

Washington State

BOATING RULES & REGULATIONS



www.BOATERexam.com/usa/washington/

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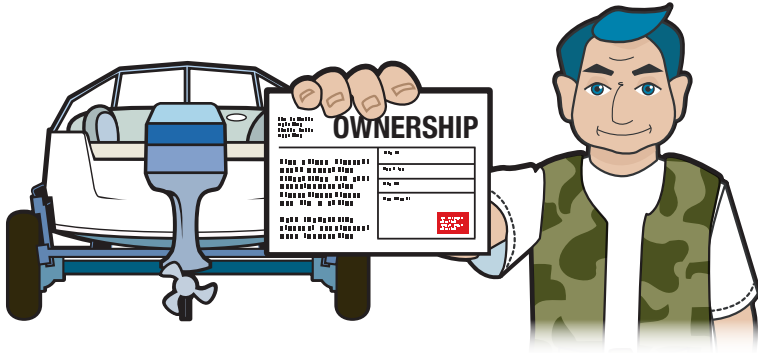
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A cartoon illustration of a man with blue hair and a green camouflage vest holding a blue registration card. The card has the word "REGISTRATION" at the top, followed by several lines of placeholder text and a yellow "EXPIRATION DATE" label.

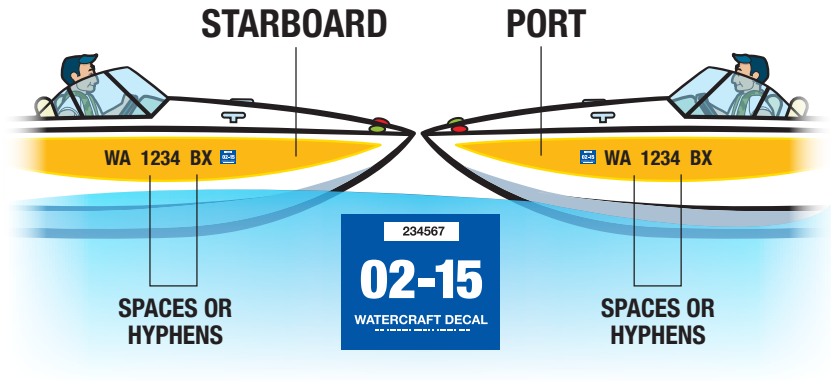
- It must be signed and carried onboard when operating the vessel.
- The Department of Licensing must be notified within 15 days if the boater changes residences.
- The Department of Licensing must also be notified within 15 days if the vessel is either destroyed, lost, stolen or abandoned.
- The Washington registration period is from July 1 through June 30 each year.
- Washington registration and decals are valid for 1 year.

A cartoon illustration of a man with blue hair and a white shirt under a green camouflage vest. He is holding a blue registration form. The form has a title 'REGISTRATION' and several fields with placeholder text. A yellow stamp is visible in the bottom right corner of the form.

All vessels propelled by machinery, including gasoline, diesel and electric motors, and principally operated on Washington State waters must be registered and issued a Washington Registration Card and Number by the state, which can be obtained through the office of vehicle licensing or Auditor in the boat owner's county. Exceptions for the boat registration requirements include:

- 5

REGISTRATION FEES



Successful registration results in a registration card along with a registration decal for each side of the vessel. Physical boat numbers must be purchased separately. Boat numbers must:

- Be affixed on both sides of the bow;
- Be block letters, three inches high and contrasting with the color of your boat;
- Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or a hyphen;
- Read from left to right.

For example: WN 1234 BX or WN-1234-BX. This is a federal and state requirement.

The decal which is provided to you by the state must be displayed aft of the registration numbers on both sides of the vessel. Lack of the correct documentation will result in delays and fines.

Make sure all boats are properly marked and documented. It's important to keep your papers with the boat – be particularly aware when transferring ownership of your vessel.

BOAT REGISTRATION FEES

Description	Fee	Other applicabl fees
Annual vessel registration fee	\$20.25	Subagent fee (if filing at any licensing office except a county auditor): \$4
Vessel excise tax: 0.5% of taxable value of vessel (\$5 minimum)		

Vessel owners may submit registration or title applications as well as fees by mail to the following:

Department of Licensing

Vessel Licensing
P.O. Box 9909
Olympia, WA 98507-8500

More information with regards to registration and titling applications may also be obtained by contacting your local county auditor or the Department of Licensing at 1-360-902-3770.

WASHINGTON PFD REQUIREMENTS



Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

Washington State requires at least one U.S. Coast Guard approved Type IV PFD (ring buoy OR seat cushion) on all recreational boats in excess of 16 feet in length, in ADDITION to the wearable PFD required for each person onboard.

Exceptions to the requirement for carrying a Type IV PFD include the following:

- Personal Watercraft
- Canoes and kayaks

All persons being towed behind a vessel are considered to be onboard.

All PWC occupants must be wearing their PFD while underway.

Child PFD Law

All boaters or passengers 12 years of age and under must be wearing a PFD while onboard a vessel that is less than 19 feet in length while underway.

COLDWATER IMMERSION IN WASHINGTON



Even in Eastern Washington, which has higher temperatures than Western Washington in the summer, average water temperature in the hottest areas is about 70 degrees. The average water temperature throughout most of Washington is 50 degrees throughout the year. It is always a good idea to be wearing a proper life jacket. Washington's waters are cold and you never know when you could find yourself in the water. Over the past six years, nearly two thirds of the fatalities on the water involved immersion in cold water which contributed to the death.

Initial Reaction: If you fall in cold water - your body's initial reaction is a 'gasp reflex'. This initial reaction can result in swallowed water. If operating in cold water, ensure your PFD has enough freeboard to keep you high in the water and reduce the possibility of face immersions.

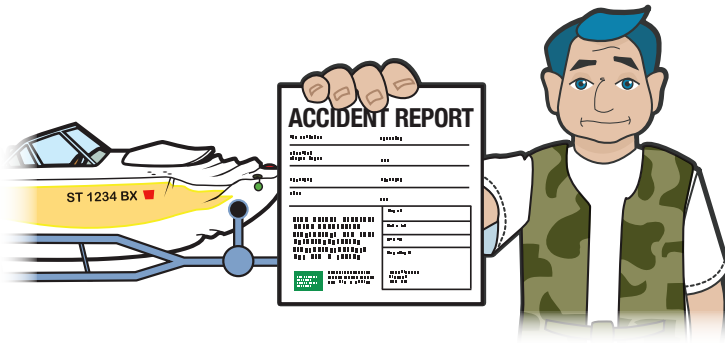
Short-Term Immersion: If you do end up in the water, particularly in cold water, it is most important to find a way to get your body out of the water as soon as possible. In cold water, you may only retain the motor skills to swim for between 10 and 30 minutes. In cold water immersion cases, boaters drown as a result of swimming failure rather than hypothermia.

- Slow down, stop if possible, and throw something buoyant to assist the person overboard (this will also help to briefly mark the spot if the person overboard submerges)
- Assign one person to keep sight of the overboard person and have him/her continuously point to the victim's location
- Carefully maneuver to recover the overboard person - keep them on the operator side of the boat for powerboats

Establish contact with the victim using a buoyant heaving line or lifebuoy secured to the boat with a line, and recover the person. Be sure to turn off the prop - if retrieving from the stern. A heavy rope, chain or cable secured at both ends and draped over the side, almost touching the water, can provide a makeshift step if no boarding ladder is available.

Learn a recovery technique that works - and PRACTICE!

ACCIDENT REPORTING IN WASHINGTON



In Washington, operators must report any accident involving;

- \$2000 or more in damages;
- Injuries requiring medical attention;
- The death or disappearance of any person.

When an accident occurs that requires a written report, the operator shall, without delay, by the quickest means available, notify the Washington State Agency with jurisdiction of the accident on an accident report form:

- Within 48 hours of an accident resulting in death/disappearance or injury;
- Within 10 days of an accident causing property/equipment damage only.

When the operator of a vessel cannot give the notice required by the foregoing, each person, onboard the vessel shall notify the Washington State agency with jurisdiction or a member of its law-enforcement team, or determine that the notice has been given.

Download the Washington Accident Report Form at:
<http://www.parks.wa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2213>

TSUNAMI EMERGENCIES

Washington State is on the Pacific rim of fire which is the main generator of seismic events that can create tsunamis. Washington has had tsunamis in the past and can expect more tsunamis in the future. It is important for boaters in coastal areas including Puget Sound to know what to do if they are on their boat when a tsunami may strike.

A tsunami is a series of ocean waves that are caused by disturbances in the earth's crust. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, explosions, landslides and meteorite impacts can all cause tsunamis. Tsunamis are unpredictable events. While tsunamis can occur in any ocean, most occur in the ring of fire areas from South America to Indonesia.

Not all tsunamis are caused by far away events. Local geologic events can cause earthquakes too. The Cascadia subduction zone is known to have caused tsunamis in the past and scientists assume that there will be another tsunami caused by slippage in the Pacific Northwest portion of this zone.

Tsunamis are capable of flooding areas hundreds of feet inland past the normal high tide line. The water moves at three to six hundred mph and can crush almost anything in its path.

Fact: Not all major earthquakes result in a tsunami.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A TSUNAMI

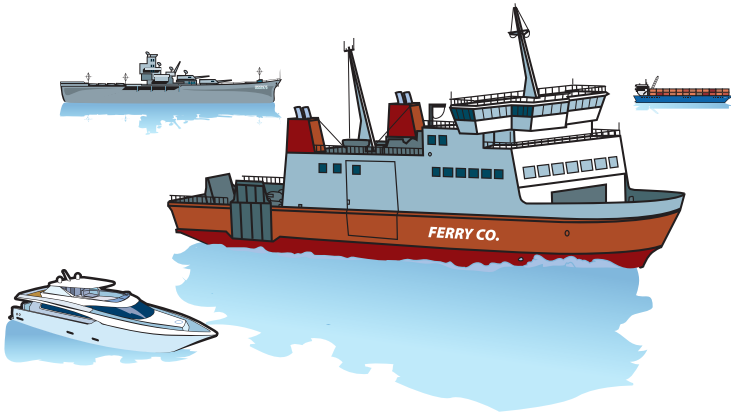
Tsunamis cause rapid changes in the water including water levels and unpredictable currents especially in harbors and entrance channels.

Tsunamis move very quickly, several hundred miles per hour, and if an earthquake along the Cascadia subduction zone is severe, there will be little time available to get to high ground. You should have an evacuation plan including what to do with your boat and belongings and if there is time, you should have planned what you will take off your boat if you cannot move the boat itself.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- If you receive a tsunami warning that allows you time to take care of your boat, move your already trailered boat to an area outside the evacuation zone.
- If you do not have time to get your boat out of the harbor in time then your best strategy is to leave your boat. (You will want to take along your insurance and ownership papers as you evacuate if possible).
- If in deep water (600 feet to 1,200 feet or greater) you should stay at sea. If time allows you can take your boat into deeper water (at least 1,200 feet deep) that is not in a harbor or at the entrance to a channel.
- If the body of water is either in the Puget Sound or the Lower Columbia River, you should anticipate heavy shipping traffic heading seaward by large ships. You may not be able to get your boat out of the harbor in time and your best strategy is to leave the boat. (You will want to take along your insurance and ownership papers as you evacuate if possible.)

VESSEL TRAFFIC SYSTEMS AND SHIPPING LANES



Every year commercial ships and recreational boats occupy the same waters. Both Portland and Seattle are major shipping ports on the West Coast. Recreational boaters need to understand how shipping channels and the vessel traffic system work so they may avoid uncomfortable and occasionally fatal contact with the ships in these channels.

Puget Sound has a Vessel Traffic System (VTS) run by the US Coast Guard that oversees the shipping lanes through the Strait of Juan De Fuca and into Seattle. The Columbia River has shipping lanes but no vessel traffic system. Boaters in both of these locations need to watch out for large ships and take appropriate measures to avoid these ships. The following should be kept in mind when operating in such waters:

- Shipping lanes in an area are identified on nautical charts.
- Give commercial shipping traffic lanes as wide a margin as you can, and avoid if at all necessary.

- Commercial traffic always has the right of way.
- If you need to cross a shipping lane, do so at a 90 degree angle, or in such a way that will be most practical to the prevailing traffic.
- Always go astern of deep-draft traffic
- Watch for ships under tow in the shipping lanes.
- Never cross ahead of a tug or between a tug and its tow.
- At night, know the light pattern that signifies a ship is either being towed or is towing another vessel like a barge.
- Know how far it takes a large ship to stop. Ships don't have brakes and it can take up to two miles to stop a large ship.
- Know the approximate view from a ship bridge and how small recreational vessels are often not seen.
- Know that in commercial ships in shipping lanes have right of way regardless of the type of your recreational vessel.
- A sailing vessel is defined by law as motor vessel if it is fitted with an engine; the engine need not be engaged or idling.
- When the "rules of the road" refer to a "fishing vessel" the definition is exclusive for commercial fishing only and does not include charter fishing vessels.
- Never anchor in the shipping lanes for any reason.

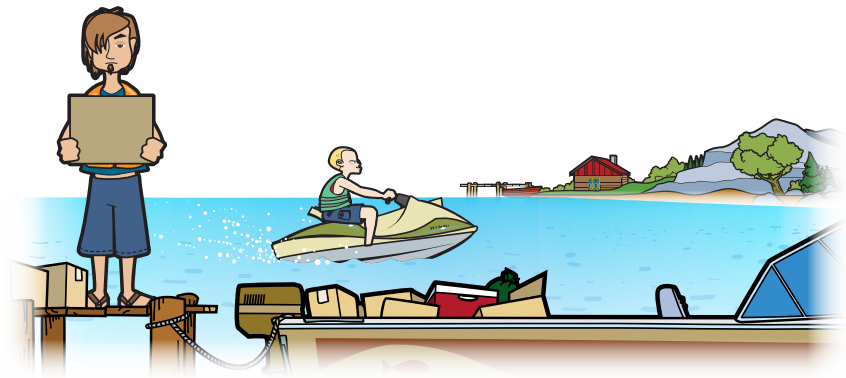
- Know how to contact the ships bridge when necessary to communicate your position in relationship to the ship.
- Avoid using a cell phone for a distress call; VHF-FM radio is monitored by nearby vessels who can assist.
- When trying to contact commercial vessels in Puget Sound, the officer on the bridge will be standing by on channel 14/5A or 13, the frequency VTS uses. Note that they are not obligated to stand by channel.

HOURS OF OPERATION



Personal watercraft may not be operated during hours of darkness (sunset to sunrise).

AGE RESTRICTIONS IN WASHINGTON



PWC operators in the state of Washington must be at least fourteen (14) years of age.

PWC LAWS AND REGULATIONS

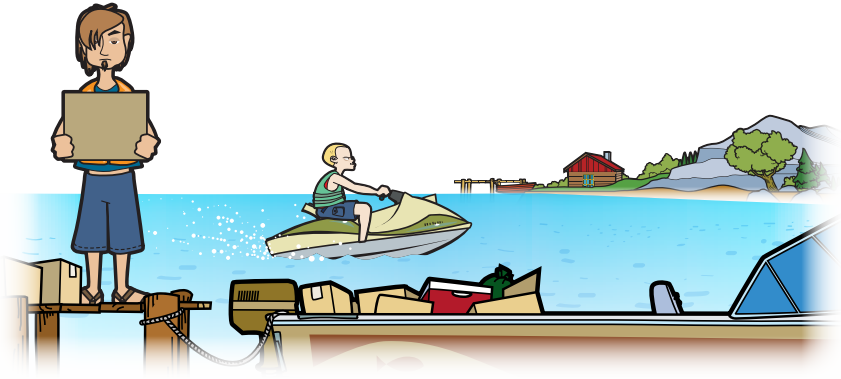


In addition to the laws that apply to all vessels, there are additional laws that apply specifically to personal watercraft. Do not underestimate PWCs – they are very powerful for their small size and demand the same respect as any boat. In fact, PWC operation must adhere to the same rules and regulations as any other powerboat – including registration with the state and a B-1 class fire extinguisher aboard. Plus PWCs have some additional requirements:

- The operator as well as all passengers on a PWC must be wearing an inherently buoyant U.S. Coast Guard approved Type I, II, or III PFD.
- When towing someone on a tube or on water skis, there must be capacity on the PWC to accommodate the operator, the observer as well as the tuber/skier(s).
- PWCs must stay at a distance of 200ft from other water skiers or others being towed behind a vessel.

- PWCs must operate at slow-no wake speed, maximum 5 mph limit when:
 - Within 200ft of a swimmer, surfer, diving flag, bank or wading angler, dock, swim float, boat launch, ramp, pier, marina,
 - floating home, moorage area, or boathouse;
 - Within 100ft of any anchored or non-motorized vessel; or
 - Within 200ft of shoreline on all lakes, reservoirs, and bays.
- PWC operators in Washington State must not exceed 10mph when approaching within 100ft of a motorized or sailing vessel that is underway.
- A person shall not operate a PWC in a reckless manner including weaving through congested traffic, recklessly jumping the wake of another boat unreasonably or unnecessarily close to the boat, or when visibility around the boat is obstructed. A person shall not recklessly swerve at the last possible moment to avoid a collision i.e. 'spraying' another boater.
- A person shall not lease, hire or rent a personal watercraft to a person under the age of sixteen.

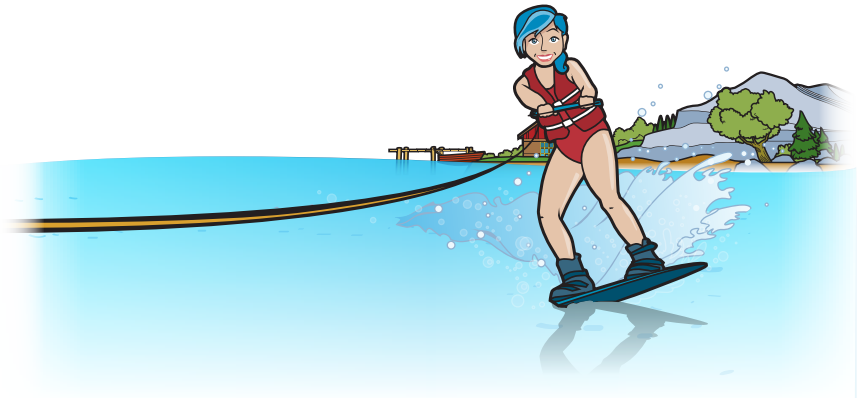
AGE RESTRICTIONS



No person under the age of 12 can operate a motorized vessel of 15 horsepower or greater.

Similarly, no person under the age of 14 may operate a personal watercraft (PWC). In addition in order to rent a PWC a person must be at least 16 years of age.

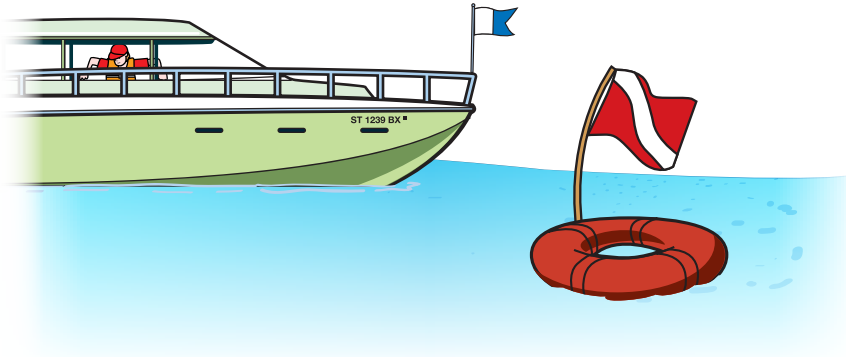
TOWED WATER SPORTS IN WASHINGTON



- Any person towed behind a boat in a water skiing activity such as water skiing, knee boarding, or tubing, or when a passenger of the boat is pulled behind a boat is by definition involved in the activity of water skiing.
- All persons, regardless of age, must be wearing a Type I, II, III or V U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) while water skiing.
 - **Note:** Not all PFDs are suitable for use when waterskiing; check the PFD label to be sure it is approved for high speed impact.
- Three people are required to engage in waterskiing: the vessel operator, an observer and the skier. The observer and the operator cannot be the same person.
- A “skier down” flag must be displayed while the skier prepares to ski and after a skier falls in the water.
- The skier down flag must be bright red or brilliant orange, at least 12” square, and mounted on a pole at least 24” in length.

- The observer must be physically and mentally capable of performing/meeting the following requirements:
 - Continuously observe skier or skiers,
 - Inform the operator of the boat that is towing the skier or skiers when they are no longer being towed,
 - Raise the skier-down flag when a person is in the water preparing to ski or returning to the ski boat.
- Waterskiing from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise is not permitted.
- Use sunset/sunrise times printed in local newspapers.
- The operator of the boat may not manipulate or control the boat so as to cause the person(s) being towed to collide with any object or person with the exception of persons engaged in competitive or recreational skiing with regards to jump buoys and similar devices.
- Similarly willful or wanton actions by a skier that would endanger a person or property are considered reckless operation. Example: cutting close to another boat, a dock, a person, or the shoreline.

DIVING AND SNORKELING IN WASHINGTON



Particular care must be taken when boating in waters where there are divers. A vessel engaged in diving must display a blue and white flag. A red and white flag carried on a buoy is to be used to mark areas where diving is in progress, although divers may stray from the boundaries of the marked areas.

Be sure you know what the 'diver down' flags look like. If you see either flag, keep well clear of the vessel and diving site, and move at slow speed.

Washington law requires that operators keep at least 200 feet from the vessel and diving site. Snorkelers and scuba divers alike are asked not to do dive in areas already occupied by numerous boats. Diving should not take place in narrow waterways, as such would restrict other vessels from passing.

Divers can be on any body of water so be vigilant for 'diver down' flags.

AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES



Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) are plants and animals that threaten the aquatic environment which is important to boaters. ANS are also called invasive species or non-native species.

Because ANS have no naturally occurring enemies that would keep them in check, these plants or animals can out compete and feed on native species. These species threaten the diversity or abundance of native species, the economic, agricultural and recreational activities that depend on our native species and water quality.

Of the species listed under the Endangered Species act, 42% are listed as a result of the deliberate or accidental introduction of non-native species into a new habitat.

Both plants and animals are spread in a variety of ways: through commercial shipping ballast water, introduction through aquarium water disposed of incorrectly, through plants and animals from landscaping/nurseries, introduction from hitchhiking on cargoes, and transported by recreational boaters.

The introduction of non-native species into Washington's waters is a problem which affects everyone. Introducing non-native species into Washington can upset the balance of the ecosystem, hurting the environment. When transported into new waters, these organisms proliferate, displacing native species, damage the water resource, damage the sports and commercial fisheries, damage Washington's large shellfish industry, pose a threat to industrial and public drinking water supplies, can weaken and damage banks and levees by burrowing into them, as well as prey on salmon and sturgeon eggs.

Always do a walk-around inspection after cleaning the prop area and bottom of the hull at the launch area before leaving with your boat. Where available, pressure washing the hull and motor parts exposed to the water is advised. Note that some species especially zebra mussels get into tight areas and may be over looked.



**YOU CAN HELP PREVENT THE INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD OF
NON-NATIVE SPECIES FROM ONE BODY OF WATER TO ANOTHER.**

- Inspect your boat and remove aquatic plants or animals before you leave any body of water.
- Flush raw-water cooling systems and clean sea strainers before moving your boat from one body of water to another.
- Empty bait buckets and remove any plant fragments from bait wells, fishing gear, trailers, dive gear or props. Dispose of the plant fragments on land, in a garbage receptacle.
- Drain water from your motor, live wells and bilge.
- Wash your boat before putting it into a new body of water
- Report any new infestation of non-native aquatic species to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

INVASIVE SEA SQUIRTS

There are three species of invasive sea squirts present at various Marina's in Puget Sound and Hood Canal. This has become a real as well as a critical issue. One animal is a colonial tunicate called Didemnum; the other two are solitary tunicates that have taken over certain areas to the exclusion of other species.

- The Didemnum infestations are currently in British Columbia in the areas surrounding Okeover Inlet and Vancouver Island. The smallest piece of the colony (a half inch square or less) can reproduce and form a new colony.
- The second sea squirt is Styela clava, and has very heavy infestations at Pleasant Harbor, Neah Bay, and Blaine. It tends to get on docks, boats, aquaculture lines and cages. It is really nasty, and reproduces rapidly. Anyone who spends more than a day or two in those harbors needs to have their boats cleaned.
- The third species, Ciona savignyi, may be moved on boats - it is present at Eagle Harbor and Des Moines marinas. We are seeing it taking over geoduck beds on S. Hood Canal. We don't know as yet how much of the canal is infested, or how the tunicate got there.

Images of the tunicate/sea-squirt species mentioned above can be viewed on the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife website: wdfw.wa.gov/ais/search.php?id=9

EXTRA ATTENTION REQUIRED

Watch for information at launch sites about any known nuisance species currently found in the water body where you are boating, such as spartina or milfoil. Before leaving the launch area, do a walk around inspection to see that all visible remnants of plant and animal materials are removed from your boat and trailer.

A general list of what is prohibited in Washington is to be found by visiting the following link for the Department of Fish and Wildlife:

wdfw.wa.gov/ais/plants.html

INVASIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Invasive Plants

Some plants that threaten marine and freshwater habitats in Washington include milfoil, purple loosestrife, hydrilla and spartina.

- For aquatic plants and weeds it only takes a small fragment of the plant to begin a new population. If a boater leaves an area with weeds on their boats those weeds could potentially carry a variety of other species, including whirling disease pathogens, snails, and egg clusters of other species. This is one of the many reasons why the state has made it illegal to have weeds on boats on any public road in Washington. For example, the Asian clam (*corbicula*) has been spread from one site on the Snake River into virtually every fresh water body in the state - it is everywhere, and in ever growing densities. It was unknowingly spread by boaters and anglers over the past 50 years or so.

Invasive Animals

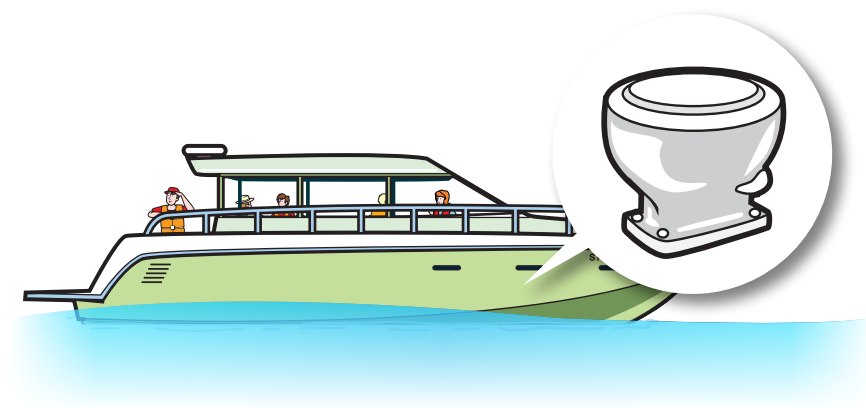
Some animals that threaten marine and freshwater habitats in Washington include European green crab, Chinese mitten crab, Zebra mussels, New Zealand mud snails, sea squirts and Asian clams.

- The largest concerns for boaters in Washington in fresh water apart from aquatic weeds are New Zealand mud snails. The Lower Columbia River and all the water bodies on the Long Beach Peninsula are infested with the snails. These snails are so small and easily transported on gear and in live wells as well as bait wells that they are a huge problem. They are hermaphrodites so it only takes one. Persons who take their boats into infested areas need to clean them with very hot water (including bilges, bait and live wells) and let them dry out for several days. If it is during the wet season they should use a weak chlorine solution.
- There is still a very large concern about Zebra mussels. They have made it into Montana, so persons who travel out of state into the Missouri River, or down in the Oklahoma area (El Dorado Reservoir) or east of the 100th Meridian should take great care to clean their boats before putting them back into local waters.

To view images of the invasive plants and animals mentioned above, visit the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife website.

wdfw.wa.gov/ais/species.html

WASHINGTON MSD REGULATIONS



The discharge of any sewage from marine toilets is prohibited on Washington's freshwater lakes, impoundments, and reservoirs that are not accessible by boat from the ocean.

The use of approved types of marine sanitation devices (MSDs) is required on the Columbia River and on the navigable portions of all coastal rivers. Discharge of untreated sewage is only permitted beyond the three nautical mile ocean limit.

MANDATORY BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON

Beginning on January 1, 2008 the state of Washington will be gradually phasing in a Mandatory Boater Education requirement. It will be phased in according to age, eventually requiring all vessel operators over the age of 12 years on boats with 15 horsepower or greater, will be required to have a Washington State issued Boater Education Card. This will indicate that a boating safety education class or its equivalent has been successfully completed by the card holder.

Persons who do not have a boater education card and are 12 years of age or older may operate a vessel with more than 15 HP if accompanied by and under the direct supervision of a responsible person 16 years of age or older who has their boater education card.

By January 1, 2016, all boat operators meeting the requirements will have an education card.

Mandatory boater safety education will be phased in as follows:

- January 1, 2008 - All boat operators twenty years old and younger;
- January 1, 2009 - All boat operators twenty-five years old and younger;
- January 1, 2010 - All boat operators thirty years old and younger;
- January 1, 2011 - All boat operators thirty-five years old and younger;
- January 1, 2012 - All boat operators forty years old and younger;
- January 1, 2013 - All boat operators fifty years old and younger;
- January 1, 2014 - All boat operators sixty years old and younger;
- January 1, 2015 - All boat operators who are required to have a card will be phased in.

Certain individuals will be exempt from meeting Washington's Mandatory Education requirement, for example: persons who have a vessel operator's license, or persons visiting Washington State.

A complete list of exemptions is available on the Washington State Parks website. <http://www.parks.wa.gov/Faq.aspx?QID=95>

All boat operators born before January 1, 1955 will not be required to have a boat operator education card.

Persons who believe that they know the boating safety rules and do not wish to take a course will have the option of taking an equivalency or challenge examination to demonstrate their knowledge of boating safety.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Although Washington State has begun implementing a mandatory boating safety education program, becoming a certified boater should not be seen as the final step in the process. Becoming a better and safer boater is a continuous process. Boating safety requirements are constantly being updated and expanded in order to make Washington's waterways a safe place for everyone. All boaters are expected to stay up to date on any new requirements which may come about as well as all existing ones. Boating safety is everyone's responsibility, at all times.

BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION AND RENTING

Washington State's mandatory Boater Education Card requirements contain a provision for people who rent vessels. ALL PERSONS who operate a motorized rental vessel of 15 HP or more are required to review a Motor Vessel Rental Safety Checklist. There is no exemption in the law if a person already has a mandatory boater education card; this requirement applies to a person even if that person has a Boater Education Card. Each person who operates a rented vessel must review the checklist with the business providing the vessel.

A person must be at least 16 years of age must in order to rent a PWC.

NO WAKE



“No wake” is defined as “The slowest possible speed required in order to maintain steerage and headway.”

In Washington, it is unlawful to operate at greater than ‘no wake’ speed when around gas docks, marinas, boat ramps, and people in the water even if not marked by a regulatory marker.

You may be held responsible for damage caused by vessel wake or wash resulting from negligent or careless operation of a vessel.

SLACKEN SPEED

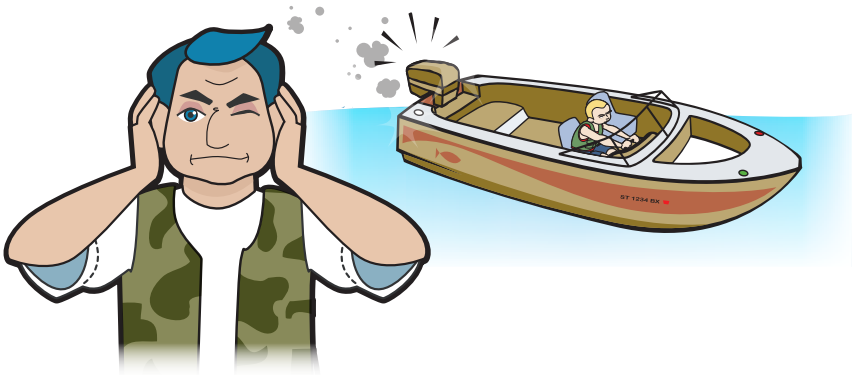


Operators in Washington should reduce speed to avoid endangering persons or a person's property from the effect of their vessel's wake. Reduce speed, to 'no-wake' speed, when approaching or passing the following:

- Vessels underway, lying to, at anchor, or made fast to the shore
- Piers, Docks or Boathouses
- Someone in the water
- Someone involved in towed water sports
- Someone on a surfboard

Certain bodies of water in Washington may have local restrictions as to type and size of vessel or motor horsepower, restricted use areas, boat speed, and times for use. Check with the local authorities for these additional restrictions.

MUFFLERS AND NOISE LEVELS



In Washington, complaints from homeowners with property adjacent or close to bodies of water used for recreational boating have led to a state law requiring strict sound levels on boats.

All motor-propelled vessels shall be equipped with and maintained with an effective muffler or underwater exhaust system that is in good working order and in constant use.

No person may operate a boat on the waters of this state in a manner to exceed a noise level of seventy-five decibels measured from any point on the shoreline of the body of water on which the vessel is being operated.

When using a stationary testing procedure an effective muffler shall not produce sound levels in excess of:

- 90 decibels for engines made before January 1, 1994: and,
- 88 decibels for engines made on or after January 1, 1994

UNSAFE PRACTICES



The following acts and maneuvers are considered dangerous & illegal while boating in Washington:

- **It is illegal to operate a boat in a manner that endangers or would likely endanger a person or property and in willful disregard of others. The following are a few examples:**
 - Endangering others or their property, by allowing the wake of your vessel to potentially harm another or their property.
 - Jumping the wake of a vessel unnecessarily close to another vessel. No person operating a personal watercraft shall cross or jump the wake of another vessel, when within sixty (60) feet of the vessel, in such a manner that more than half of the hull of the personal watercraft jumping the wake leaves the water.
 - Failing to conform to boating signage such as posted speeds, indicated restricted entry zones, diver down flags, etc. No person shall operate a boat at a speed in excess of a Slow-No-Wake in a posted no wake zone. No person may operate a vessel at speeds greater than are reasonable or prudent given the existing weather conditions, watercraft traffic or persons in the water.

- **Operating at an unsafe speed.** Boaters must always operate their vessel at a safe speed as well as adhering to any indicated speed limitations.
- **Failure to maintain adequate distance.** Boaters must maintain the designated 'slow-no-wake' speed in the circumstances discussed above as well as keeping their distance from water skiers or vessels towing someone on another device.
- **Exceeding maximum capacity.** The recommended capacity indicated on the boats' capacity plate should not be exceeded. Operation of a vessel loaded or powered in excess of the maximum capacity affects the stability of the vessel and makes the chance of a capsizing or fall overboard more likely.
- **Not maintaining a lookout.** All operators are required to keep a constant lookout for other vessels, hazards and/or people in the water.
- **Not maintaining proper seating aboard your vessel.** In Washington, it is unlawful to allow any person to ride or sit on the bow, gunwale, transom, or on the decking over the bow of the vessel while underway unless such a vessel is provided with adequate guards or railing to prevent passengers from falling overboard. Passengers or other persons aboard a vessel may occupy these areas of the vessel to moor or anchor the vessel, to cast off, or for any other necessary purpose.
- **Dangerous operation.** Boaters must make sure that the vessel is being operated in such a manner that its occupants or others sharing the water are not in any danger. If an officer observes that someone's safety may be endangered, the operator may be forced to head to the closest moorage. Examples of such operation could be: operating without all the required equipment, operating the vessel with more power than recommended, operating the vessel with a fuel leak, or operating at night without lights.

- **Obstructing navigation.** Boaters may not stop or anchor beneath bridges or in a channel without leaving adequate room for boat passage.

LAWS ON NEGLIGENT AND RECKLESS OPERATION

Negligent Operation - A person shall not operate a vessel in a negligent manner. Negligent operation of a vessel is inadvertent operation that endangers another person or property, but is not intentional.

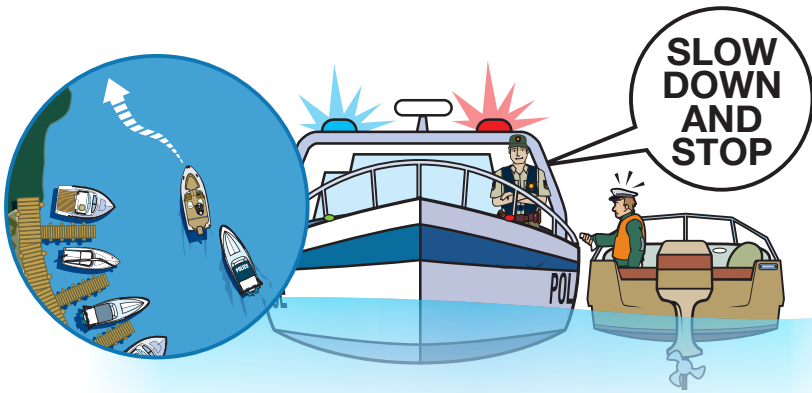
- Examples are operating a vessel in disregard of careful and prudent operation and rates of speed such as in a “no wake” or “no boats” zone, or other operation that disregards the existing conditions at the time, such as other traffic, freedom from obstruction to the view ahead, restrictions to the body of water, or the effects of boat wake.

Reckless Operation - It is also unlawful for any person to operate a vessel in a reckless manner. Reckless operation of a vessel is deliberate behavior that puts a person or property at risk.

- Examples would be repeated operation of a dangerous act such as cutting closely near another person or boat or deliberately ignoring a marked speed zone.

Speed limits and zoned or restricted areas are determined by local ordinance. Become familiar with your local ordinances by talking with your sheriff's office marine patrol or with your local police department marine patrol. Examples are no wake zones, danger zones, and speed limit zones.

LAW ENFORCEMENT IN WASHINGTON



If a law enforcement officer makes a request for a boater to stop their vessel it is the boater's responsibility to comply. Boaters are required to respond to any law enforcement officer to stop his or her boat when asked to do so by said officer. It is illegal to elude law enforcement officers.

An operator of a vessel is required to stop when requested or signaled to do so by a person reasonably identifiable as a law enforcement officer. An operator of a vessel is required to immediately stop a vessel if operating in a reckless manner and is attempting to elude a pursuing law enforcement vessel after being given a visual or audible signal to stop the vessel.

SERIOUS PENALTIES



Boaters need to be aware that it is illegal to drink and operate a boat just as it is to drink and drive a motor vehicle. Most of the laws pertaining to the operation of a vessel under the influence of drugs and alcohol apply in the same way as they would for a car, truck or motorcycle on the road. It shall be a violation for a person to operate a vessel while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any drug. A person is considered to be under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drug if:

- The person has 0.08 grams or more of alcohol per two hundred ten liters of breath, as shown by analysis of the person's breath
- The person has 0.08% or more by weight of alcohol in the their blood as shown by analysis of their blood
- The person is deemed to be under the influence of or affected by intoxicating liquor or any drug.

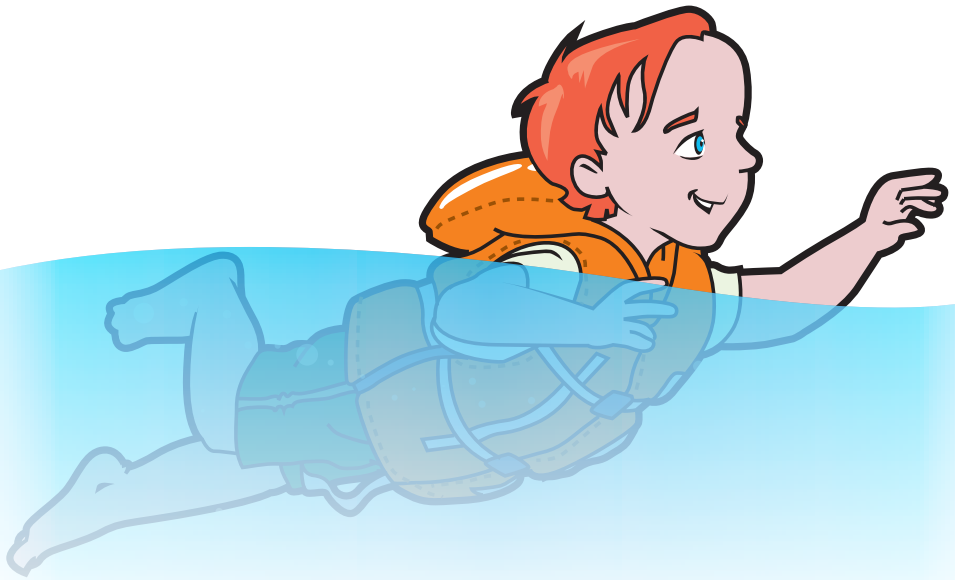
The penalties for boating under the influence of intoxicating alcohol or drugs include the following: **If convicted of an offense:**

- Imprisonment in a county jail for up to 90 days
- Fines of up to \$1,000

The operator may also be subject to the payment of compensation for any damages or injuries which may have occurred as a result of the offense.

- Homicide by watercraft - When an individual involved in a boating accident dies as a result of injuries incurred during that accident within three years following the accident the operator of the vessel implicated may be charged with homicide by watercraft if:
 - They were found to be under the influence of either alcohol or drugs (or any combination of the two)
 - They are determined to have acted in a reckless manner which resulted in the accident
- Assault by Watercraft - When an individual involved in a boating accident experiences serious bodily injury such as risk of death, permanent disfigurement, or loss of function of a part of the body or organ the operator of the vessel implicated may be charged with assault by watercraft if:
 - They were found to be under the influence of either alcohol or drugs (or any combination of the two)
 - They are determined to have acted in a reckless manner which resulted in the accident

- Boaters are required to respond to any law enforcement officer's request to stop his or her boat when asked to do so by said officer. It is illegal to elude law enforcement officers.
- Any new or used motor driven boat or vessel, other than open motorboats with outboard engines and personal watercraft, sold within Washington State must display a carbon monoxide warning sticker on the interior of the vessel.





For more information about boating rules and regulations, and to obtain your Washington Boater Education Card, please visit

<http://www.BOATERexam.com/usa/washington/>

