

# *the* **HANDBOOK!**



2011 Edition



## **OF MICHIGAN BOATING LAWS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**



**ALWAYS WEAR  
YOUR LIFE JACKET!**

# WELCOME

to the best boating resources in the U.S. and the Michigan  
Department of Natural Resources



*The State of Michigan is surrounded by four of the five Great Lakes—the world's largest freshwater lakes. These Great Lakes constitute 90% of the United State's fresh surface water. Michigan has approximately 3,288 miles of Great Lakes coastline; has more than 10,000 inland lakes and ponds; and is interwoven by a 35,000-mile web of freshwater rivers, streams, and wetlands. Accordingly, Michigan leads the nation for registered boats.*

*The Michigan Department of Natural Resources promotes the safe use and enjoyment of the bountiful waters of Michigan. Through education, regulation, and enforcement, the Department hopes to ensure that boating continues to grow in safety and popularity.*

*Whether your interest is in fishing, sailing, hunting, canoeing, camping, or water-skiing, boating education is essential. We hope that you will practice what you learn from this handbook and pass your knowledge on to others.*

## Michigan Department of Natural Resources

# OUR MISSION

**The Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use, and enjoyment of the state's natural resources for current and future generations.**

---

# *the* **HANDBOOK!** of

---

## **Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities**

### **EQUAL RIGHTS FOR NATURAL RESOURCE USERS**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunities for employment and access to Michigan's natural resources. Both state and federal laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, sex, height, weight, or marital status under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended (MI PA 453 and MI PA 220, Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act). If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, or if you desire additional information, please write: HUMAN RESOURCES, MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, P.O. BOX 30028, LANSING, MI 48909-7528; the MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS, STATE OF MICHIGAN PLAZA BUILDING, 1200 6TH STREET, DETROIT, MI 48226; or the OFFICE FOR DIVERSITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, 4040 NORTH FAIRFAX DRIVE, ARLINGTON, VA 22203.

Hearing Impaired TTY (711) Michigan Relay Center.

For information or assistance on this publication, contact the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 30028, Lansing, MI 48909-9727. This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

Printed by Authority of: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Total Number Printed: 60,000 Total Cost: \$24,600 Cost Per Copy: \$0.41



Published by Boat Ed, a division of Kalkomey Enterprises, Inc., 14086 Proton Road, Dallas, TX 75244, 214-351-0461. Printed in the U.S.A.

Copyright © 2011 by Boat Ed. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any process without permission in writing from Boat Ed. Effort has been made to make this publication as complete and accurate as possible. All references contained in this publication have been compiled from sources believed to be reliable, and to represent the best current opinion on the subject. Boat Ed is not responsible or liable for any claims, liabilities, damages, or other adverse effects or consequences to any person or property caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly from the application or use of the information contained in this publication. P0211

 **kalkomey**  
[www.kalkomey.com](http://www.kalkomey.com)

Copyright © 2011 Boat Ed, [www.boat-ed.com](http://www.boat-ed.com)

# Table of Contents

## Boating **BASICS**

### Before Going Out

Vessel Length Classes . . . . .	4	U.S. Aids to Navigation System (ATON) . . . . .	12
Vessel Capacity . . . . .	4	Weather Emergencies . . . . .	16
Fueling a Vessel . . . . .	4		
Fuel Selector Switch on a PWC . .	6		
Preventing Theft . . . . .	6		
Filing a Float Plan . . . . .	7		
Pre-Departure Checklist . . . . .	7		

### On the Water

Encountering Other Vessels . . . .	8		
Navigation Rules . . . . .	9		
Nighttime Navigation . . . . .	10		

### Specifically for PWCs

Steering and Stopping a PWC . .	18
Ignition Safety Switches . . . . .	19
Reboarding a Capsized PWC . . .	19
Courtesy When Encountering Other Vessels . . . . .	20
Environmental Considerations . .	20
Other PWC Considerations . . . .	21

## It's the **LAW!**

### Before Going Out

Registering Your Vessel . . . . .	22
Other Facts About Titling/Registration . . . . .	24
Schedule of Fees . . . . .	24
Hull Identification Number . . . .	25
Legal Requirements for Trailers . .	25
Who May Operate a Boat . . . . .	26
Who May Operate a Personal Watercraft (PWC) . . . . .	26
Marine Events . . . . .	27

### Required Equipment

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) . . . . .	28
Navigation Lights . . . . .	30
Fire Extinguishers . . . . .	32
Ventilation Systems . . . . .	33
Backfire Flame Arrestors . . . . .	33
Mufflers . . . . .	33
Sound-Producing Devices . . . . .	34
Visual Distress Signals (VDSs) . .	34

## On the Water

Unlawful and Dangerous Operation .....	36
Enforcement .....	37
Alcohol and Drugs .....	38
Obstructing Navigation.....	39
Accidents and Casualties .....	39
Diver-Down Flags.....	40
Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances.....	40
Discharge of Waste .....	41
Discharge of Trash.....	41

## Specifically for PWCs

Requirements Specific to PWCs .....	42
--	----

## Specifically for Skiing

Requirements for Towing Skiers .....	43
---	----

## Protecting the Environment

Invasive Aquatic Plants and Animals .....	44
Waste-Handling Facilities .....	45
Clean Boating Tips for Petroleum Control.....	45

## Commercial Fishing Nets .....

## DNR Operation Service Centers .....

## Required Equipment Checklist .....

## Stay up-to-date on new boating laws ...

- ◆ Call the Michigan Department of Natural Resources at **517-373-1230**
- ◆ Visit the Department of Natural Resources website at **[www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)**
- ◆ Report all poaching **1-800-292-7800**



# Before Going Out

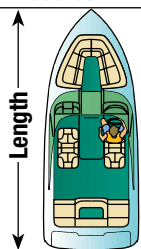


Before going out on the water, take steps to make the outing safe and enjoyable.

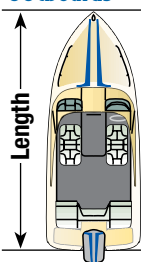
## Vessel Length Classes

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

**Inboards**



**Outboards**



## Vessel Capacity

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

## Fueling a Vessel

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

### ◆ **Before beginning to fuel:**

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

### ◆ **While filling the fuel tank:**

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

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

If your vessel is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes 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 PWCs**

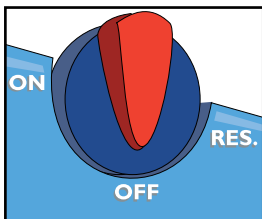
- ◆ Do not tip the PWC in order to fill it all the way up. If the tank is overfilled, the fuel may expand and spill into the water.
- ◆ After fueling, open the door of the engine compartment and sniff to check for any evidence of gas fumes. Do this before starting the engine. If you do smell gas fumes,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



## Fuel Selector Switch on a PWC

This switch can help you avoid becoming stranded without fuel.

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



## Preventing Theft

Defend against theft of your vessel and equipment.

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



## Filing a Float Plan

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

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

### Pre-Departure Checklist

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

- ✓ Check the weather forecast for the area and timeframe 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 ignition safety switch and wrist lanyard are in good order.
- ✓ Make sure you have the required number of personal flotation devices (PFDs), and check that they are in good condition.
- ✓ Leave a float plan with a reliable friend or relative.

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

## Encountering Other Vessels

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

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

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

## Encountering Vessels With Limited Maneuverability

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

# Navigation Rules

There are two terms that help explain these rules.

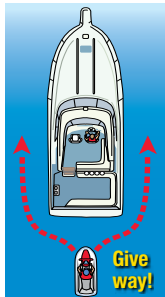
- ◆ **Stand-on vessel:** The vessel that should maintain its course and speed
- ◆ **Give-way vessel:** The vessel that must take early and substantial action to avoid collision by stopping, slowing down, or changing course



**Power vs. Power**



**Power vs. Power**



**Power vs. Power**

## Meeting Head-On

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

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

## Crossing Situations

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

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

## Overtaking

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

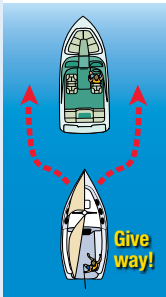
**Power vs. Sail:** The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.



**Power vs. Sail**



**Power vs. Sail**

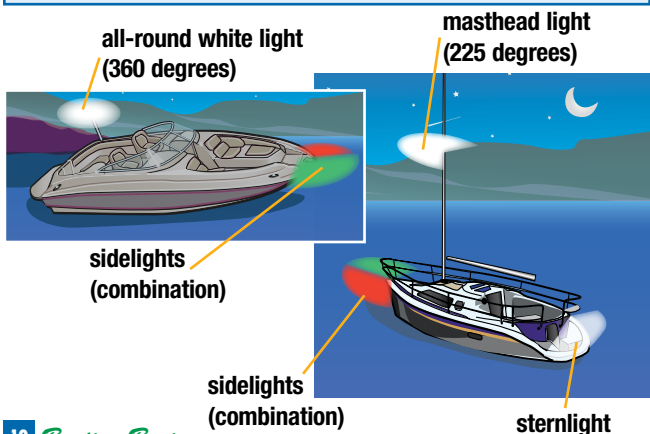


**Power vs. Sail**

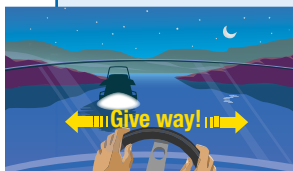
## Nighttime Navigation

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

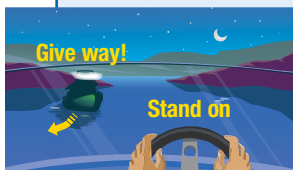
- ◆ **Sidelights:** These red and green lights are called sidelights (also called combination lights) because they are visible to another vessel approaching from the side or head-on. The red light indicates a vessel's port (left) side; the green indicates a vessel's starboard (right) side.
- ◆ **Sternlight:**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



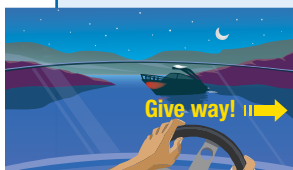
## Encountering Vessels at Night



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



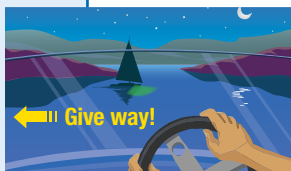
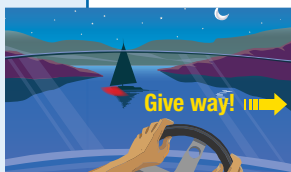
When you see a green and a white light, you are the stand-on vessel. However, remain alert in case the other vessel operator does not see you or does not know the navigation rules.



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

## Encountering a Sailboat at Night

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



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

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

### Lateral Markers

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

**Red colors, red lights, and even numbers** indicate the right side of the channel as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream.

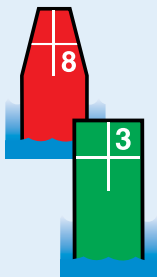


**Green colors, green lights, and odd numbers** indicate the left side of the channel as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream.

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



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

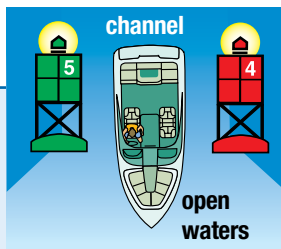
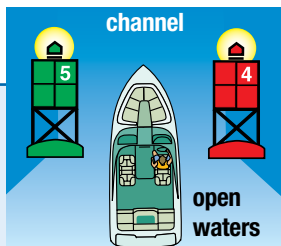


**Cans** are green cylindrical-shaped buoys marked with odd numbers.



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

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



### Red Right Returning

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

## Non-Lateral Markers

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



### Information

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



### Controlled

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



### Exclusion

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



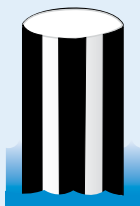
### Danger

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



## Other Non-Lateral Markers

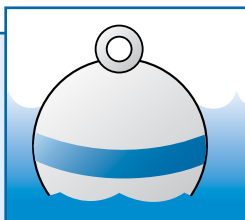
**Safe Water Markers** are white with red vertical stripes and mark mid-channels or fairways. They may be passed on either side.



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

## Mooring Buoy

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



## Weather Emergencies

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

### What To Do If Caught in Severe Weather

- ◆ **Prepare the boat to handle severe weather.**
  - Slow down, but keep enough power to maintain headway and steering.
  - Close all hatches, windows, and doors to reduce the chance of swamping.
  - Stow any unnecessary gear.
  - Turn on your boat's navigation lights. If there is fog, sound your fog horn.
  - Keep bilges free of water. Be prepared to remove water by bailing.
  - If there is lightning, disconnect all electrical equipment. Stay as clear of metal objects as possible.
- ◆ **Prepare your passengers for severe weather.**
  - Have everyone put on a USCG–approved life jacket (PFD). If passengers are already wearing their PFDs, make sure they are secured properly.
  - Have your passengers sit on the vessel floor close to the centerline for their safety and to make the boat more stable.
- ◆ **Decide whether to go to shore or ride out the storm.**
  - If possible, head for the nearest shore that is safe to approach. If already caught in a storm, it may be best to ride it out in open water rather than try to approach the shore in heavy wind and waves.
  - Head the bow into the waves at a 45-degree angle. PWCs 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 Frequencies Broadcasting NOAA Weather Reports

<b>162.400 MHz</b>	<b>162.450 MHz</b>	<b>162.500 MHz</b>	<b>162.550 MHz</b>
<b>162.425 MHz</b>	<b>162.475 MHz</b>	<b>162.525 MHz</b>	

These are the most commonly used VHF channels on United States waters.

**Channel 6** Intership safety communications.

**Channel 9** Communications between vessels (commercial and recreational), and ship to coast (calling channel in designated USCG Districts).

**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; often called the “hailing” channel. (Some regions use other channels as the hailing channel.) When hailing, contact the other vessel, quickly agree to another channel, and then switch to that channel to continue conversation.

**Channel 22** Communications between the U.S. Coast Guard and the maritime public, both recreational and commercial. 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.

**Channel 70** Digital selective calling “alert channel.”

# Specifically for PWCs



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

- ◆ PWCs 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 ...**

You always must have power in order to maintain control. If you allow the engine to return to idle or shut off during operation, you lose all steering control. The PWC will continue in the direction it was headed before the engine was shut off, no matter which way the steering control is turned.

- ◆ **A PWC has no 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.

## Ignition Safety Switches

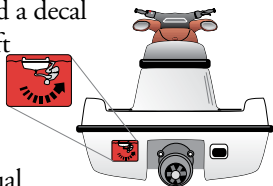
- ◆ Most PWCs and powerboats come equipped by the manufacturer with an important device called an emergency ignition safety switch. This is a safety device that is designed to shut off the engine if the operator is thrown from the proper operating position.
- ◆ A lanyard is attached to the safety switch and the operator's wrist or PFD. The safety switch shuts off the engine if the operator falls off the PWC or out of the powerboat. If your vessel does not come equipped with an ignition safety switch, you should have one installed.
- ◆ It is illegal to ride your PWC without attaching the lanyard properly between the switch and yourself.



## Reboarding a Capsized PWC

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

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



## Courtesy When Encountering Other Vessels

- ◆ Jumping the wake of a passing boat, or riding too close to another PWC or boat, creates risks and is restricted or even prohibited in some states. The vessel making the wake may block the PWC operator's view of oncoming traffic and also conceal the PWC operator from approaching vessels.
- ◆ Excessive noise from PWCs 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 life jacket (PFD).
- ◆ Keep hands, feet, loose clothing, and hair away from the pump intake area. Before cleaning debris away from the pump intake, be sure to shut off the engine.
- ◆ Keep everyone clear of the steering nozzle unless the PWC is shut off. The water jet can cause severe injuries.
- ◆ Frequently inspect your PWC's electrical systems (e.g., starter and engine gauge connections) to ensure there is no potential for electrical spark. Gas fumes could collect in the engine compartment and an explosion could occur. After fueling, sniff the engine compartment for any evidence of gas fumes.
- ◆ Never exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity for your PWC.
- ◆ Know your limits, and ride according to your abilities.
- ◆ See page 42 for other requirements specific to PWCs.



# Before Going Out



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

## Registering Your Vessel

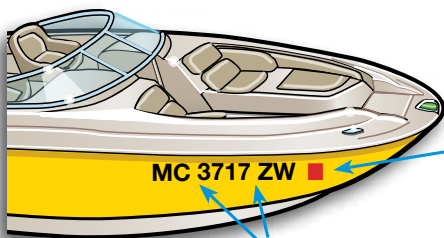
- ◆ You must have a Michigan Certificate of Number (registration) and validation decals to operate your vessel legally on public waters in Michigan. The only exceptions are:
  - Privately owned rowboats 16 feet or less in length
  - Privately owned non-motorized canoes or kayaks
  - Vessels registered in another state or country using Michigan waters for 60 days or less
- ◆ All watercraft with a motor must be registered including electric and inflatable vessels.
- ◆ The Certificate of Number and validation decals are obtained by submitting the proper application and fee to any Secretary of State branch office.
- ◆ *The Certificate of Number (registration card) must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is being operated.*
- ◆ The registration number and validation decals must be displayed as follows.
  - Number must be painted, applied as a decal, or otherwise affixed to both sides of the bow as high above the water line as practical.
  - Number must read from left to right on both sides of the bow.
  - Number must be in at least three-inch-high **BLOCK** letters.

A sample of a Michigan Certificate of Number (registration card). The card contains the following information:

03/31/11	3717 ZW				
98	Four Winns	20	04	\$42.00	
FWN67689B698		Wayne		XX	
Fiberglass	3	Open	1	Inboard	1
Pleasure	1	Gas	1		

John Doe  
1430 Southview Lane  
Livonia, MI 48152





Spaces or hyphens  
should appear here.



Validation  
Decal

- Number's color must contrast with the color of the background and be distinctly visible and legible.
- Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen: **MC 3717 ZW** or **MC-3717-ZW**.
- No other numbers may be displayed on either side of the bow.
- Decals must be affixed on each side of the vessel and placed three inches after the last character of the registration number.

## Where To Title and Register

The Certificate of Number and validation decals are obtained by submitting the proper application and fee to any Secretary of State branch office. You can find your closest branch office:

- By calling **517-322-1460**
- On the Internet at **[www.michigan.gov/sos](http://www.michigan.gov/sos)**

## Where To Renew Your Certificate of Number

A Certificate of Number is valid for three years and may be renewed:

- Over the Internet at **[www.michigan.gov/sos](http://www.michigan.gov/sos)**
- At any Secretary of State branch office

## Other Facts About Titling and Registration

- ◆ All vessels that are 20 feet long or longer or have a permanently affixed engine must be titled also.
- ◆ As the owner of a vessel, you must notify the Secretary of State and surrender your Certificate of Number within 15 days if:
  - Your vessel is abandoned or destroyed **or ...**
  - Your vessel is sold or ownership is transferred **or ...**
  - You change your address.
- ◆ If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Number or decal, you must apply to the Secretary of State for a duplicate and submit a processing fee.
- ◆ Larger recreational vessels owned by U.S. citizens may (at the option of the owner) be documented by the U.S. Coast Guard. Call the USCG at **1-800-799-8362** for more information. Documented vessels are required to be registered also.

### Schedule of Fees To Register Your Vessel

#### Motorboats (all motors including electric motors)

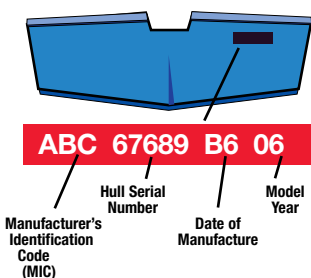
Less than 12 feet . . . . .	\$ 14.00
12 feet to less than 16 feet . . . . .	\$ 17.00
16 feet to less than 20 feet . . . . .	\$ 42.00
20 feet to less than 28 feet . . . . .	\$ 115.00
28 feet to less than 35 feet . . . . .	\$ 168.00
35 feet to less than 42 feet . . . . .	\$ 244.00
42 feet to less than 50 feet . . . . .	\$ 280.00
50 feet and over . . . . .	\$ 448.00
Pontoon vessels – any length. . . . .	\$ 23.00
Motorized canoe – any length . . . . .	\$ 14.00

#### Other Fees

Non-powered vessels . . . . .	\$ 9.00
15-day temporary permit . . . . .	\$ 10.00

## Hull Identification Number

- ◆ The Hull Identification Number (HIN) is a unique 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.



## Legal Requirements for Trailers

Michigan has specific requirements for boat trailers.

- ◆ Trailers must be licensed *and* registered.
- ◆ If the gross weight of the vessel and trailer exceeds 3,000 pounds, the trailer must be equipped with brakes.
- ◆ Trailers must have proper lighting, including turn signals, taillights, and brake lights. All trailer lights must be maintained in an operable condition—same as when the trailer was manufactured.
- ◆ All towing vehicles must be connected to the trailer by a safety chain or cable of sufficient strength to maintain connection under all conditions.

For further information, contact the Michigan Secretary of State at **517-322-1460**, call one of the branch offices or visit **[www.michigan.gov/sos](http://www.michigan.gov/sos)**.

## Who May Operate a Boat

- ◆ **Those less than 12 years of age:**
  - May operate a boat powered by a motor of no more than 6 horsepower (hp) legally without restrictions.
  - May operate a boat powered by a motor of more than 6 hp but no more than 35 hp legally **only if** they are directly supervised on board by a person at least 16 years of age.
  - May not operate a boat powered by a motor of more than 35 hp legally under any conditions.
- ◆ **Those 12 to 15 years of age:**
  - May operate a boat powered by a motor of no more than 6 hp legally without restrictions.
  - May operate a boat powered by a motor of more than 6 hp legally **only if** they:
    - Have passed a boating safety course approved by the Department of Natural Resources and have on board their boating safety certificate **or** ...
    - Are accompanied on board by a person at least 16 years of age.
- ◆ **Those 16 years of age or older** may operate any boat on the waters of Michigan. Note: See “Who May Operate a Personal Watercraft (PWC)” below.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
**BOATING SAFETY CERTIFICATE**  
Issued under authority of Part 801 and Part 802, P. A. 451 of 1994.  
This certificate must be presented upon demand of any peace officer. Failure to comply with the provisions of the Act is a violation of State law.

LAST NAME		FIRST NAME		MIDDLE INITIAL
DATE OF BIRTH	SEX	AGE	BOATER NUMBER	
STUDENT'S SIGNATURE				
INSTRUCTOR'S SIGNATURE				
DATE COMPLETED	INSTRUCTOR'S NUMBER			

NOT VALID UNLESS SIGNED BY INSTRUCTOR  
Approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators

## Who May Operate a Personal Watercraft (PWC)

### Operating Provisions Until October 1, 2011

- ◆ **Those less than 12 years of age** may **not** legally operate a PWC.
- ◆ **Those 12 and 13 years of age** may operate a PWC legally **only if**:
  - He or she obtained a boating safety certificate prior to January 1, 1999, **or** ...

- **All** of the following conditions are satisfied:
  - The operator is accompanied solely by his or her parent or legal guardian **and ...**
  - Both the operator and the parent or legal guardian have obtained a boating safety certificate **and ...**
  - The PWC is equipped with a lanyard-type ignition safety switch and the parent or legal guardian has the lanyard attached to his or her person, clothing, or PFD.

## Operating Provisions Beginning on October 1, 2011

- ◆ Those **less than 14 years of age** may **not** legally operate a PWC.
- ◆ Those **14 and 15 years of age** may operate a PWC legally **only if**:
  - He or she is accompanied on board by his or her parent or legal guardian or by a person at least 21 years of age who has been designated by the parent or legal guardian **or ...**
  - He or she is operating or riding the PWC at a distance of not more than 100 feet from his or her parent *or* legal guardian or from a person at least 21 years of age who has been designated by the parent or legal guardian.

## Safety Education Requirement

### Those 14 years of age or older:

- ◆ And born after December 31, 1978, may operate a PWC legally **only if** they have obtained a boating safety certificate.
- ◆ And born on or before December 31, 1978, may operate a PWC legally without restrictions.

## Marine Events

- ◆ To hold a race, regatta, or tournament, you must notify the Michigan Department of Natural Resources at least 30 days prior to the event by calling your operation service center (see page 48).
- ◆ If the event is being held on federally controlled waters, a permit from the U.S. Coast Guard is required.

# Required Equipment



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

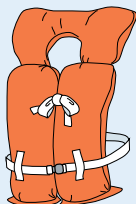
## Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

- ◆ All vessels must be equipped with a personal flotation device for each person on board or being towed.
  - The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) requires that all vessels have at least one Type I, II, or III personal flotation device that is USCG–approved, wearable, and of the proper size for each person on board or being towed. Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.
  - Michigan’s PFD law permits a vessel that is less than 16 feet long, or is a canoe or kayak, to choose to have either a wearable PFD (Type I, II, or III) or a throwable PFD (Type IV) for each person on board.
- ◆ In addition to the above requirements, one USCG–approved Type IV PFD must be on board vessels 16 feet or longer and be readily accessible.
- ◆ Michigan law requires all children under 6 years of age to *wear* a USCG–approved Type I or II PFD when riding on the open deck of any vessel.
- ◆ Each person **under 12 years of age** riding on or towed behind a PWC must *wear* a USCG–approved Type I or Type II personal flotation device.
- ◆ Each person **over 12 years of age** riding on or towed behind a PWC must *wear* a USCG–approved Type I, II, or III personal flotation device.
- ◆ Inflatable PFDs are not allowed on PWCs.
- ◆ All PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition and must be readily accessible.



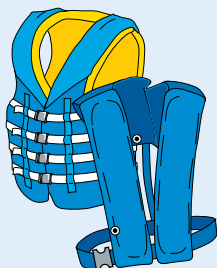
### **TYPE I: Offshore Life Jackets**

These vests are geared for rough or remote waters where rescue may take awhile. They provide the most buoyancy, are excellent for flotation, and will turn most unconscious persons face up in the water.



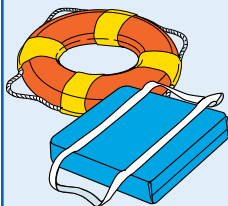
### **TYPE II: Near-Shore Vests**

These vests are good for calm waters when quick rescue is likely. A Type II may not turn some unconscious wearers face up in the water.



### **TYPE III: Flotation Aids**

These vests or full-sleeved jackets are good for calm waters when quick rescue is likely. They are not recommended for rough waters since they will not turn most unconscious persons face up.



### **TYPE IV: Throwable Devices**

These cushions and ring buoys are designed to be thrown to someone in trouble. Since a Type IV is not designed to be worn, it is neither for rough waters nor for persons who are unable to hold onto it.



### **TYPE V: Special-Use Devices**

These vests, deck suits, hybrid PFDs, and others are designed for specific activities such as windsurfing, kayaking, or water-skiing. *To be acceptable, Type V PFDs must be used in accordance with their label.*

## Navigation Lights

If underway between sunset and sunrise, or during periods of reduced visibility (fog, rain, haze, etc.), vessels must be equipped with and exhibit navigation lights. The required navigation lights differ depending on the type and size of your vessel.

### Power-Driven Vessels When Underway

Remember, power-driven vessels include sailboats operating under engine power.

◆ **If less than 26 ft. long, the required lights are:**

- Red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least one mile away.
- An all-round white light as shown in *Figure 4* or both a masthead light and a sternlight as shown in *Figures 1, 2, and 3*. These lights must be visible from a distance of at least two miles away. The all-round white light (or the masthead light) must be higher than the sidelights.

◆ **If 26 ft. long or longer, the required lights are:**

- Red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least one mile away.





- A masthead light and a sternlight visible from a distance of at least two miles away. The masthead light must be higher than the sidelights as shown in *Figures 1, 2, and 3*.

## Unpowered Vessels When Underway

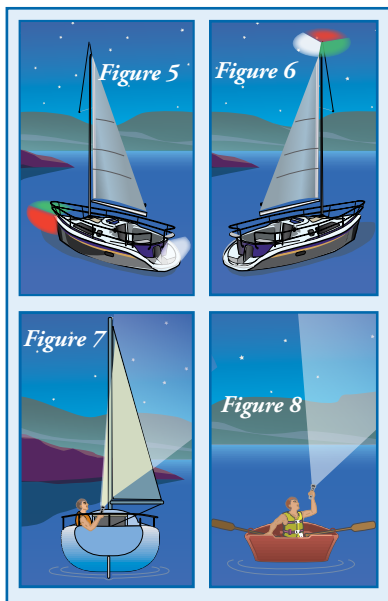
Unpowered vessels are sailing vessels or vessels that are paddled, poled, or rowed.

- ◆ **If 26 ft. long or longer,** these vessels must exhibit the lights as shown in *Figures 5 and 6*:

- Red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least two miles away
- A sternlight visible from a distance of at least three miles away

- ◆ **If less than 26 ft. long,** these vessels should:

- If practical, exhibit the lights as shown in *Figures 5 and 6*.
- If not practical, have on hand at least one lantern or flashlight shining a white light as shown in *Figures 7 and 8*.



## All Vessels When Not Underway

**All vessels** are required to use an all-round white light between sunset and sunrise whenever they are anchored in the waters of or connected to the Great Lakes. It is advisable to display a white light always when anchored or adrift at night.

## Fire Extinguishers

- ◆ All vessels, including PWCs, are required to have a Type B fire extinguisher(s) on board if one or more of the following conditions exist:
  - Closed compartments under seats where portable fuel tanks may be stored
  - Closed storage compartments in which flammable or combustible materials may be stored
  - Double-bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not completely filled with flotation material
  - Closed living spaces
  - Permanently installed fuel tanks
- ◆ 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

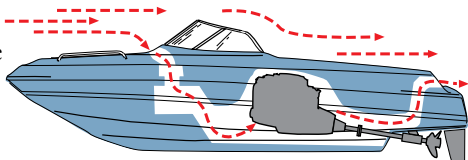
Classification type & size	Foam minimum gallons	Carbon Dioxide minimum pounds	Dry Chemical minimum pounds
B-I	1¼	4	2
B-II	2½	15	10

Length of Vessel	Without Fixed System	With Fixed System*
Less than 26 ft.	one B-I	None
26 ft. to less than 40 ft.	two B-I <i>or</i> one B-II	one B-I
40 ft. to less than 65 ft.	three B-I <i>or</i> one B-II and one B-I	two B-I <i>or</i> 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 in either of these situations:
  - After fueling
  - Before starting the engine

## Backfire Flame Arrestors

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

## Mufflers

- ◆ A vessel's engine must have a factory-installed muffler or exhaust system for noise reduction, or another effective muffling system. Vessel operators may not hear sound signals or voices if the engine is not adequately muffled.
- ◆ Michigan law states that a vessel's muffler or exhaust system must prevent noise in excess of:
  - 90 decibels at idle from three feet away *and ...*
  - 75 decibels when measured from the shore.

## 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.

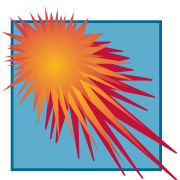
If on State Waters	
<i>Vessel 16 feet up to 26 feet long <b>and</b> under engine power</i>	Whistle capable of producing a blast of two seconds or more and audible for at least one-half mile is required.
<i>Vessel 26 feet long or longer <b>and</b> under engine power</i>	Whistle capable of producing a blast of two seconds or more and audible for at least one mile is required.
If on Federally Controlled Waters	
<i>Vessel less than 65.6 feet long (includes PWCs)</i>	Whistle or horn audible for at least one-half mile is required.
<i>Vessel 65.6 feet long or longer</i>	Whistle or horn audible for at least one mile is required.

## Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

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

- ◆ Vessels on federally controlled waters, such as the Great Lakes, must be equipped with visual distress signals that are U.S. Coast Guard–approved, in serviceable condition, and readily accessible.
  - All vessels, regardless of length or type, are required to carry night signals when operating between sunset and sunrise.
  - Most vessels must carry day signals also; exceptions to the requirement for day signals are:
    - Recreational vessels less than 16 feet in length
    - Non-motorized open sailboats that are less than 26 feet in length
    - Manually propelled vessels

- ◆ If pyrotechnic VDSs are used, a minimum of three must be carried in the vessel.
- ◆ An example of VDSs that could be carried on board to satisfy U.S. Coast Guard requirements is one handheld orange smoke signal (day), two floating orange smoke signals (day), and one electric light (night only).
- ◆ It is prohibited to display visual distress signals while on the water unless assistance is required to prevent immediate or potential danger to persons on board.



### Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals

#### Orange Smoke

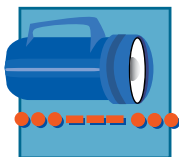
*Day Signal*

#### 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 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

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

## Unlawful and Dangerous Operation

Michigan law designates these dangerous operating practices as illegal.

- ◆ **Reckless Operation** of a vessel or reckless manipulation of water skis, a surfboard, or similar device is defined as operation which disregards the safety or rights of others or endangers the person or property of others. Some examples are:
  - Weaving your vessel through congested waterway traffic or swerving at the last possible moment in order to avoid collision
  - Jumping the wake of another vessel unnecessarily close to the other vessel or when visibility around the other vessel is restricted
  - Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife with your vessel
  - Causing damage from the wake of your vessel
- ◆ **Failure To Regulate Speed** is operating a vessel at speeds that may cause danger to life or property of any other person or at speeds that will not permit you to bring your vessel to a safe stop. It is illegal to operate a vessel:
  - In excess of 55 mph unless you are at least one mile offshore on the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair
  - At greater than “slow, no wake speed” when a person is in the bow of a vessel without proper seating
  - Faster than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions (weather, vessel traffic, etc.)

- ◆ **Improper Distance** is not maintaining a proper distance while operating a vessel or towing a person. To maintain a proper distance when you are operating at greater than “slow, no wake speed” (except in channels that are not posted), the vessel or persons being towed must not be within 100 feet of:
  - A shoreline (if operating in water less than three feet deep)
  - Any moored or anchored vessel
  - A dock or raft
  - Any marked swimming area or person(s) in the water

**“Slow, No Wake Speed”** means the slowest speed at which it is still possible to maintain steering and which does not create a wake.

- ◆ **Improper Distance for PWCs** means that, if operating at greater than “slow, no wake speed,” PWCs also must:
  - Stay at least 200 feet from any Great Lakes shoreline.
  - Not cross within 150 feet behind another vessel other than another PWC.
- ◆ **Improper Direction** is defined as the failure to operate in a counterclockwise direction except in areas marked by well-defined channels or rivers.
- ◆ **Boating in Restricted Areas** is defined as operating within a restricted area clearly marked by buoys, beacons, diver-down flags, etc.
- ◆ **Riding on the Bow** is illegal if the vessel is not equipped with bow seating and the vessel is operating at greater than “slow, no wake speed.” Persons also are not allowed to ride on the gunwale. While underway, persons on a vessel may not sit, stand, or walk on any portion of a vessel not designed for that purpose.

## Enforcement

The boating laws of Michigan are enforced by officers of the Law Enforcement Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, County Sheriff’s Department, U.S. Coast Guard, and any other authorized law enforcement agency. They have the right to stop and board vessels in order to check for compliance with federal and state laws. The USCG has enforcement authority on federally controlled waters.

## Alcohol and Drugs

Michigan law prohibits anyone from boating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It is also unlawful for the owner of a vessel to allow anyone else to operate their vessel if that person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- ◆ The following conditions determine if you are boating under the influence.
  - If your blood alcohol content is 0.10% or greater by weight of alcohol as determined by a breath, blood, or urine test, you are considered to be under the influence of alcohol.
  - If your blood alcohol content is greater than 0.07% but less than 0.10% by weight of alcohol as determined by a breath, blood, or urine test, a law enforcement officer can consider that fact along with other evidence in determining if you are under the influence.
- ◆ Michigan law establishes the following penalties.
  - People arrested for boating under the influence are guilty of a misdemeanor. Upon a third conviction within 10 years, a person will be guilty of a felony.
  - If a person boating under the influence causes great bodily injury or death of another person, he or she will be guilty of a felony.
- ◆ By operating a vessel on Michigan waters, you have consented to be tested for alcohol or drugs if arrested by a law enforcement official.





## Obstructing Navigation

It is illegal to:

- ◆ Anchor a vessel in the traveled portion of a river or channel in a way that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.
- ◆ Moor or attach a vessel to a buoy, beacon, light, or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities.
- ◆ Move, displace, tamper with, damage, or destroy any navigational aid.
- ◆ Obstruct a pier, wharf, boat ramp, or access to any facility.

## 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.
- ◆ The operator of a vessel, or each person on board, must report an occurrence without delay, and by the quickest means available, to the nearest conservation officer, sheriff of the county, or nearest state police post when:
  - A person dies **or ...**
  - A person disappears from a vessel.
- ◆ The operator or the owner of a vessel involved in a boating accident must file an accident report form supplied by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
  - The form must be filed within 48 hours if:
    - A person dies within 24 hours of the occurrence **or ...**
    - A person loses consciousness, receives medical treatment, or is disabled for more than 24 hours.
  - The form must be filed within five days if:
    - Damage to the vessel and other property damage totals more than \$2,000 **or ...**
    - A person disappears from the vessel under circumstances that indicate death or injury.

## Diver-Down Flags

Scuba divers or snorkelers must display a diver-down flag to mark their diving area.

- ◆ Divers must stay within 100 feet of the vertical position of their diver-down flag.
- ◆ Vessels must remain at least 200 feet away from the flag.



**Divers Flag**

*A rectangular red flag, at least 14 inches x 16 inches with a 3 1/2" white diagonal stripe, is required on Michigan state waters.*



**Alfa Flag**

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

## Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

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

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

- ◆ Immediately call the U.S. Coast Guard at **1-800-424-8802**.
- ◆ Also report the discharge to the Michigan Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS) by calling **1-800-292-4706**.



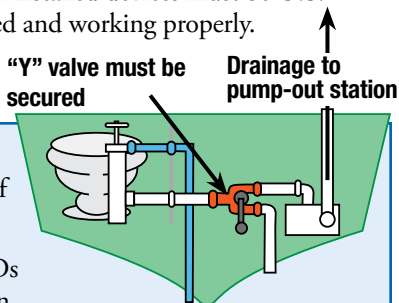
## Discharge of Waste

- ◆ Houseboats must have a wastewater holding system to prevent the discharge of waste into the water. Michigan law prohibits discharge of any sewage, treated or untreated, into the fresh waters of Michigan.
- ◆ If you have a recreational vessel with installed toilet facilities, it must have an operable marine sanitation device (MSD) on board. All installed devices must be U.S. Coast Guard–certified and working properly.

### Types of MSDs

There are three types of MSDs.

- ◆ Types I and II MSDs are usually found on large boats. Waste is treated with special chemicals to kill bacteria. The “Y” valve must be secured so that waste cannot be discharged into the water.
- ◆ Type III MSDs, the simplest and most common, consist of holding tanks or portable toilets. Waste is to be taken ashore and disposed of in a pump-out facility station.



## Discharge of Trash

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

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

# Specifically for PWCs



PWC operators must obey additional legal requirements that apply specifically to the operation of personal watercraft on Michigan waters.

## Requirements Specific to PWCs

- ◆ Each person riding on or being towed behind a PWC must *wear* a U.S. Coast Guard–approved Type I, II, or III PFD. Inflatable PFDs may not be used. See page 28 for PFDs age restrictions.
- ◆ You may not allow a child under 7 years of age to ride on or be towed behind a PWC unless with a parent or guardian or designee of the parent or guardian.
- ◆ The lanyard of a PWC’s ignition safety switch must be attached to the person, clothing, or PFD of the operator.
- ◆ It is illegal to operate a PWC during the period that begins at sunset and ends at 8:00 a.m. “Sunset” means that time determined by the national weather service.
- ◆ PWCs must be operated in a reasonable and prudent manner at all times. It is illegal to:
  - Jump the wake of another vessel unnecessarily close to the other vessel.
  - Weave your PWC through congested traffic.
  - Swerve at the last possible moment to avoid collision.
- ◆ A PWC must be operated at “slow, no wake speed” if crossing within 150 feet behind another vessel unless the other vessel is also a PWC.
- ◆ You may not operate a PWC within 200 feet of a Great Lakes shoreline unless traveling at “slow, no wake speed” perpendicular to the shoreline.
- ◆ You may not operate a PWC in waters less than two feet deep unless you are operating at “slow, no wake speed” or are docking or launching your PWC.
- ◆ It is illegal to harass wildlife or disturb aquatic vegetation with your PWC.

## Specifically for Skiing

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

### Requirements for Towing Skiers

- ◆ Every vessel towing a person(s) on water skis, a surfboard, or a similar device must have a person, in addition to the vessel operator, observing the towed person(s) at all times.
- ◆ It is illegal to tow persons on water skis, surfboards, or any device of this type between:
  - One hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise if towed behind a boat
  - Sunset and 8:00 a.m. if towed behind a PWC
- ◆ Persons being towed must stay at least 100 feet away from:
  - A shoreline (if operating in water less than three feet deep)
  - Any moored or anchored vessel
  - A dock or raft
  - Any marked swimming area or person(s) in the water
- ◆ Those being towed behind a PWC must *wear* a U.S. Coast Guard–approved Type I, II, or III PFD. Inflatable PFDs may not be used.



# Protecting the Environment

## Invasive Aquatic Plants and Animals

Michigan waters are threatened by non-native, invasive, aquatic plants and animals such as zebra mussels, round goby, sea lamprey, Eurasian ruffe, Eurasian watermilfoil, rusty crayfish, spiny water fleas, and hydrilla. These species and others are harmful to recreational boating and can cause extensive economic and natural resource damage.

- ◆ Boaters should learn to identify non-native species that they may encounter and take precautions to prevent the spread of these species.
  - Remove all visible aquatic plants and animals from your boat, motor, trailer, and accessory equipment before leaving the access area.
  - Dispose of live bait and aquatic animals in the trash. Do not release live bait into the water.
  - Drain live wells and all water from boats before leaving the access area.
  - Power wash boats and trailers whenever possible, or dry all equipment thoroughly, before leaving the access area.
  - Allow the boat to dry for at least 10 days before launching into a different body of water.
  - Fill out a Hydrilla Hunt I.D. card available online at [www.miseagrant.umich.edu/downloads/ais/Hydrillacard.pdf](http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/downloads/ais/Hydrillacard.pdf).



- ◆ Please help support invasive species control, research, and education efforts by purchasing a Great Lakes Specialty Decal from the Michigan Electronic Store at [www.michigan.gov/michiganestore](http://www.michigan.gov/michiganestore).

## *Remember when you caught your first fish?*

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



### **Keep our water clean—use pump-outs**

To report illegal discharge of any sewage, treated or untreated, in the fresh waters of Michigan, call the U.S. Coast Guard at **1-800-424-8802**



## **Waste-Handling Facilities**

Michigan has approximately 280 marina-provided pump-out stations that are widely available to recreational boaters. The 280 pump-outs serve 32,000 boats that have Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs) and are kept at Great Lakes coastal locations in Michigan, including 9,000 boats

not kept at marinas. Keeping our environment clean is everybody's job. Please make it yours.

## **Clean Boating Tips for Petroleum Control**

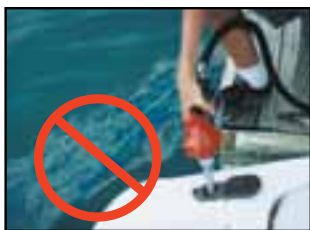
Petroleum in or on the water is harmful, and in some cases fatal, to aquatic life. Floating petroleum reduces light penetration, affects the exchange of oxygen at the water's surface, and contaminates the microlayer. The microlayer is the uppermost portion of the water column—home to thousands of species of plants, animals, and microbes that attract seabirds from above and fish from below. Pollution in the microlayer can poison much of the aquatic food web.

## The Law

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (also called the Clean Water Act) prohibits the discharge of oil or oily waste upon or into the navigable waters of the United States or the waters of the contiguous zone if such discharge causes a film or sheen upon, or discoloration of, the surface of the water or causes a sludge or emulsion beneath the surface of the water. Violators are subject to a penalty of \$5,000 from the U.S. Coast Guard. State law also prohibits the discharge of oil. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality may impose additional fines.

## Fueling Practices

Gas or diesel may be spilled while fueling—as backsplash out the fuel intake or as overflow out the vent fitting. Spills harm aquatic life. Follow these tips to avoid problems.



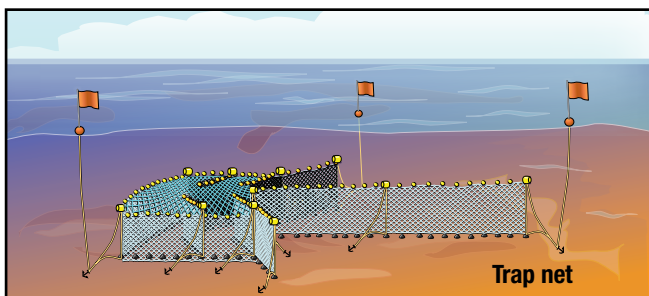
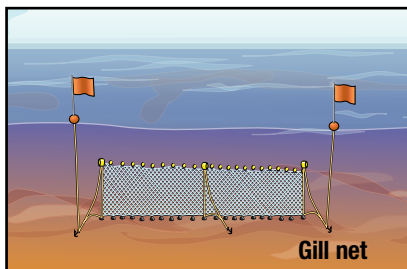
- ◆ Fill tanks to no more than 90% capacity—gas from cool storage tanks will expand as it warms up.
- ◆ To determine when the tank is 90% full, listen to the filler pipe, use a sounding stick, and know your tank's volume.
- ◆ Rather than filling your tank upon your return to port, wait and fill it just before leaving on your next trip. This practice will reduce spills due to thermal expansion because some fuel will be used before it warms up.
- ◆ Fill portable tanks on shore where spills are less likely to occur and are easier to clean up.
- ◆ Use oil absorbent pads to catch all drips.
- ◆ Slow down at the beginning and end of fueling.

## Pollution Emergencies

Call the Michigan Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS) at **1-800-292-4706**.



# Commercial Fishing Nets



## Do not tamper with net markings!

It is against the law and puts others at risk!

- ◆ This includes intentionally or unintentionally cutting, moving, or damaging buoys while trying to recover tangled gear.
- ◆ Steer clear of the nets to avoid tangles.
- ◆ If you do get tangled, cut your lines and do not disturb the markers. Missing markers put other boaters at risk.
- ◆ Those witnessing net tampering or unmarked nets should report their observations to the RAP Hotline **1-800-292-7800**.

# Michigan Department of Natural Resources Operation Service Centers

## Baraga Operations Service Center

427 US-41 North  
Baraga, MI 49908  
906-353-6651

## Bay City Operations Service Center

3580 State Park Drive  
Bay City, MI 48706  
989-684-9141

## Cadillac Operations Service Center

8015 Mackinaw Trail  
Cadillac, MI 49601  
231-775-9727

## Gaylord Operations Service Center

1732 West M-32  
Gaylord, MI 49735  
989-732-3541

## Southfield Operations Service Center

26000 W. Eight Mile Rd.  
Southfield, MI 48034  
248-359-9040

## Marquette Operations Service Center

1990 US-41 South  
Marquette, MI 49855  
906-228-6561

## Newberry Operations Service Center

5100 State Highway M-123  
Newberry, MI 49868  
906-293-5131

## Plainwell Operations Service Center

621 North 10th Street  
Plainwell, MI 49080  
269-685-6851

## Roscommon Operations Service Center

I-75 & M-18 South  
8717 North Roscommon Rd.  
Roscommon, MI 48653  
989-275-5151

## Rose Lake Field Office

8562 Stoll Rd.  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
517-641-4903

Visit the DNR website

[www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)

## Obtain information about:

- State parks and recreation areas
- Trail information and maps
- More education courses
- Renewing licenses
- DNR's Division of Law Enforcement

To ensure the enjoyment for future riders,  
report riding violations.  
**1-800-292-7800**



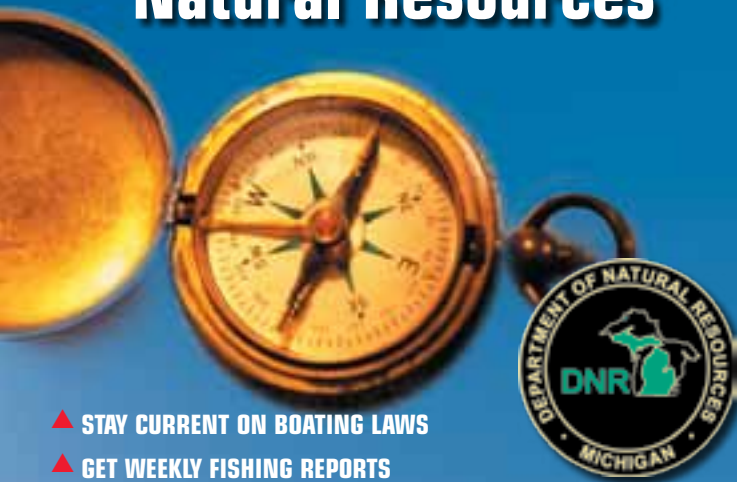
# Required Equipment Checklist



	PWC	Boat Less Than 16 Ft.	Boat 16 Ft. to Less Than 26 Ft.
<b>Boating Safety Certificate On Board</b>	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>1</sup>
<b>Certificate of Number On Board</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Validation Decals Displayed</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>PFDs: Type I, II, or III</b>	✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>
<b>PFD: Type IV</b>			✓
<b>Type B-I Fire Extinguisher</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Ignition Safety Switch</b>	✓		
<b>Backfire Flame Arrestor</b>	✓	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>
<b>Ventilation System</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Muffler</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Horn, Whistle, or Bell</b>	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓
<b>Daytime Visual Distress Signals</b>			✓ <sup>5</sup>
<b>Nighttime Visual Distress Signals</b>	N/A	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>
<b>Navigation Lights</b>	N/A	✓ <sup>6</sup>	✓ <sup>6</sup>

1. Applicable for some operators. See pages 26-27 for details.
2. Those on PWCs must wear a PFD at all times. Inflatable PFDs may not be used.
3. Those under the age of 6 years must *wear* a Type I or II PFD when riding on the open deck of any vessel.
4. Required on inboard and stern drives only.
5. Required only on the Great Lakes and waters connected to the Great Lakes.
6. Unpowered vessels (sailboats under sail, rowboats, etc.) are required only to have a flashlight or a lantern on hand.

# Michigan Department of Natural Resources



- ▲ **STAY CURRENT ON BOATING LAWS**
- ▲ **GET WEEKLY FISHING REPORTS**
- ▲ **PURCHASE FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSES ONLINE**
- ▲ **GET ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT:**
  - **BOAT REGISTRATION**
  - **FISHING AND HUNTING REGULATIONS**
- ▲ **FIND OUT ABOUT STATE PARKS:**
  - **LOCATIONS AND FEES**
  - **ACTIVITIES—CAMPING, FISHING, HIKING, BOATING**
- ▲ **MAKE CAMPGROUND RESERVATIONS ONLINE**

**Visit our website:**  
**[www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)**

**Everything you want to know about what's going on outdoors  
in Michigan is just a click away.**