vessel.
- If your vessel requires registration, it is illegal to operate it or allow others to operate your vessel unless it is registered and numbered as described above.

### Documented Vessels

Federally documented vessels used primarily in Rhode Island must be registered with the state. The documentation number will be used as the registration number. The vessel must display the validation decals issued by the state on each side of the vessel.

## Other Facts About Titling and Registration

- All vessels must be titled, except a ship's tender, non-motorized inflatable vessels, documented vessels, and all vessels 14 feet or less.
- A vessel's registration is valid for two years and expires on the last day of February.
- Outboard engines also must be registered. However, for outboard engines, it is a one-time registration—the registration does not expire.
- If ownership of a vessel changes, a new registration application must be filed. The registration number assigned to the vessel will remain the same.
- Vessels owned by Rhode Island residents that are not registered properly are subject to local property taxes levied by local cities and towns.
- Larger recreational vessels owned by U.S. citizens may (at the option of the owner) be documented by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Call the USCG at **1-800-799-8362** for more information. Documented vessels used primarily in Rhode Island must be registered with the state also. The documentation number will be used as the registration number. The vessel must display the validation decals issued by the state on each side of the vessel where best visible.
- If you change your address or transfer your interest in the vessel, or if the vessel is abandoned, destroyed, or stolen, you must notify the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management within 15 days.
- If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Number or title, you must complete a “duplicate” form and submit a processing fee within 30 days.

- To register a new or used vessel for the first time, you must submit all of the following:
  - Dealer's Bill of Sale (for a new vessel) or notarized bill of sale or notarized gift statement (for a used vessel)
  - Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin (for a new vessel) or title notarized by seller (for a used vessel)
  - Properly filled out Boat Registration Application and, if applicable, Outboard Motor Registration Application
  - Properly filled out Application for Initial Vessel Certificate of Title
  - All required fees and sales tax (if applicable)
  - Verify that the physical Hull Identification Number on the vessel matches the Hull Identification Number on the Title, Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin, and other required documents.

**If you suspect the sale of a stolen vessel...**

Immediately contact the Department of Environmental Management/  
Environmental Police at **401-222-2284**.



**Change of Address/Change of Ownership/Change of Registration Status**

If you change your address or sell or otherwise dispose of your vessel, you must, in writing within 15 days, notify the Department of Environmental Management, Office of Boat Registration & Licensing, 235 Promenade Street, Suite 360, Providence, RI 02908. For further information or questions, contact this office at **401-222-6647**.

## Registration and Titling Fees

If the transaction is a...	Then your fee is...
New title for a vessel without lien .....	\$25.00
New title for a vessel with lien .....	\$40.00
2-yr. registration      1–15 ft. ....	\$32.00
of a vessel              16–20 ft. ....	\$42.00
(by length <sup>1</sup> )            21–25 ft. ....	\$66.00
26–30 ft. ....	\$108.00
31–35 ft. <sup>2</sup> .....	\$212.00
36–40 ft. <sup>2</sup> .....	\$264.00
41–45 ft. <sup>2</sup> .....	\$316.00
46–50 ft. <sup>2</sup> .....	\$418.00
over 50 ft. <sup>2</sup> .....	\$620.00
Registration of an outboard engine .....	\$20.00
Duplicate registration (vessel or engine).....	\$5.00
Duplicate decals .....	\$2.00
Transfer title of a vessel .....	\$5.00
Duplicate or corrected title of a vessel .....	\$5.00
Late fee .....	\$15.00

<sup>1</sup> Round to next highest feet in length.

<sup>2</sup> Vessels over 30 ft. may, upon request, register for one year at the rate of ½ of the 2-yr. fee.

## Where to Title and Register Your Vessel

Your certificate of number, decals, and title can be obtained by submitting the proper application and fee to:

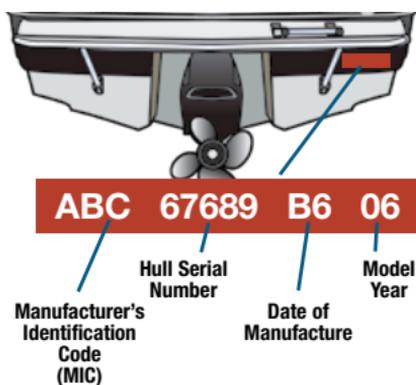
Department of Environmental Management  
Office of Boat Registration & Licensing  
235 Promenade Street  
Suite 360  
Providence, RI 02908



Forms are obtained by writing to the address above, calling **401-222-6647**, or accessing the Internet at **[www.dem.ri.gov/programs/management/services/licenses/boating-registration.php](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/management/services/licenses/boating-registration.php)**.

## Hull Identification Number

- The Hull Identification Number (HIN) is a unique, 12-digit number assigned by the manufacturer to vessels built after 1972.
- Hull Identification Numbers:
  - Distinguish one vessel from another.
  - Are engraved in the fiberglass or on a metal plate permanently attached to the transom.
- 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.
- If your vessel is homemade, the Department of Environmental Management will issue an HIN for your vessel and instruct you on how to attach it permanently.
- It is illegal to destroy, remove, cover, or mutilate the HIN.



## Buying a Vessel

- All vessels sold after January 1, 1989, must have a valid title.
- Be certain that the vessel's description on the title matches the vessel you are buying. Check year, make, length, and HIN.
  - Do not buy a vessel if the HIN has been altered or removed.
  - Do not buy a vessel that is registered as “homemade” but is obviously a manufactured vessel.
  - Do not buy an outboard motor if the model and serial number plates have been removed.
  - Do not buy a “new” vessel without obtaining a Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin (MCO).
- Before buying any vessel, be certain the seller can provide you with his or her current registration, a notarized bill of sale, and the title.

## Who May Operate a Vessel

- All those born on or after January 1, 1986, are required to pass an approved boater education course before they legally may operate any vessel powered by a motor of more than 10 horsepower.
- **Anyone operating a personal watercraft, regardless of age, must have passed an approved boater education course.**
- The boater education course must be one that is approved by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.
- Operators who are required to have passed a boater education course must carry on board their certificate of completion. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management will issue certificates of completion to boaters passing approved courses.
- Operators of vessels other than personal watercraft are exempt from the requirements for mandatory boater education for any of the following reasons.
  - They are supervised on board by a person 18 years of age or older who has met the education requirements *or...*
  - They hold a valid commercial vessel operator's license *or...*
  - They are not a resident of Rhode Island and meet the requirements of their state of residence *or...*
  - They have been a resident of Rhode Island for 60 days or less *or...*
  - They are operating a rented vessel and have successfully completed the requirements for renters (renters of vessels powered by a motor of more than 10 horsepower must watch an instructional video and pass a written examination prior to operation).
- There are no exemptions for personal watercraft operators. All PWC operators must have passed an approved boating safety course in Rhode Island or their state of residence.



# 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 have at least one U.S. Coast Guard–approved wearable personal flotation device or PFD (life jacket) for each person on board.
- In addition to the above requirement, one U.S. Coast Guard–approved throwable PFD must be on board vessels 16 feet or longer.
- Children under 13 years of age must *wear* a U.S. Coast Guard–approved PFD while underway in a recreational vessel less than 65 feet in length unless below deck or in an enclosed cabin.
- Each person being towed behind a vessel on water skis, a surfboard, or other device must *wear* a U.S. Coast Guard–approved PFD.
- Each person riding on a PWC must *wear* a U.S. Coast Guard–approved PFD.
- Besides being USCG–approved, all PFDs must be:
  - *In serviceable condition.*
  - *Readily accessible*, which means you are able to put the PFD on quickly in an emergency.
  - *Of the proper size for the intended wearer.* Sizing for wearable PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.

***Your PFD won't work if you don't wear it. Protect yourself and others—wear your PFD.***

## 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

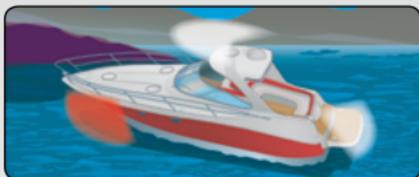
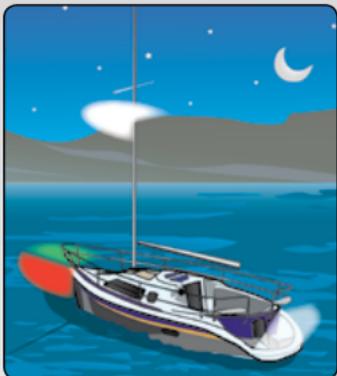
Unpowered vessels are sailboats or vessels that are paddled, poled, or rowed.

- **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.

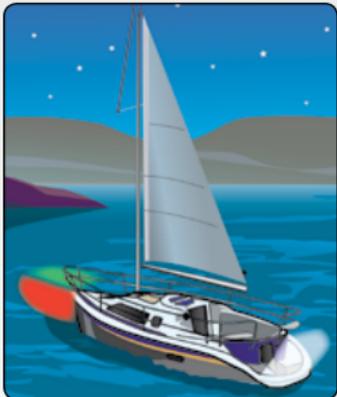
## 1. Power-Driven Vessels Less Than 65.6 Feet



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



## 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.

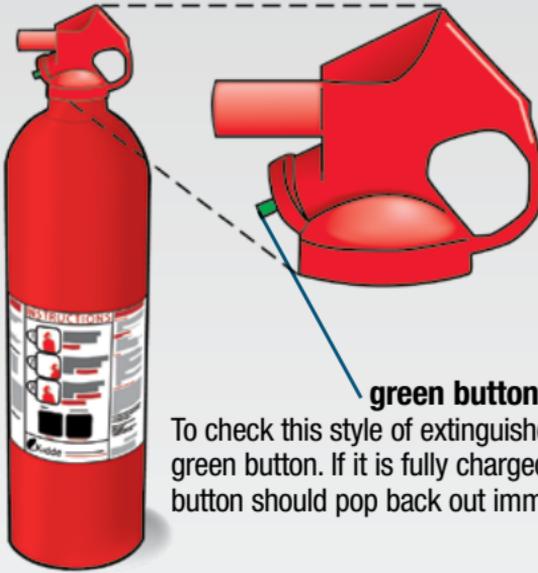
## 3. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 23.0 Feet



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 Extinguisher Charge Indicators

Check the charge level of your fire extinguishers regularly. Replace them immediately if they are not fully charged.



**green button**

To check this style of extinguisher, depress the green button. If it is fully charged, the green button should pop back out immediately.



On this style of fire extinguisher, the needle indicator should be in the "full" range.

## Fire Extinguishers

- All vessels equipped with an engine are required to have a Type B, U.S. Coast Guard–approved fire extinguisher on board. Vessels equipped with an outboard engine and less than 26 feet in length are exempt from this requirement if they have an open construction that does not allow flammable gases or vapors to be trapped.
- 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—not near the engine or in a compartment, but where they can be reached immediately. Be sure you know how to operate them, and inspect extinguishers regularly to ensure they are in working condition and fully charged.

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

### Fire Extinguisher Requirements

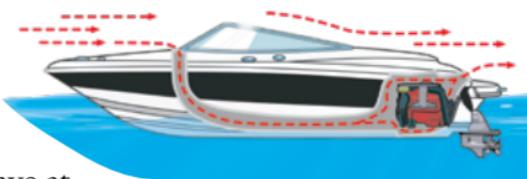
<b>Classification</b> type & size	<b>Foam</b> minimum gallons	<b>Carbon Dioxide</b> minimum pounds	<b>Dry Chemical</b> minimum pounds
B-I	1¼	4	2
B-II	2½	15	10
<b>Length of Vessel</b>	<b>Without Fixed System</b>		<b>With Fixed System*</b>
Less than 26 ft.	one B-I		none
26 ft. to less than 40 ft.	two B-I <b>or</b> one B-II		one B-I
40 ft. to less than 65 ft.	three B-I <b>or</b> one B-II and one B-I		two B-I <b>or</b> one B-II

\*refers to a permanently installed fire extinguisher system

## 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 personal watercraft), open the engine compartment and sniff for gasoline fumes before starting the engine.



## Backfire Flame Arrestors

- Because boat engines may backfire, all powerboats (except outboards) that are fueled with gasoline must have a U.S. Coast Guard–approved backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor (must comply with SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 standards).
- Periodically clean the flame arrestor(s) and check for any damage.

## Mufflers

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

- All vessels equipped with an engine must have a factory-type muffler or exhaust water manifold installed on the engine or another effective muffling system for noise reduction purposes.
- The use of cutouts is prohibited except for vessels participating in permitted marine events.

## Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

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

- Vessels used on Rhode Island coastal waters or on federally controlled waters must be equipped with visual distress signals that are U.S. Coast Guard–approved, in serviceable condition, and readily accessible.
- 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.

	If on State or Federally Controlled Waters	
	Day (sunrise to sunset)	Night (sunset to sunrise)
<b>Vessels less than 16 feet long</b>	None required	3 night (or day/night) VDSs
<b>Manually propelled vessels</b>	None required	3 night (or day/night) VDSs
<b>Non-motorized open sailboats less than 26 feet long</b>	None required	3 night (or day/night) VDSs
<b>All other vessels</b>	3 day (or day/night) VDSs	3 night (or day/night) VDSs

### Don't "cry wolf"...

It is illegal to knowingly transmit a false distress or hoax call, whether it be by radio, telephone, emergency flares, or any other means of communication. Under Rhode Island law, the penalty for a false distress or hoax call is a \$1,000 fine, one year in jail, and reimbursement of emergency response costs.

- 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).

### Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals



**Orange Smoke**

*Day Signal*



**Red Meteor**

*Day and Night Signal*



**Red Flare**

*Day and Night Signal*

### Non-Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals



**Electric Light**

*Night Signal*



**Orange Flag**

*Day Signal*



**Arm Signal**

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

### 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

## 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. Use the chart below to determine what is required based on your vessel's length.



### Sound-Producing Device Requirements

Vessels less than 39.4 feet long	Some means of making an efficient sound signal capable of a four-second blast <b>and</b> audible for one-half nautical mile
39.4 feet to less than 65.6 feet long	Whistle audible for one-half nautical mile
65.6 feet or longer	Whistle <b>and</b> a bell audible for one nautical mile

## Sound Signals

Sound signals are composed of short and prolonged blasts and must be audible for at least one-half mile:

- **Short blast**—about one second in duration
- **Prolonged blast**—4–6 seconds in duration

Some common sound signals that you should be familiar with as a recreational boater are as follows.

### Changing Direction

- **One short blast** tells other boaters, “I intend to pass you on my port (left) side.”
- **Two short blasts** tell other boaters, “I intend to pass you on my starboard (right) side.”
- **Three short blasts** tell other boaters, “I am operating astern propulsion.” For some vessels, this tells other boaters, “I am backing up.”

### Restricted Visibility

- **One prolonged blast** at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by power-driven vessels when underway and making way.
- **One prolonged blast plus two short blasts** at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by sailing vessels, vessels not under command, vessels engaged in towing, vessels restricted in ability to maneuver, and fishing vessels.

### Warning

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

## On the Water

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

### Reckless and Unlawful Operation

Rhode Island law provides regulations that apply to all vessel operators boating on Rhode Island waters.

- The failure to exercise the care necessary to prevent the endangerment of life, limb, or property of any other person is illegal.
- It is illegal to operate a vessel within any marked restricted areas such as swimming areas.
- No one may operate a vessel in any harbor, inlet, pond, or any other confined body of water in Rhode Island at a speed in excess of:
  - 45 miles per hour from sunrise to sunset *and...*
  - 25 miles per hour from sunset to sunrise or during other periods of restricted visibility such as fog.
- It is illegal to exceed any posted speed limits. For example, harbors may be marked as “maximum speed 5 miles per hour—no wake” zones.
- It is illegal to enter any posted exclusionary zones.
- You may not dock or secure your vessel to a pier, wharf, or any other shore structure without the consent of the owner of the structure except in the case of an emergency.
- Some waterways in Rhode Island may have special regulations such as horsepower restrictions, speed limits, or limits on when certain watercraft may be used. Be sure to check for special restrictions on a waterway before going boating.

## Obstructing Navigation

It is illegal to:

- Operate any vessel in such a way that it will interfere unnecessarily with the safe navigation of other vessels.
- 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.

In Rhode Island, moorings are controlled by the harbor-master of each town. Boaters must check with individual harbormasters to obtain permission to use any moorings, or to clarify which moorings are for public use.

- Move, displace, tamper with, damage, or destroy any navigational aid.

### Responsibility of vessel owners...

As an owner of a vessel, you are responsible for any damage or injury caused by the negligent operation of your vessel if it is being operated with your express or implied consent. If the vessel is being operated by an immediate family member, it is presumed that you have given consent.

## Homeland Security Restrictions

- Do not approach within 100 yards and slow to minimum speed within 500 yards of any U.S. Naval vessel. If you need to pass within 100 yards of a U.S. Naval vessel for safe passage, you must contact the vessel or the USCG escort vessel on VHF-FM channel 16.
- Observe and avoid all security zones. Avoid commercial port operation areas, especially those that involve military, cruise line, or petroleum facilities.
- Observe and avoid other restricted areas near dams, power plants, etc.
- Do not stop or anchor beneath bridges or in the channel.
- Keep a sharp eye out for anything out of the ordinary, and report suspicious activities to the closest authority.

## Alcohol and Drugs

- Rhode Island law prohibits anyone from boating while intoxicated (BWI). This includes the operation of any powerboat, sailboat, personal watercraft, water skis, canoe, kayak, or similar device. Intoxicated means a person is under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance, or drugs such that his or her thoughts or actions are impaired, causing a danger to others.
- **Rhode Island law sets the blood alcohol limit for boating while intoxicated at 0.08% or greater.**
- Rhode Island law establishes penalties for boating while intoxicated. Penalties are set according to the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) that is detected.
  - On a first conviction for offenders with a BAC of 0.08% up to 0.10%, the penalties are:
    - \$100–\$250 fine
    - Right to operate a vessel suspended for 45 days
    - 10–60 hours of community service
    - Required attendance at a boating safety course
    - \$500 boating safety assessment fee
  - On a first conviction for offenders with a BAC of 0.10% but less than 0.15%, the penalties are:
    - \$100–\$300 fine and/or imprisonment for up to one year
    - Right to operate a vessel suspended for three to six months
    - 10–60 hours of community service
    - Required attendance at a boating safety course and/or an alcohol/drug treatment class
    - \$500 boating safety assessment fee
  - On a first conviction for offenders with a BAC of 0.15% or greater, the penalties are:
    - \$500 fine and/or imprisonment for up to one year
    - Right to operate a vessel suspended for three to six months
    - 20–60 hours of community service
    - Required attendance at a boating safety course and/or an alcohol/drug treatment class
    - \$500 boating safety assessment fee

- Operating a vessel while operating privileges are suspended carries additional penalties, including imprisonment and loss of operating privileges for two additional years.
  - Any convicted offender who had a child under 13 years of age on board the vessel may be imprisoned for up to one year. This imprisonment cannot be deferred or suspended.
  - An operator under 21 years of age who is convicted of BWI or for refusing to submit to chemical testing (see below) also may have his or her motor vehicle driver's license suspended for one year, lose the right to operate a vessel for up to an additional six months, and have the vessel's registration suspended.
  - Subsequent convictions within a five-year period carry higher fines and other severe penalties, including imprisonment for up to five years and seizure of the offender's vessel.
- ***By operating a vessel*** on Rhode Island waters, you have consented to be tested for alcohol and/or drugs if requested by a law enforcement official. Refusal to submit to testing carries an automatic fine of \$300, a \$700 assessment fee, up to 60 hours of community service, and loss of operating privileges for one year. Fines and penalties will increase substantially with subsequent offenses.



Just remember this simple rule:  
***Don't Drink and Boat!***

### Why drinking and boating can be fatal...

- The effect of alcohol is increased by the natural stressors (wind, sun, vibration) placed on your body while boating. Also, alcohol causes dehydration of your body. It takes less alcohol, combined with stressors, to impair an operator's ability to operate safely. Research has proven that one-third of the amount of alcohol that it takes to make a person legally intoxicated on land can make a boater equally intoxicated on the water.
- Alcohol depresses the central nervous system, affects judgment, and slows reaction time. Most people become impaired after only one drink.
- Alcohol makes it difficult for you to pay attention and perform multiple tasks. For example, it will be more difficult for you to keep track of two or more vessels operating in your area. This could become critical if you are placed in an emergency situation and must make a sudden decision.

*It is encouraged that the operator and passengers stay sober. Due to the instability of vessels and the lack of proper seating, intoxicated passengers are at high risk for falls inside and overboard the vessel. Stay safe and stay sober.*



## 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 property damaged by the accident.
- Vessel operators or owners whose vessel is involved in an accident or casualty must report the incident immediately to the Department of Environmental Management or to a nearby state or local police office if the incident results in:
  - Death or disappearance of a person *or...*
  - Injury to a person *or...*
  - Property damage or loss exceeding \$2,000.
- Vessel owners whose vessel is involved in an accident or casualty exceeding \$2,000 must make written reports of those damages or losses within five days of the incident. Report forms are available by contacting DEM's Division of Law Enforcement Office at **401-222-2284** or online at **[www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/enforce/pdfs/boatacc.pdf](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/enforce/pdfs/boatacc.pdf)**.
- Vessel operators who cause serious bodily injury to another person due to reckless operation will be charged with "operating so as to endanger, resulting in personal injury" and, if convicted, be imprisoned for up to five years.
- Vessel operators who cause the death of another person due to reckless operation will be charged with "operating so as to endanger, resulting in death" and, if convicted, be imprisoned for up to ten years.

## Enforcement

Officers of the Department of Environmental Management's Environmental Police, harbor masters, and police officers have the authority to enforce the boating laws of Rhode Island. The U.S. Coast Guard also has enforcement authority on federally controlled waters.

- It is illegal to refuse to stop or move when commanded to do so by a person with enforcement authority.
- The officer has the authority to stop and board your vessel in order to check that you are complying with state and federal laws.



## Marine Events

- An application for a permit must be filed at least 15 days in advance in order to hold a race, regatta, parade, or tournament involving vessels propelled by engines on Rhode Island waters.
  - For permits or information on these or other marine events, call DEM's Division of Law Enforcement Office at **401-222-2284**.
  - The applicant will be required to furnish proof to the Department that the applicant has adequate regatta liability insurance.
- Permits for events held on federally controlled waters are granted through the U.S. Coast Guard by applying at least 30 days in advance.



## Diver-Down Flags

- Persons scuba diving, skin diving, or snorkeling in Rhode Island waters where vessels are used must display a diver-down flag to mark their diving area.
- Powerboats must remain at least 50 feet away from a diver-down flag, unless doing so would prevent safe navigation.
- Two types of flags are used to indicate diving activity.
- A red divers flag must meet these requirements.



**Divers Flag**

A rectangular red flag with a white diagonal stripe ( $\frac{1}{4}$  the width of the flag) is required on state waters by Rhode Island law.



**Alfa Flag**

A blue and white International Code Flag A (or Alfa flag) is required on federally controlled and international waters.

- If the flag is displayed on the water, it must be at least 12 inches x 12 inches.
  - If the flag is flown from a vessel, it must be at least 18 inches x 18 inches.
  - The flag must be in place only while diving operations are in progress.
  - If diving between sunset and sunrise, the flag must be illuminated.
- Diving areas must be chosen in a location that will not impede the normal flow of waterway traffic.

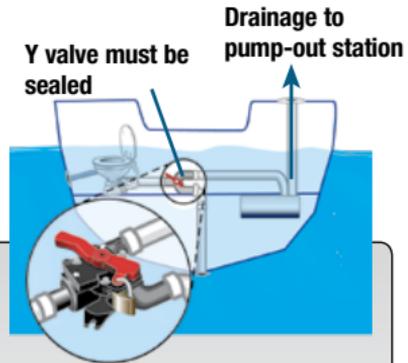
## Discharge of Sewage and Waste

- It is illegal to discharge any treated or untreated sewage into the waters of Rhode Island. **All waters of Rhode Island have been declared “No Discharge Zones.”**
- If you have a recreational vessel with installed toilet facilities, it must have a marine sanitation device (MSD) on board and be sealed to prevent discharge into the water. All installed devices must be U.S. Coast Guard–certified and working properly.
- For a list of yacht centers and marinas with pump-out facilities, see “Pump-Out Locations.”

## Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

- You are not allowed to discharge oil or hazardous substances into federally controlled or state waters.
- 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 your vessel is 26 feet or longer, you must display a 5 x 8-inch placard (sign) near the bilge pump control station stating the Federal Water Pollution Control Act's law.

## Typical Marine Sanitation Device



### Types of MSDs

There are three 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 in a closed position.
- 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 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 (sign) that is at least 4 x 9 inches and notifies passengers and crew about discharge restrictions. 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.

It is illegal for any vessel to dump plastic trash anywhere in the ocean or navigable waters of the United States. Annex V of the MARPOL TREATY is a new International Law for a cleaner, safer marine environment. Each violation of these requirements may result in civil penalty up to \$25,000, a fine up to \$50,000, and imprisonment up to 5 years.

**U.S. lakes, rivers, bays, sounds,  
and 3 miles from shore**

**ILLEGAL TO DUMP:**

Plastic	Garbage
Paper	Metal
Rags	Crockery
Glass	Dunnage
Food	

**3 to 12 miles**

**ILLEGAL TO DUMP:**

Plastic  
Dunnage (lining & packing materials that float)  
Also, if not ground to less than one inch:

Garbage	Metal
Paper	Crockery
Rags	Food
Glass	

**12 to 25 miles**

**ILLEGAL TO DUMP:**

Plastic  
Dunnage (lining & packing materials that float)

**Outside 25 miles**

**ILLEGAL TO DUMP:**

Plastic

State and local regulations may further restrict the disposal of garbage

***Working together we can all make a difference!***

**If your vessel discharges oil or hazardous substances in the water...**

- Notify the National Response Center immediately by calling **1-800-424-8802**.
- Also notify the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management by calling **401-222-1360**.
- After hours or for emergencies, contact the Environmental Police at **401-222-3070**.



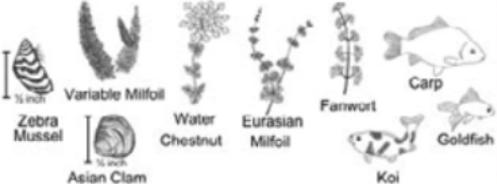
## Prevent the Spread of Nuisance Species!

- Introducing non-native species into Rhode Island waters can upset the balance of the ecosystem, thereby harming the environment. Aquatic nuisance species, such as zebra mussels, quagga mussels, milfoil, and hydrilla, are most often spread between waterways by hitching a ride on vessels and trailers. When transplanted into new waters, these organisms proliferate, displacing native species and damaging the water resource.
- To prevent spreading aquatic nuisance species:
  - Inspect your vessel and trailer, and remove any plants and animals you see before leaving the area.
  - Drain your motor, live well, and bilge on land before leaving the area.
  - Empty your bait bucket on land. Never release live bait into a body of water or release aquatic animals from one body of water into another.
  - Rinse your vessel, propeller, trailer, and equipment.
  - Air-dry your vessel and equipment for as long as possible.

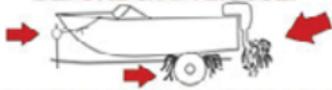




**THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES**



**BOATERS: INSPECT VESSEL CAREFULLY BEFORE & AFTER USE!**



- Remove ALL weeds and plant fragments from watercraft & trailer before & after use
- Drain boat & motor far from water; allow to dry before next use
- Clean off all waders, boots and gear after use in any waterbody
- Do not release bait or aquarium fish, shellfish or plants

For more information contact:  
 RI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT  
 Division of Fish and Wildlife  
 (401) 789-6281 or (401) 789-7481  
[www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov)




# Specifically for PWC

## Requirements Specific to PWC

- Each person riding on a PWC must *wear* a U.S. Coast Guard–approved PFD (life jacket). Each PFD must be designed for persons on PWC and used in accordance with the manufacturer’s label.
- 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.
- PWC may not be operated between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise.
- PWC must be operated in a reasonable and prudent manner at all times. For example, it is illegal to:
  - Jump the wake of another vessel unnecessarily close to the other vessel.
  - Weave your PWC through congested traffic.
- No one may operate a PWC at greater than headway speed within 200 feet of swimmers, divers, the shoreline, or moored vessels. Headway speed is the slowest speed at which it is still possible to maintain steering.
- When launched from shore or returning to shore, PWC must proceed directly to the area where operation is allowed in a direction as near perpendicular as possible and not in excess of headway speed.
- *Anyone operating a personal watercraft, regardless of age, must have passed an approved boater education course (See “Who May Operate a Vessel”).*
- Some waters may have local regulations that limit or prohibit the operation of personal watercraft. Be sure to check local regulations before going boating.

## Sharing Your PWC...Safely!

Sharing the fun of your personal watercraft (PWC) with friends is all part of the boating experience. Before you share your PWC, however, make sure that others you allow to operate it understand their responsibilities as an operator. They need to know that they have the same responsibilities as any other vessel operator, including obeying the navigation rules.

In addition:

- Make sure that anyone you allow to operate your PWC meets the education requirements for PWC operation in Rhode Island and the local waterway you are using.
- Show new operators how to start and reboard the PWC while on shore or in shallow water.
- Explain how to steer and control the PWC. Tell all new operators and remind experienced operators that ***power is required for steering control!***
- Make sure that the operator understands how to use the engine cut-off switch and attaches the lanyard to his or her person or PFD before starting the engine.
- Have anyone new to PWC go out in an uncongested area first. Tell them to stay clear of other PWC, boats, or persons in the water.
- Explain how to recognize a “slow, no wake” speed marker and what to do when approaching one.



# Specifically for Skiing

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

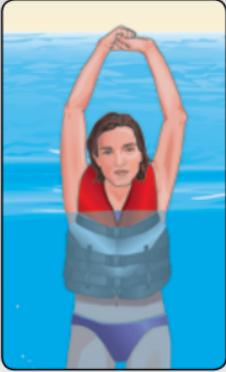
## Requirements for Towing Skiers

- It is illegal for vessels to tow persons on water skis, surfboards, or any device of this type between one hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise.
- Every vessel towing a person(s) on water skis, a surfboard, or a similar device must have an observer, in addition to the vessel operator, who is 12 years of age or older and in position to observe the skier(s).
- Each person being towed behind a vessel on water skis, a surfboard, or other device must *wear* a U.S. Coast Guard–approved PFD (life jacket). The PFD must be designed for the towing activity and used in accordance with the manufacturer’s label.
- A reasonable distance from other vessels, people, and property must be maintained while towing so as not to endanger life or property. It is illegal to cause the towed device or person being towed to collide with any object or person.

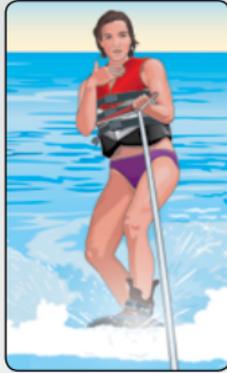


## Hand Signals for Skiers

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



**Skier OK**



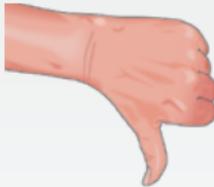
**Stop**



**Skier down—watch!**



**Speed up**



**Slow down**



**Speed OK**



**Turn left**



**Turn right**

# Public Launching Spots

The public launching locations are listed here. For more information, visit [www.shoreline-ri.com](http://www.shoreline-ri.com) and [www.exploreri.org](http://www.exploreri.org).

## FRESHWATER RAMPS

Town	Location	HP Restrictions	Parking
(S) = State-owned & operated, (T) = Town/City-owned & operated, (H) = Handicapped accessible			
Burrillville	Clear River access to Harrisville Pond. Rt. 100 from Chepachet to Rt. 98 to Harrisville, site is 1/4 mile north of Harrisville Village on left. Cement slab ramp. (S)	None	Yes
	Union Pond 8 acres. Rt. 44 to Rt. 100, left on Reservoir Rd. (S)	No outboard motors	Yes
	Spring Lake 96 acres. Rt. 102 to Joslin Rd., to Spring Lake Rd., to Blackhut Rd., access site on the right. Cement slab. (S)	Electric trolling motors only	Yes
	Wakefield Pond 72 acres. Rt. 100 N to left on Wakefield Pond Rd., to left on Lee Circle, to top of hill, a right to bottom of hill, take left. Ramp on right. (S)	No outboard motors 6/20-9/20	Yes
	Wilson Reservoir 127 acres. Rt. 100 from Chepachet to Wallum Lake Rd., left 1/2 mile on East Wallum Lake Rd. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
Charlestown	Watchaug Pond-Rt 1 to Prosser Trail, take left onto Sanctuary Road. * No PWC per Town Ordinance. (S)	See Text*	★
Coventry	Carbuncle Pond 48 acres. Rt. 102 to Rt. 14, 4.5 miles on Rt. 14, sign and road on left. (S)	Elec. trolling motor only for all ramps to this pond	Yes
	Tiogou Lake 215 acres. off Rt. 3 (T)	None	limited
	Zeke's Bridge access to Big River and portions of Johnson's Pond. Rt. 3 to Harkney Hill Rd., 2 miles on right. Cement slab. (S)	None	Yes
Cranston	John L. Curran Public Fishing Area 38 acres. Fiskville Reservoir. Rt. 295 N to Scituate Ave., west to Seven Mile Rd. Pond on left. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
Exeter	Breakheart Pond 33 acres. In Arcadia Mgmt. Area. Rt. 3 to Rt. 165, to Frosty Hollow Rd., to Austin Farm Rd., 1/4 mile. Gravel ramp. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
	Beach Pond 340 acres. Launching on Connecticut side. (S)	None	Yes
Foster	Shippee Saw Mill Pond. Rt. 6 to Rt. 94 N, left to Willoughby Young Rd. (S)	Electric trolling motors only	Yes
Glocester	Bowdish Reservoir 126 acres. Rt. 44, Glocester, to George Washington Camp Ground entrance, 3rd left to boat ramp. Concrete slab. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
	Clarkville Pond. Rt. 44 Glocester to Richardson Clearing Trail, to Cold Spring Trail, first left off Cold Spring Trail. (S)	Electric trolling motors only	Yes
	Keech Pond 129 acres. Rt. 44 Glocester to Chestnut Hill Rd., to Indian Trail, to end. Ramp on left. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
	Lake Washington 42 acres. Rt. 44 to Lake Washington Dr. (S)	Electric trolling motors only	Yes
	Smith & Sayles Reservoir 186 acres. Rt. 44 Glocester to Chestnut Hill Rd., to Sand Dam Rd. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes

★ Vehicles With Trailers Only. Limited Car-Top Spaces.

Town	Location	HP Restrictions	Parking
(S) = State-owned & operated, (T) = Town/City-owned & operated, (H) = Handicapped accessible			
Glocester (cont.)	Pascoag Reservoir (Echo Lake) 352 acres. Rt. 44 W to Jackson School House Rd., North, site is 1/2 mile on the right. (S)	10 HP limit from Saturday before Memorial Day until day after Labor Day	Yes
Hopkinton	Alton Landing access to Wood River and Alton Pond. Rt. 95 to Rt. 138, to Hope Valley Rd., to Rt. 91, 3/4 mile on right. (S)	No outboard motors	Yes
	Ashville Pond 32 acres. Rt. 95 to Rt. 3, to Canochet Rd., 1 3/4 miles on left. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
	Locustville Pond 83 acres. Rt. 95 S to Rt. 138, right onto Bank St., to Fairview Ave., entrance to lot and ramp on left, bear to the right of fork. Gravel ramp. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
	Mechanic's Street Access Site. Rt. 95 S to Rt. 3, to Mechanic St., site at bottom of hill on left, canoes and small car-top boats. Access to Wood River provided. (S)	None	limited
	Moscow Pond 18 acres. Rt. 95 S to Rt. 138 W, to Woody Hill Rd., car-top boats, unimproved ramp. (S)	None	limited
	Wood Rv. Access Grantvill, Hope Valley Rd. (S)	None	limited
	Blue Pond. Rt. 95 S to Rt. 3, to Canochet Rd., and walk in. Canoe launching. (S)	Electric trolling motors only	limited
Lincoln	Olney Pond 126 acres. Lincoln Woods State Park. Rt. 95 N to Rt. 146. 3 1/2 miles to State Park. (S)	All power boats prohibited on Sat., Sun., & Holidays 6/6 through 9/15, 10-HP limit all other times	Yes
North Kingstown	Silver Spring Lake 10 acres. Directly off Tower Hill Rd. at junction Rt. 1 and Rt. 4. (S)	Electric trolling motors OK	Yes
North Smithfield	Upper Slatersville Reservoir 147 acres. Rt. 295 N to Rt. 102 N, approx. 1 1/4 mile on right. Slab ramp. (S)	None	Yes
Portsmouth	Melville Public Fishing Area 6 acres. Mostly shore fishing. Off Rt. 114, car-top launching. (T)(S)	None	Yes
Richmond	Access to Pawcatuck River Biscuit City Landing at Biscuit City Rd. Rt. 2 S, approx. 5 miles past the Rt. 138 intersection turn left onto Biscuit City Rd. Gravel ramp. (S)	None	Yes
	Richmond Landing to Pawcatuck River. Rt. 95 to Rt. 138 E, to Rt. 112, to Rt. 91, 2 miles on left side near bridge. (S)	None	Yes
	Wyoming Pond 26 acres. Rt. 95 to Rt. 138 W, site just past intersection of Rts 3 and 138 on the right. Gravel ramp. (S)	None	Yes
Scituate	Upper Pawtuxet River, Hope Landing access. Rt.116 to Hope Furnace Rd. (S)	Electric trolling	Yes
Smithfield	Woonquatucket Reservoir (Stump Pond) 304 acres. Rt. 5 to Log Road. Slab ramp. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
South Kingstown	Indian Lake 199 acres. Off Tower Hill Rd. (Rt.1). Cement ramp. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
	Barber's Pond 28 acres. Rt.102 to Rt. 2 S, about 7 miles on right. Gravel ramp. (S)	Electric trolling motors only	Yes
	Taylor's Landing to Chepuxet River, Rt. 4 to Rt. 138 E, 6 miles to Liberty Lane, West Kingston. Mainly canoes and small boats. (S)	None	Yes
	Tucker's Pond 101 acres. Rt.138 to Rt. 110, to Tuckertown Rd., left 1/2 mile. Cement slab. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes

Town	Location	HP Restrictions	Parking
(S) = State-owned & operated, (T) = Town/City-owned & operated, (H) = Handicapped accessible			
South Kingstown (cont.)	Worden's Pond 1043 acres. Rt. 138 to Rt. 110, to Worden's Pond Rd., take right 1/2 mile on north side. Cement slab ramp. (S)	None	Yes
Tiverton (closed until further notice)	Stafford Pond 476 acres. Rt. 24 E to Fish Road S, to Bulgarmarsh Rd., left on Rt. 81 (Stafford Pond Rd.), access on left. Slab ramp. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
Warwick	Potowomut Pond 17 acres. Rt. 1 to Essex Ave., to Potowomut Rd., site on left. (S)	None	Yes
Westerly	Bradford Landing on Pawcatuck River, Rt. 95 to Rockville Alton Rd., to Rt. 91, 3 miles on left. (S)	None	Yes
	Chapman's Pond (Burden's) 164 acres. Rt. 95 to Rockville Alton Rd., to Rt. 91, to Westerly Bradford Rd., approx. 2 1/2 miles on left. Cement slab ramp. (S)	10 HP limit	Yes
West Greenwich	Big River Landing off Weaver Hill Rd. Rt. 95 to Weaver Hill Rd., turn right, 1/4 mile on the right, stay to the right, 1/2 mile on dirt road. (S)	None	Yes
	Tarbox Pond 15 acres. Rt. 95 to Rt. 3, to Division Rd., to Hopkins Hill Rd., south of New London Turnpike. (S)	None	Yes

## SALTWATER RAMPS

Town	Location	Mean Low Water	Parking
(S) = State-owned & operated, (T) = Town/City-owned & operated, (H) = Handicapped accessible			
Barrington	Haines Memorial Park on Bullock's Cove, off Metropolitan Park Dr. Concrete slab. (S)(H)	4 ft.	Yes
Bristol	Bristol Harbor State St. Concrete ramp. Use is restricted to permitted Bristol residents. (T)	No Data	No
	Independence Park at the foot of Church St., off Rt. 114. (T)	No Data	Yes
	Colt State Park off Hope St. (Rt. 114). Concrete ramp. (S)(H)	4 ft.	Yes
	Annawanscutt to Mt. Hope Bay Annawanscutt Dr., off Metacom Ave. (Rt. 136), past Veteran's Home. Linked concrete planks. (S)	>2 ft.	Yes
Charlestown	Charlestown Breachway West end of Charlestown Beach Rd. Linked concrete slabs. No PWC in Pond per Town Ordinance. (S)	3 ft.	●
	Quony Breachway off West Beach Road. Concrete plank ramp. No PWC in Pond per Town Ordinance. (S)	3 ft.	■
	Town Dock Rd. (T)	No Data	Yes
Cranston	Pawtuxet Aborn St. (T)	No Data	No
East Greenwich	Greenwich Cove Pole #6, Crompton Ave. (T)	No Data	Yes
East Providence	Bold Point off Veteran's Memorial Pkwy., via Mauran Ave. at the end of Pier Rd. Concrete slab. (S)(H)	4 ft.	Yes
	Sabin Point Park off Bullock's Pt. Ave. Hard packed sand. (T)	No Data	Yes
	Haines Memorial Park on Bullock's Cove, off Metropolitan Park Dr. Concrete slab. (S)(H)	4 ft.	Yes
Jamestown	Fort Getty Recreation Area off Beavertail Rd. Concrete. (T)	No Data	Yes/fee if park open
	Fort Wetherill Southeast end of Ocean St., off Walcott Ave. (Rt. 138). Linked concrete plank. Car-top only. (S)	2.5 ft./steep	Yes
Little Compton	Sakonnet Point. Sakonnet Point Rd. (Rt. 77). N side of Town Landing Rd. Linked concrete planks. (S)	2 ft.	Yes

Town	Location	Mean Low Water	Parking
(S) = State-owned & operated, (T) = Town/City-owned & operated, (H) = Handicapped accessible			
Middletown	Third Beach Road concrete ramp. Parking fee when beach is open. (T)	No Data	Yes
Narragansett	Snug Harbor Jerusalem (T)	No Data	limited
	Galilee. Corner of Galilee Rd. and Great Island Rd., southeast side of Great Island Bridge. Linked concrete planks—double ramp. (S)	4 ft.	▲
	Monahan's Dock east side of Ocean Rd. at S. Pier Rd. concrete—steep-drop. (S)	3 - 4 ft.	■
Newport	Off Washington St. Two locations, Elm St. and Poplar St. (T)	No Data	limited
	Kings Beach directly off Ocean Dr., natural rock and cement. Car-top only. (T)	No Data	Yes
	Ft. Adams State Park off Harriston Ave. Concrete slabs. (S)	3 ft.	Yes
North Kingstown	Wickford East end Intrepid Dr., off Post Rd., Rt. 1, near fire station. Linked concrete plank—moderately steep. (T)(S)	3 ft.	Yes
	Wickford Pleasant St. (T)	No Data	limited
	Allen's Harbor. Rt. 1 (Post Road) to Quonset Pt. Davisville (T)	3 ft.	Yes/Fee
Pawtucket	Taft Street Ramp—concrete planks, fast current, moderately steep. (T)	No Data	Yes
	School Street Ramp—sandy, some shoaling at low tide. (S)	No Data	Yes
Portsmouth	Sandy Point Rd. off Rt. 138. Concrete ramp. (T)	No Data	limited
	Weaver Cove at Weaver Cove on Burma Road. South of Melville complex. Concrete ramp. (T)(H)	4 ft.	Yes
	Stone Bridge off Rt. 138 at junction of Park Ave. & Point Rd. at Teddy's beach. Concrete planks. (S)	3 ft.	limited
	Gull Cove. Rt. 138. Linked concrete planks. (S)	2 ft.	Yes
Providence	Collier Park Ramp, Allen's Ave, concrete plank, moderately steep, privately owned but open to public.	No Data	Yes
South Kingstown	Snug Harbor foot of Gooseberry Rd. (T)	No Data	limited
	Narrow River off Pettaquamscutt Rd., between Middle Bridge Rd. & Bridgetown Rd. Concrete planks. Several bridges on Narrow River. (S)	3 ft.	Yes
	Pond Street at end of Pond St. Gravel ramp. (T)	No Data	Yes
	Marine Park exit Rt. 1. Concrete slabs. Several bridges on Narrow River. (T)	No Data	Yes
Tiverton	Fogland Point, bottom of Fogland Road. Concrete and sand ramp. (T)	No Data	limited
Warwick	Goddard State Park via Rt. 1 & East Greenwich. Linked concrete planks ramp. (S)	<2 ft.	Yes
	Conimicut Point. Northeast end of Shawomut Ave. off Symonds Ave. Linked concrete ramp. Problematic ramp—frequently sand covered. (S)	<2 ft.	limited
	Passeonkquis Cove. Southwest end of Gaspee Pt. Dr. off Narragansett Pkwy. Concrete and asphalt ramp. Closed 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. (S)	2 ft.	limited
	Oakland Beach at Warwick Cove. Oakland Beach Ave. take last left. East side of Oakland Beach. Concrete ramp. (T)(H)	<4 ft.	Yes
	Longmeadow. East end of Samuel Gorton Ave. off Warwick Neck Ave. Linked concrete ramp. High Tide Only. (S)	<2 ft.	Yes
Westerly	Westerly Boat Ramp. Main St. Concrete ramp. (S)(H)	4 ft.	◆

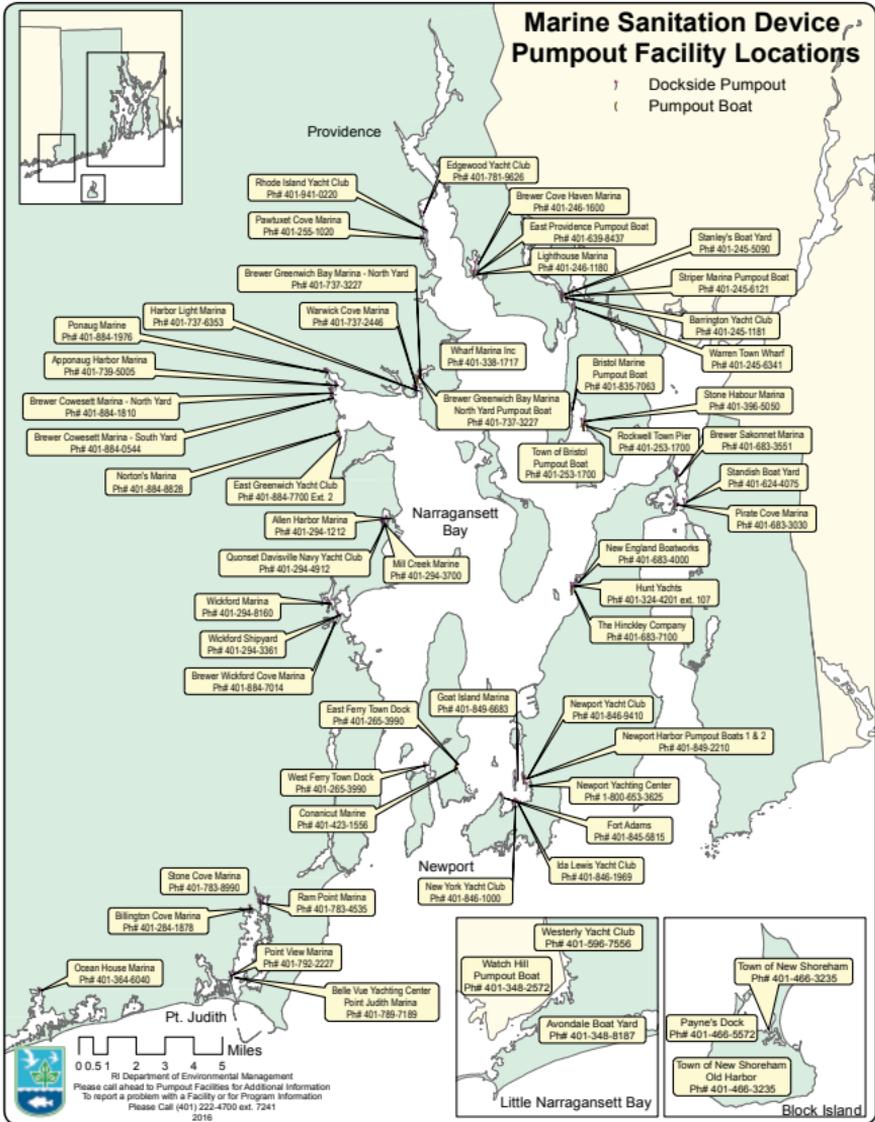
● Fee When Open/Limited/Designated Trailer Only Area.

■ Limited/Designated Trailer Only Area.

▲ Vehicles With Trailers Only. No Other Parking.

◆ Vehicles With Trailers Only. Limited Car-Top Spaces.

# Pump-Out Locations



For the most up-to-date list of pump-out locations, go to [www.dem.ri.gov/maps/mapfile/pumpmap.pdf](http://www.dem.ri.gov/maps/mapfile/pumpmap.pdf).

For more information on Marine Toilets and Boat Waste, go to [www.dem.ri.gov/programs/water/shellfish/marine-pumpouts.php](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/water/shellfish/marine-pumpouts.php).

<b>Marina</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Water Body</b>
0 Goat Island Marina	849-5655	Newport Harbor
1 New York Yacht Club	846-1000	Newport Harbor
2 Ida Lewis Yacht Club	846-1969	Newport Harbor
3 Newport Yachting Center	846-1600	Newport Harbor
4 Bowen's Wharf	849-2243	Newport Harbor
5 Newport Pump-out	474-0543	Newport Harbor
6 Newport Yacht Club	846-9410	Newport Harbor
7 Hinckley Yacht Yard	683-7100	Melville-East Passage
8 Hunt Yachts	324-4201	Melville-East Passage
9 New England Boatworks	683-4000	Melville-East Passage
10 Pirate Cove Marina	683-3030	Sakonnet River
11 Standish Boat Yard	624-4075	Sakonnet River
12 Brewer Sakonnet Marina	683-3551	Sakonnet River
13 Town of Bristol	253-1700	Bristol Harbor
14 Rockwell Town Pier	243-1700	Bristol Harbor
15 Bristol Marine	253-2200	Bristol Harbor
16 Warren Town Dock	245-7340	Warren River
17 Barrington Yacht Club	425-1181	Barrington River
18 Stanley's Boat Yard	245-5090	Barrington River
19 Lighthouse Marina	246-1180	Bullock's Cove
20 East Providence Pumpout Boat	639-8437	Bullock's Cove
21 Brewer Cove Haven Marina	246-1600	Bullock's Cove
22 Port Edgewood Marina	941-2000	Providence River
23 Edgewood Yacht Club	466-1000	Providence River
24 Rhode Island Yacht Club	941-0220	Providence River
25 Pawtuxet Cove Marina	941-2000	Pawtuxet Cove
26 Harbor Light Marina	737-6353	Warwick Cove
27 Warwick Cove Marina	737-2446	Warwick Cove
28 Bay Marina, Inc.	739-6435	Warwick Cove
29 Brewer Greenwich Bay Marina North Yard	884-1810	Warwick Cove
30 Greenwich Wharf Marina	737-2233	Warwick Cove
31 Greenwich Bay Marine	884-1810	Warwick Cove
32 Ponaug Marine	884-1976	Apponaug Cove
33 Apponaug Harbor Marina	739-5005	Apponaug Cove
34 Greenwich Bay Marina Club	884-1810	Greenwich Bay
35 Brewer Greenwich Bay Marina South Yard	884-1810	Greenwich Bay
36 Greenwich Bay Marina Club	884-1810	Greenwich Bay
37 Norton's Shipyard	884-8770	Greenwich Cove
38 East Greenwich Yacht Club	884-7700	Greenwich Cove
39 Allen Harbor Marina	294-1212	Allen Harbor
40 Quonset Davisville Navy Yacht Club	294-4912	Allen Harbor
41 Mill Creek Marina	294-3700	Allen Harbor
42 Wickford Marina	294-8160	Wickford Harbor
43 Wickford Ship Yard	294-3361	Wickford Harbor
44 Brewer Wickford Cove Marina	884-7014	Wickford Harbor
45 East Ferry Town Dock	423-1762	Jamestown Harbor
46 Dutch Harbor Boat Yard	423-0630	Dutch Island Harbor
47 West Ferry Town Dock	423-1262	Dutch Island Harbor
48 Conanicut Marine	423-1556	Jamestown Harbor
49 Ram Point Marina	738-4535	Point Judith Pond
50 Point View Marina	789-7660	Point Judith Pond
51 Belle Vue Yachting Center/PJ Marina	789-7189	Point Judith Pond
52 Ocean House Marina	364-6040	Ninigret Pond
53 Westerly Yacht Club	596-7556	Little Narragansett Bay
54 Avondale Boat Yard	348-1887	Little Narragansett Bay
55 Watch Hill Pump-out Boat	348-2500	Little Narragansett Bay
56 Block Island Harbor Department	466-3202	Block Island- Great Salt Pond
57 Block Island Boat Basin	466-2631	Block Island- Great Salt Pond
58 Smuggler's Cove Marina	466-2826	Block Island-Great Salt Pond
59 Payne's Dock	466-5572	Block Island- Great Salt Pond
60 Old Harbor Dock	466-3204	Block Island- Old Harbor

# Rhode Island Harbormasters

<b>Barrington</b>	<b>401-437-3930</b>
<b>Bristol</b>	<b>401-253-1700</b>
<b>Charlestown</b>	<b>401-641-3083</b>
<b>Coventry</b>	<b>401-826-1100</b>
<b>Cranston</b>	<b>401-461-5000</b>
<b>East Greenwich</b>	<b>401-884-2244</b>
<b>East Providence</b>	<b>401-639-8437</b>
<b>Jamestown</b>	<b>401-423-1212</b>
	<b>401-423-7249</b>
<b>Little Compton</b>	<b>401-835-4474</b>
<b>Middletown</b>	<b>401-846-1144</b>
	<b>401-842-6500 ext. 7081</b>
<b>Narragansett</b>	<b>401-640-1038</b>
<b>New Shoreham</b>	<b>401-466-3204</b>
<b>Newport</b>	<b>401-845-5815</b>
<b>North Kingstown</b>	<b>401-294-3311</b>
	<b>401-633-5323</b>
<b>Portsmouth</b>	<b>401-683-0300</b>
	<b>401-643-0137</b>
<b>Providence</b>	<b>401-272-3121</b>
<b>South Kingstown</b>	<b>401-783-3321</b>
<b>Tiverton</b>	<b>401-624-3222</b>
	<b>401-864-8248</b>
<b>Warren</b>	<b>401-245-1311</b>
	<b>401-245-6341</b>
<b>Warwick</b>	<b>401-738-2000 ext. 6819</b>
<b>Westerly</b>	<b>401-596-2022</b>

# Required Equipment Checklist



PWC

Boat Less  
Than 16  
Ft.

Boat 16  
Ft. to Less  
Than 26  
Ft.

Boater Education Certificate on Board	✓ 1	✓ 1	✓ 1
Certificate of Number on Board	✓	✓	✓
Validation Decals Displayed	✓	✓	✓
"No Discharge" Cert. Decal Displayed		✓ 2	✓ 2
Wearable PFD	✓ 3	✓ 4	✓ 4
Throwable PFD			✓
Type B-I Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓
Engine Cut-Off Switch	✓		
Backfire Flame Arrestor	✓	✓ 5	✓ 5
Ventilation System	✓	✓	✓
Muffler	✓	✓	✓
Horn, Whistle, or Bell	✓	✓	✓
Daytime VDSs			✓
Nighttime VDSs	6	✓ 4	✓ 4
Navigation Lights	6	✓	✓

1. Required for all PWC operators and for those born on or after January 1, 1986, operating a vessel powered by a motor of more than 10 horsepower.
2. All vessels with a permanently installed marine toilet must be inspected and display a decal.
3. Those on PWC must wear a PFD at all times.
4. Children under 13 years of age must wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved PFD while underway in a recreational vessel less than 65 feet in length unless below deck or in an enclosed cabin.
5. Required on inboard and stern drives only.
6. Not applicable since PWC may not operate at night.

**RHODE ISLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT  
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICE**



**Boat Safe,  
Boat Smart,  
Boat Rhode Island!**