

BOATING BEST PRACTICES, RULES & REGULATIONS

Courtesy of FOCA

BEST PRACTICES

- When boating, be aware/steer clear/reduce wake for others near you, such as swimmers, canoes, kayaks, sailboats, paddleboats, paddleboards, wildlife, etc.
- **SLOW – NO WAKE PLEASE** when boating close to the shore (less than 30 metres/ approx. 100 feet), or in channels such as _____ and _____, to prevent damage to shorelines, docks/boats and nesting habitat. Remember that you are responsible for any damage you cause. Also, remember that there may be people swimming and enjoying water activities in these waters.
- **Do** - boaters **must** give way to swimmers and vessels that have less manoeuvrability e.g., sails have right of way over canoes which have right of way over motorized boats.
- **Do - respect your neighbours and the environment.**
- Use the '**BOATER'S CODE**' (included in this Boating Section) as your guideline to safe and respectful boating practices
- **Do** - take steps to reduce noise pollution with watercraft.
- **Do** - maintain watercraft and motors to reduce contamination from fuels, wastewater and other hazardous or toxic chemicals. Consider decommissioning older-2 stroke engines in favour of 4-stroke or E-Tec engines.
- **Do** - reduce the chance of importing invasive species by rinsing your boat whenever you trailer it for transport to another body of water. Review the poster at right, created by FOCA:

**CLEAN + DRAIN + DRY
YOUR BOAT**

Motors, boats, and Ontario's ecosystems can be ruined by zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species. Take a few simple steps to preserve our lakes and fisheries: **CLEAN** off any plants or debris, **DRAIN** bilges and ballast water, and **DRY** any wet areas of your boat.

**DON'T LET THEM CATCH A RIDE
STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS**

TO REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES:
1-800-563-7711
www.EDDMapS.org/Ontario

ZEBRA MUSSELS 2.0 cm
ROUND GOBY 6 - 10 cm
EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL

Department of Natural Resources and Forestry
INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL
FOCA
Ontario

Basic Boating Rules & Regulations

Pleasure Craft Operator's Card

Since September 15, 2009, all persons operating a pleasure craft in Canada that is fitted with a motor require proof of operator competency, regardless of that person's age, the size of the pleasure craft, or the size of the motor. The most common proof of competency is the **Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC)**. You can get the card by taking a boating safety course in-person or online, and passing the test at the end of the course. The PCOC is good for life.

For more, see:

https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-paperwork-paperwork_operatorfaq-2233.htm

You must carry a copy of the PCOC with you whenever operating a powered pleasure craft. Visitors from the US who are boating in Canada for up to 45 days, maximum, can have their state boat operator credentials accepted as proof of competency in lieu of a PCOC, for example a card recognized by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA).

Age and Horsepower Restrictions

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Under 12 years of age with no direct supervision* | May operate a boat with up to 7.5 kW (10 hp) |
| Ages 12 to under 16 with no direct supervision | May operate a boat with up to 30 kW (40 hp) |
| Under 16 years of age, regardless of supervision | May not operate a personal watercraft |
| 16 years of age or older | No horsepower restrictions |

*Direct supervision means a person (16 years of age or older) is in the boat and directly supervising the operator.

REMEMBER: Youth must also carry proof of competency to operate any motorized vessel, supervised or not.

Speed Limits

The maximum speed limit is **10km/hr for boats traveling within 30 metres (approximately 100 feet) of shore**. Even if this limit is not posted, boaters are expected to be aware of it and respect the safety of others in narrow waterways. There are 3 exceptions to this:

- 1.1. Waterskiing, where the boat follows a trajectory perpendicular to the shore.
- 1.2. In rivers that are less than 100 m (approximately 330 feet) in width, or canals or buoyed channels.
- 1.3. In waters where another speed is prescribed under a schedule to the regulations.

Safety Equipment

All watercraft must have safety equipment on board; however, the specific equipment depends on the type of craft and in some cases whether the operator is wearing a personal flotation

device (PFD). The following table is taken from the Transport Canada's "Safe Boating Guide" (download the full guide here: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-menu-1362.htm>). Note that Stand-Up Paddleboards, which are not included in this table, must have onboard one Canadian approved lifejacket/personal floatation device (PFD), a sound signalling device (i.e. whistle on PFD) and a 15m (49.3') buoyant heaving line (unless wearing a PFD), available for immediate use.

Carry Your Documents

When heading out in your motorized boat, make sure to bring on board:

- Proof of competency (PCOC)
- Personal identification
- Pleasure craft licence¹ (for 10hp or more)

Alcohol Consumption

The laws for alcohol consumption in pleasure craft or other recreational vehicles are the same as those for automobiles in the Province of Ontario. An Ontario boater convicted of operating a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs may have their driver's license suspended for a minimum of 1 year.

In fact, in Ontario no one can consume alcoholic beverages while a boat is being operated, not the operator or the passengers. Transporting of alcohol can only be done if the containers are unopened and stored away. Boat passengers may consume alcohol on board a boat in Ontario so long as the boat has a permanent toilet, cooking facilities, sleeping facilities and it is anchored or docked!

RESOURCES

- **Transport Canada** – www.tc.gc.ca
 - Go to the Marine section for information on Pleasure Craft licenses, Operator Competency programs, and the Safe Boating Guide.
- **Ontario Ministry of Transportation** - www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/driver/handbook
 - The Driver's Handbook covers operation of ATVs, ORVs, and Snowmobiles under the Off-road Vehicles section.
- **FOCA's Boating Safety tips** - <https://foca.on.ca/safe-boating/>
 - this webpage includes links to the OPP's "Boat Notes," cold water immersion info, and the many online resources of the Canadian Safe Boating Council.
- **Safe Quiet Lakes** - <http://safequiet.ca/>

¹ A pleasure craft licence is a document giving your boat a unique licence number that is valid for 10 years. The Pleasure Craft Licensing System allows Search and Rescue personnel to access information about your boat 24/7 and is required for all motorized boats with 10 hp. or more.

BOATER'S CODE – COURTESY "SAFE QUIET LAKES"

BOATER'S CODE

Respectful boating guidelines from Safe Quiet Lakes

1. I will never operate my boat beyond the level of my skills.
2. I will be aware of and obey all laws and regulations governing operation of my boat.
3. I will operate my boat with caution and courtesy to others at all times.
4. I will minimize my wake impact on shorelines, docks, structures and people.
5. I will always steer well clear of other boats, swimmers and wildlife.
6. I will set a speed and heading that is safe and comfortable for my passengers and others on the water.
7. I will provide safety instructions and offer appropriate life jackets or PFDs to everyone who travels in my boat.
8. I will carry all equipment necessary to operate my boat safely and within the law.
9. I will not consume alcohol in my boat or allow my boat to be operated by anyone who is impaired.
10. I understand that boating is a shared experience and I will not create excessive noise or operate my boat in a manner that disrupts the peaceful enjoyment of the lake by others.



BOATING SAFETY REQUIREMENTS (COPIED FROM TRANSPORT CANADA'S "SAFE BOATING GUIDE")

MINIMUM SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS BY BOAT TYPE AND LENGTH

NOTE: See page 19 for notes.

| BOAT TYPE AND LENGTH | PERSONAL LIFESAVING APPLIANCES | VISUAL SIGNALS | VESSEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT | NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT | FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paddleboats • Watercycles • Sealed-Hull and Sit-on-Top Kayaks | 1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board* 2. One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) 3. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long | If boat is over 6 m 4. One (1) watertight flashlight 5. Six (6) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2) | 6. One (1) bailer OR One manual bilge pump (See Note 3) OR Bilge-pumping arrangements | 7. One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance 8. Navigation lights (See Note 4) 9. One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) 10. One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) | None |
| *If everyone on board is wearing a lifejacket or a PFD of appropriate size, you are only required to carry: - 1) a sound-signalling device; and - 2) a watertight flashlight if the boat is used after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility. | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canoes • Kayaks • Rowboats • Rowing Shells • Other Human-Powered Boats | 1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board 2. One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) 3. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long | If boat is over 6 m 4. One (1) watertight flashlight 5. Six (6) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2) | 6. One (1) bailer OR One manual bilge pump (See Note 3) OR Bilge-pumping arrangements | 7. One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance 8. Navigation lights (See Note 4) 9. One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) 10. One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) | None |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sailboards • Kiteboards | 1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board* 2. One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) 3. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long | None | 5. One (1) manual propelling device OR One (1) anchor and at least 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination 6. One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump (See Note 3) | 7. One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance 8. Navigation lights (See Note 4) 9. One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) 10. One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) | None |
| *If everyone on board is wearing a lifejacket or a PFD of appropriate size, you are only required to carry: - 1) a sound-signalling device; and - 2) a watertight flashlight if the boat is used after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility. NOTE: Kiteboarders and sailboarders should not wear a lifejacket or PFD that is fitted with an automatic inflator. | | | | | |

| BOAT TYPE AND LENGTH | PERSONAL LIFESAVING APPLIANCES | VISUAL SIGNALS | VESSEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT | NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT | FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>• Personal Watercraft (PWC)</p> | <p>1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board*</p> <p>2. One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1)</p> <p>3. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long</p> | <p>4. One (1) watertight flashlight OR Three (3) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2)</p> | <p>5. One (1) manual propelling device OR One (1) anchor and at least 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination</p> <p>6. One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump (See Note 3)</p> | <p>7. One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance</p> <p>8. Navigation lights (See Note 4)</p> <p>9. One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5)</p> <p>10. One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6)</p> | <p>11. One (1) 5BC fire extinguisher</p> |
| <p>*If every person on board a personal watercraft is wearing a lifejacket or a PFD of an appropriate size, you are only required to carry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1) a sound-signalling device; - 2) a watertight flashlight or three pyrotechnic distress signals other than smoke signals; - 3) a magnetic compass if the personal watercraft is navigated out of sight of navigation marks; and - 4) navigation lights if the personal watercraft is used after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility. <p>NOTE: Lifejacket or PFD must be inherently buoyant.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>• Sail and Power Boats up to 6 m (19'8")</p> | <p>1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board</p> <p>2. One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1)</p> <p>3. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long</p> | <p>If boat is equipped with a motor</p> <p>4. One (1) watertight flashlight OR Three (3) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2)</p> | <p>5. One (1) manual propelling device OR One (1) anchor and at least 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination</p> <p>6. One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump (See Note 3)</p> | <p>7. One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance</p> <p>8. Navigation lights (See Note 4)</p> <p>9. One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5)</p> <p>10. One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6)</p> | <p>11. One (1) 5BC fire extinguisher if equipped with an inboard engine, a fixed fuel tank of any size, or a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance</p> |
| <p>• Sail and Power Boats over 6 m and up to 9 m (19'8" - 29'6")</p> | <p>1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board</p> <p>2. One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1)</p> <p>3. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long OR One (1) lifebuoy attached to a buoyant line at least 15 m (49'3") long</p> | <p>4. One (1) watertight flashlight</p> <p>5. Six (6) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2)</p> | <p>6. One (1) manual propelling device OR One (1) anchor and at least 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination</p> <p>7. One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump (See Note 3)</p> | <p>8. One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance</p> <p>9. Navigation lights (See Note 4)</p> <p>10. One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5)</p> <p>11. One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6)</p> | <p>12. One (1) 5BC fire extinguisher if equipped with a motor</p> <p>13. One (1) 5BC fire extinguisher if equipped with a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance</p> |

| BOAT TYPE AND LENGTH | PERSONAL LIFESAVING APPLIANCES | VISUAL SIGNALS | VESSEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT | NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT | FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>* Sail and Power Boats over 9 m and up to 12 m (29'6" - 39'4")</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long One (1) lifebuoy attached to a buoyant line at least 15 m (49'3") long | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) watertight flashlight Twelve (12) flares of type A, B, C or D, not more than six (6) of which are of type D (See Note 2) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) anchor and at least 30 m (98'5") of cable, rope or chain in any combination One (1) manual bilge pump (See Note 3) OR Bilge-pumping arrangements | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance Navigation lights (See Note 4) One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) 10BC fire extinguisher if equipped with a motor One (1) 10BC fire extinguisher if equipped with a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance |
| <p>* Sail and Power Boats over 12 m and up to 24 m (39'4" - 78'9")</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long One (1) lifebuoy equipped with a self-igniting light or attached to a buoyant line at least 15 m (49'3") long | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) watertight flashlight Twelve (12) flares of type A, B, C or D, not more than six (6) of which are of type D (See Note 2) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) anchor and at least 50 m (164'1") of cable, rope or chain in any combination Bilge-pumping arrangements | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) sound-signalling appliance. Two required if the boat is 20 m and over that meets the applicable standards set out in the <u>Collision Regulations</u> Navigation lights (See Note 4) One (1) magnetic compass that meets the requirements set out in the <u>Navigation Safety Regulations</u> (See Note 5) One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) 10BC fire extinguisher at all of the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at each access to any space where a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance is fitted; at the entrance to any accommodation space; and at the entrance to the machinery space. One (1) axe Two (2) buckets of at least 10 L each |
| <p>* Sail and Power Boats over 24 m (78'9")</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 30 m (98'5") long Two (2) SOLAS lifebuoys, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one (1) is attached to a buoyant line at least 30 m (98'5") long; and one (1) is equipped with a self-igniting light. Lifting harness with appropriate rigging | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) watertight flashlight Twelve (12) flares of type A, B, C or D, not more than six (6) of which are of type D (See Note 2) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) anchor and at least 50 m (164'1") of cable, rope or chain in any combination Bilge-pumping arrangements | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Two (2) sound-signalling appliances that meets the applicable standards set out in the <u>Collision Regulations</u> Navigation lights (See Note 4) One (1) magnetic compass that meets the requirements set out in the <u>Navigation Safety Regulations</u> (See Note 5) One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) 10BC fire extinguisher at all of the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at each access to any space where a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance is fitted; at the entrance to any accommodation space; and at the entrance to the machinery space. One (1) power-driven fire pump located outside the machinery space, with one fire hose and nozzle that can direct water into any part of the boat Two (2) axes Four (4) buckets of at least 10 L each |

Note 1 – Reboarding Device

A reboarding device is only required if the vertical height that a person must climb to reboard the boat from the water (freeboard) is over 0.5 m (1'8").

Note 2 – Flares

Flares are not required for a boat that:

- is operating on a river, canal or lake in which it can never be more than one (1) nautical mile (1.852 km) from shore; or
- has no sleeping quarters and is engaged in an official competition or in final preparation for an official competition.

Note 3 – Bailer and Manual Bilge Pump

A bailer or manual bilge pump is not required for a boat that cannot hold enough water to make it capsize or a boat that has watertight compartments that are sealed and not readily accessible.

Note 4 – Navigation Lights

Navigation lights are only required if you operate the boat after sunset, before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility (fog, falling snow, etc.).

Note 5 – Magnetic Compass



A magnetic compass is not required if the boat is 8 m (26'3") or less and you operate it within sight of navigation marks.

Note 6 – Radar Reflector

Radar reflectors are required for boats under 20 m (65'7") and boats built of mostly non-metallic materials. A radar reflector is not required if:

- the boat is used in limited traffic conditions, daylight and favourable environmental conditions, and where having a radar reflector is not essential to the boat's safety; or
- the small size of the boat or its operation *away* from radar navigation makes it impossible to install or use a radar reflector.

REMEMBER: Boating laws change from time to time, so make sure you have the most current information. If the *SAFE BOATING GUIDE* differs from the regulations, remember that it is always the current regulatory text that applies. To learn more about regulations, use the direct links in the **CONTACT INFORMATION AND REFERENCES** section of this guide.