

# ABCs

## OF THE CALIFORNIA BOATING LAW

2005



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
THE RESOURCES AGENCY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
BOATING AND WATERWAYS

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**TO THE CALIFORNIA BOATER:**

Each year, millions of boaters visit California's waterways seeking an enjoyable outdoor recreational experience. To ensure that boating in California is safe and enjoyable for everyone, it is important for all who use our waterways to know and abide by the regulations found in this book.

The more you know about boating and boating laws, the safer and more enjoyable your boating experiences will be. To order a boating safety course you can take at home, see the postcard in this pamphlet or visit [www.dbw.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.ca.gov).

California Boating Law applies to the operation of vessels on all waters within territorial limits, including coastal waters. California law, in general, does not replace the United States Coast Guard and other federal regulations in force on federally navigable waters, but is in general conformity with these laws.

The "ABCs of the California Boating Law" is based upon the California Harbors and Navigation Code, Vehicle Code, Penal Code and California Code of Regulations, but does not adhere to legal text. Not all provisions of law pertaining to boating are included. It is consequently not suitable for use in law enforcement or in litigation of any nature.

Through common sense, courtesy afloat, and sober boating, you can enhance the enjoyment and safety of our waterways.

Have a pleasant and safe boating season!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raynor Tsuneyoshi".

RAYNOR TSUNEYOSHI  
Director

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# PREPARATION

## EDUCATION

The Department of Boating and Waterways recommends taking a boating safety class offered by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadrons, or certain chapters of the American Red Cross. For more information on Coast Guard Auxiliary and Power Squadron classes call:

Toll-Free:

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary: (800) 869-SAIL(7245)

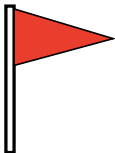
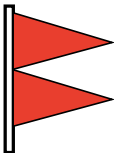
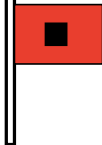





U.S. Power Squadrons: (800) SEA-SKIL (732-7545)

U.S. Coast Guard Customer Infoline: (800) 368-5647

The Department of Boating and Waterways offers a home study guide, California Boating Safety Course. For more information see postcard in centerfold. In addition, Aquatic Centers, operated by colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations throughout California, offer on the water boating safety courses for a number of different boating activities, including sailing, canoeing, kayaking, water skiing, and the use of personal watercraft. Please see our Website [www.dbw.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.ca.gov) under "education" for more information.

## WEATHER

Before you begin a cruise, check the local "weather and sea" conditions. Detailed information can be obtained by tuning in to local radio stations or the National Weather Radio broadcasts on frequencies of 162.400, 162.475, and 162.550 MHz in areas where available, or by consulting local newspapers.

STORM ADVISORIES				
<b>Daytime Signals</b>				
<b>Night Signals</b>				
	<b>Small Craft</b> Winds up to 38 mph	<b>Gale</b> Winds 39 to 54 mph	<b>Storm</b> Winds 55 to 73 mph	<b>Hurricane</b> Winds 74 mph and up

NOTE: In some areas, the display of storm advisory flags has been discontinued. Boaters should check current weather conditions before getting under way.

At selected locations in and near boating areas, storm advisories are displayed by flag hoists or lights. Coast Guard stations and many marinas no longer display storm advisory flags. Remaining display points are located at some park ranger stations, marinas, or municipal piers. A boater should become familiar with the display stations in the area and the meanings of the signals.

## EPIRB OR VHF MARINE RADIO LICENSING INFORMATION

For information on getting a license for a VHF marine radio or Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), contact the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) at (800) 418-3676 for forms, or (888) CALL-FCC for assistance.

## FUELING

Most fires happen after fueling. To prevent fires, follow these rules:

- Don't smoke or strike matches.
- Shut off motors. Turn off electric equipment.
- Close all windows, doors and openings.
- Take portable tanks out of the boat and fill them on the dock.
- Keep the filling nozzle in contact with the tank.
- Wipe up any spilled gas with petroleum-absorbent pads. Discard the pads in a safe manner.
- Ventilate for at least five minutes. Make sure there is no odor of gasoline anywhere in the boat.
- Periodically check the system for fuel leaks.
- Visually check for leaks, or fuel in the bilges.

## BOAT CAPACITY

Single-hull motorboats less than 20 feet in length which are manufactured after 1972 must display capacity and safe horsepower information. The maximum weight in persons, gear and motors is offered as a guide to boaters, and should not be exceeded. It is not a violation of federal or California state law to exceed recommended maximums. However, other states may cite an operator who exceeds capacity and horsepower limitations. Some insurance companies will not insure craft exceeding horsepower maximums and some boat manufacturers will void any applicable warranties for the same reasons.

## LOADING

It's the operator's responsibility that supplies be carefully loaded and all passengers be properly seated. Remember:

- Spread weight evenly.
- Fasten gear to prevent shifting.
- Keep passengers seated.
- Don't overload.

# CHECK LIST AND FLOAT PLAN

## CHECK LIST

Before embarking on a cruise:

1. File a float plan (see below)
2. Give consideration to basic safety items, including the following:
  - Vessel in good condition
  - Vessel properly loaded
  - Ample supply of fuel
  - Check weather reports
  - Compass and charts
  - Good anchoring equipment
  - Bailing Device
  - Spare parts
  - First-aid kit
  - Flashlight
  - Tools
  - Extra starting battery
  - Personal flotation devices  
(Coast Guard-approved)
  - Fire extinguishers  
(Coast Guard-approved)
  - Visual distress signals
  - Oars or paddles
  - Marine VHF radio
3. Cancel your "Float Plan" when you return

## FLOAT PLAN

### Operator

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Search for an overdue boat has a much greater chance of being successful if the Coast Guard or other rescue agencies have certain facts. For your own safety and before leaving on a cruise, complete this form and leave it with a reliable person who will notify authorities if necessary.

### If Overdue, Contact

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and phone number or rescue agency near point of departure

### Vessel

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Persons

\_\_\_\_\_

### Radio

\_\_\_\_\_

### Departure From

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Destination

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT: DON'T FORGET TO CANCEL FLOAT PLAN WHEN YOU RETURN**



# AIDS TO NAVIGATION

## LATERAL SYSTEM (FEDERAL)

The waters of the United States are marked for safe navigation by the lateral system of buoyage. The system employs a simple arrangement of colors, shapes, numbers, and light characteristics to show the side on which a buoy should be passed when proceeding in a given direction. The characteristics are determined by the position of the buoy with respect to the navigable channels as the channels are entered from seaward.

The expression “red right returning” has long been used by the seafarer as a reminder that the red buoys are kept to the starboard (right) side when proceeding from the open sea into port (upstream). Likewise, green buoys are kept to the port (left) side, (see page 8). Conversely, when proceeding toward the sea or leaving port, red buoys are kept to port side and green buoys to the starboard side. Red buoys are always even numbered. Green buoys are odd numbered. Red and white vertically striped buoys mark the center of the channel.

## UNIFORM STATE WATERWAY MARKING SYSTEM

Most waterways used by boaters are located entirely within the boundaries of the state. The California Uniform State Waterway Marking System has been devised for these waters. Examples of such aids are found on page 6.

The waterway marking system employs buoys and signs with distinctive standard shapes to show regulatory or advisory information. These markers are white with black letters and have orange borders. They signify speed zones, restricted areas, danger areas, and general information.

Aids to navigation on state waters use red and green buoys to mark channel limits. Red and green buoys are generally used in pairs. The boat should pass between the red buoy and its companion green buoy.

## MOORING TO BUOYS

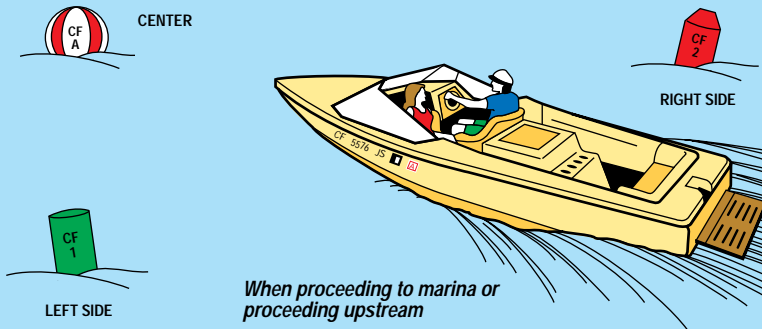
Tying up to or hanging on to any navigation buoy (except a mooring buoy) or beacon is prohibited.








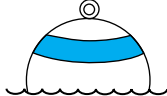
## AIDS TO NAVIGATION

In recent years, modifications to certain aids to navigation located on coastal and inland waters have been completed. These changes apply to aids used in both the lateral and state waterway marking systems. (See charts which follow.)

- Port-hand buoys are painted green, with green fixed or flashing lights.
- Starboard-hand buoys are painted red, with red fixed or flashing lights.
- Safe water buoys, also called midchannel or fairway buoys, and approach buoys are painted with red and white vertical stripes, with flashing lights.
- Preferred channel, or junction buoys, are painted with red and green horizontal bands, with flashing lights.
- Special marks (traffic separation, anchorage areas, dredging, fishnet areas, etc.) are painted yellow. If lighted, the light may be fixed or flashing.

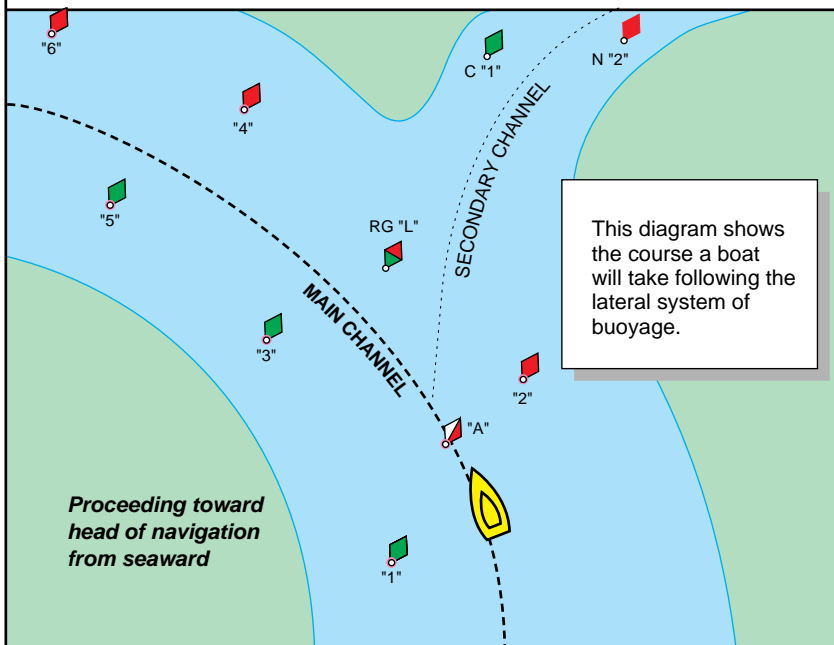
## CALIFORNIA WATERWAY MARKER SYSTEM INFORMATION AND REGULATORY MARKS



 <b>BOATS KEEP OUT</b> Explanations may be placed outside the crossed diamond shape such as: dam; rapids; swim area.	 <b>DANGER</b> The nature of danger may be indicated by words inside the diamond shape such as: shoal; reef; wreck; dam.	 <b>CONTROLLED AREA</b> Type of control is indicated within the circle such as: 5 MPH; No Anchoring	 <b>INFORMATION</b> For displaying official information such as: directions; distances; locations.
 <b>MARKER ON PILING</b>	 <b>MARKER ON SPECIAL PURPOSE BUOY</b>	 <b>DUAL PURPOSE MARKER ON LAND</b>	 <b>MOORING BUOY</b>

# FEDERAL CHANNEL MARKING SYSTEM

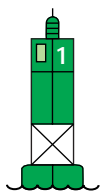
## LATERAL SYSTEM AS SEEN ENTERING FROM SEAWARD



## MAIN CHANNEL BUOYS

**PORT SIDE:**  
Odd number aids, green light only

FIXED	
FLASHING (2)	
FLASHING	
OCCULTING	
QUICK FLASH	
ISO	

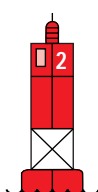


"1" "3" "5" "7"

**LIGHTED BUOY:**  
Odd number, increasing toward head of navigation, leave to port (left) when proceeding upstream.

**STARBOARD SIDE:**  
Even number aids, red light only

FIXED	
FLASHING (2)	
FLASHING	
OCCULTING	
QUICK FLASH	
ISO	



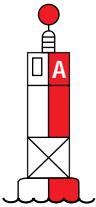
"2" "4" "6" "8"

**LIGHTED BUOY:**  
Even number, increasing toward head of navigation, leave to starboard (right) when proceeding upstream.

# MAIN CHANNEL BUOYS, CONTINUED

## SAFE WATER BUOY - MARKS MIDCHANNEL: No numbers - may be lettered, white light only

MORSE CODE (A) 



 "A"

LIGHTED AND/OR SOUND:  
Marks midchannel, pass on either side. Not numbered, may be lettered. Letter has no lateral significance, used for identification and location purposes.

UNLIGHTED

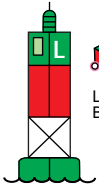


## PREFERRED CHANNEL BUOY: No numbers, may be lettered

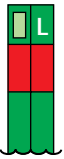
Topmost band denotes preferred channel. Letter has no lateral significance, used for identification and location purposes.

COMPOSITE GROUP FLASHING (2 + 1) 

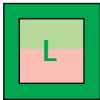
STARBOARD



LIGHTED BUOY "L"

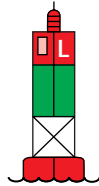


UNLIGHTED CAN "L"

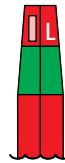


DAYMARK

PORT



LIGHTED BUOY "L"



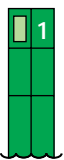
UNLIGHTED NUN "L"



DAYMARK

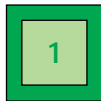
# SECONDARY CHANNEL BUOYS STARTS NEW NUMBERING SYSTEM

PORT



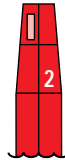
C "1"

UNLIGHTED CAN BUOY:  
Odd number, leave to port.



DAYMARK

STARBOARD



N "2"

UNLIGHTED NUN BUOY:  
Even number, leave to starboard.



DAYMARK

# INLAND RULES OF THE ROAD

## NAVIGATION RULES

The inland navigational rules, commonly called the “*Rules of the Road*,” govern the operation of boats and specify light and sound signals on inland waters in order to prevent collisions.

Existing law requires that a complete copy of the new inland navigational rules must be kept for reference on board all boats of 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) or more in length operating on inland waters. A copy of the *Navigation Rules International - Inland* booklet, which is published by the Coast Guard, may be ordered from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Attn: Customer Service, Washington, DC 20402.

There is a charge for this booklet. Please call (866) 512-1800 (Toll Free) for availability and price.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Nothing in the rules of the road shall exonerate the operator of a vessel from the consequences of neglecting to comply with the inland rules of the road, or from neglecting any precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen, or by the special circumstances of the case.

In construing and complying with the inland rules of the road, due regard shall be had to all dangers of navigation and collision and to any special circumstances, including the limitations of the vessels involved, which may make a departure from the rules of the road necessary to avoid immediate danger.

## NAVIGATION SIGNALS

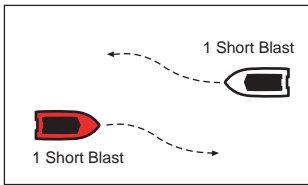
The law prescribes signals for vessels in sight of each other to indicate the intended course of a vessel when necessary for safe navigation.

- 
- One short blast (1 second) of the horn or whistle will show an intention to direct course of vessel to own starboard (right).
  - Two short blasts will show intention to direct course of vessel to own port (left).
  - Three short blasts will indicate the vessel's engines are going astern (in reverse).
  - Five or more short and rapid blasts is a danger signal used when the other vessel's intentions are not understood or where the other vessel's indicated course is dangerous.
  - Prolonged blast (4 to 6 seconds) will indicate situations of restricted visibility (see Fog Signals, page 12).
-

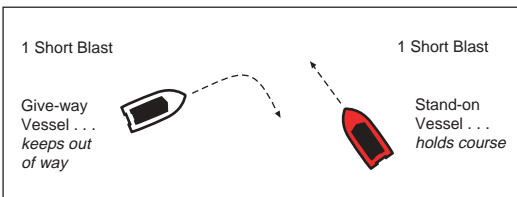
Motorboats should not use cross signals, that is, answering one blast with two blasts or two blasts with one blast.

## MEETING OR CROSSING SITUATIONS

When motorboats are in sight of one another and meeting or crossing at a distance within half a mile of each other, each vessel shall indicate its intended maneuver with the following signals: one short blast – *I intend to leave you on my port side*, or two short blasts – *I intend to leave you on my starboard side*, or three short blasts – *I am operating astern propulsion*. Upon hearing the one- or two-blast signal, the other vessel shall, if in agreement, sound the same signal and take steps to effect a safe passing. If the proposed maneuver is unsafe, the danger signal (five or more short and rapid blasts) should be sounded and each vessel shall take appropriate action until a safe passing agreement is made.

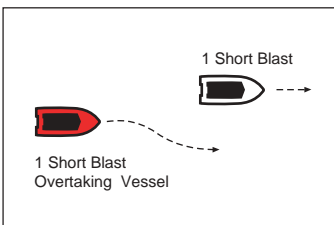


When meeting head-on, or nearly so, either vessel shall signal its intention with one short blast which the other vessel shall answer promptly. Both vessels should alter their course to starboard (right) so that each will pass to the port (left) side of each other.



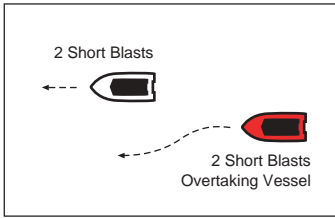
When crossing, the vessel which has the other on the starboard (right) side shall keep out of the way and avoid crossing ahead of the other vessel. The give-way vessel, the vessel

directed to keep out of the way, shall take early and substantial action to keep well clear of the other vessel (stand-on vessel). This latter vessel should hold course and speed. However, it may, as the stand-on vessel, take action to avoid collision by maneuvering as soon as it becomes apparent that the vessel required to keep out of the way is not taking appropriate action.



## OVERTAKING SITUATIONS

When two motorboats are running in the same direction and the vessel astern desires to pass, it shall give one short blast to indicate a desire to pass on the overtaken vessel's starboard. The vessel ahead shall answer with one blast if the course is safe.



If the vessel astern desires to pass to port of the overtaken vessel, it shall give two short blasts. The vessel ahead shall answer with two short blasts if the course is safe. If it is unsafe to pass, the vessel being overtaken should answer with the danger signal (five or more short and rapid blasts).

A vessel approaching another vessel from the stern and overtaking it shall keep out of the way of the overtaken vessel. The vessel being overtaken shall hold its course and speed.

## OTHER SITUATIONS

- A boat nearing a bend in a channel where vessels approaching from the other direction cannot be seen shall signal with a prolonged blast (four to six seconds), which shall be answered with the same signal by an approaching boat within hearing. Should such signal be answered by a boat on the farther side of the bend, then usual signals for meeting and passing shall be given upon sighting. If the signal is unanswered, the channel may be considered clear.
- Boats shall keep to the starboard side of narrow channels whenever safe and practicable.
- Motorboats leaving a dock or berth shall sound one prolonged blast.
- Motorboats shall keep out of the way of sailing vessels where courses involve the risk of collision.
- In narrow channels, do not hamper the safe passage of vessels, such as deep-draft liners and freighters, which can navigate only inside such channels.

## RULES FOR SAILING VESSELS

When two sailing vessels are approaching one another, so as to involve risk of collision, one of them shall keep out of the way of the other as follows:

- When each has the wind on a different side, the vessel which has the wind on the port side shall keep out of the way of the other.
- When both have the wind on the same side, the vessel which is to windward shall keep out of the way of the vessel which is to leeward.
- If a vessel with the wind on the port side sees a vessel to windward and cannot determine with certainty whether the other vessel has the wind on the port or on the starboard side, she shall keep out of the way of the other.

The windward side shall be deemed to be the side opposite to that on which the mainsail is carried or, in the case of a square-rigged vessel, the side opposite to that on which the largest fore-and-aft sail is carried. The international rules for sailing are the same as the above.

## FOG SIGNALS

The law also prescribes signals to identify vessels navigating in or near areas of restricted visibility.

Upon hearing a fog signal apparently forward of the beam, the operator should reduce speed to the minimum at which the boat can be kept on course, unless it has been determined by radar or other means that the risk of collision does not exist. If necessary, the operator should use reverse propulsion. In any event, navigate with extreme caution until any danger is over.

Motorboats:

- Making way through the water, sound, at intervals of not more than two minutes, one prolonged blast.
- Under way but stopped and making no way through the water, sound, at intervals of not more than two minutes, two prolonged blasts in succession, with an interval of about two seconds between them.

Sailboats or Vessels Not Under Command, Restricted in Ability to Maneuver, Towing or Pushing Another Vessel, or Engaged in Fishing with Nets or Trawling:

- Sound at intervals of not more than two minutes, one prolonged followed by two short blasts.

Boats at Anchor:

- Ring, at intervals of not more than one minute, a bell rapidly for about five seconds. In addition, one short blast followed by one prolonged and one short blast may be sounded to give warning of position and of the possibility of collision to an approaching vessel.
- Boats less than 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) in length may, instead of the above, make an efficient sound signal at intervals of not more than two minutes.
- Boats less than 65 feet 7 inches (20 meters) are not required to sound signals when anchored in a federally designated anchorage area.



## OPERATIONAL LAW

### PEACE OFFICERS

Every peace officer of the state, city, county, harbor district, or other political subdivision of the state is empowered to enforce California Boating Law. Such officers have the authority to stop and board any vessel where the peace officer has probable cause to believe that a violation of law exists.

Peace officers are also authorized to order the operator of an unsafe vessel to shore. A vessel can be ordered to the nearest safe moorage if an unsafe condition is found that cannot be corrected on the spot and where, in the judgment of the officer, the continued operation of the vessel would be especially hazardous.

Any vessel approaching, overtaking, being approached, or being overtaken by, a moving law enforcement vessel operating with a siren or an illuminated blue light, or any vessel approaching a stationary law enforcement vessel displaying an illuminated blue light, shall immediately slow to a speed sufficient to maintain steerage only, shall alter its course, within its ability, so as not to inhibit or interfere with the operation of the law enforcement vessel, and shall proceed, unless otherwise directed by the operator of the law enforcement vessel, at the reduced speed until beyond the area of operation of the law enforcement vessel.

### TRAILERING

It is against the law to tow a trailered vessel containing a passenger, except when engaged in launching or retrieving a vessel.

### STOLEN VESSELS

If a numbered vessel is stolen, the owner or legal owner should notify the local law enforcement agency as soon as possible. The owner shall also notify the local law enforcement agency if the vessel reported stolen is recovered.

### COUNTY AND CITY LAWS

In addition to state law, many counties, cities, and districts have special laws or ordinances which restrict activities in certain areas, prohibit certain acts at certain times, or establish additional requirements. These ordinances may regulate speed, set aside certain areas or hours for special purposes and prohibit acts which would be contrary to public interest. Boaters must comply with these local rules as well as with the state laws. Check with your local waterway operator for special laws or ordinances in your area.

## AGE RESTRICTIONS

No person under 16 years of age may operate a motorboat of more than 15 horsepower, except for a sailboat that does not exceed 30 feet in length or a dinghy used directly between a moored boat and the shore, or between two moored boats. The law allows persons 12-15 years of age to operate motorboats of more than 15 horsepower or sailboats over 30 feet if supervised on board by a person at least 18 years of age. A violation of these provisions is an infraction.

## SPEED

Speed is limited by law for certain conditions and areas. The maximum speed for motorboats within 100 feet of a bather (but not a water skier) and within 200 feet of a bathing beach, swimming float, diving platform or life line, passenger landing being used, or landing where boats are tied up is five miles per hour.

A safe speed should be maintained at all times so that: a) action can be taken to avoid collision and b) the boat can stop within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.

In restricted visibility, motorboats should have the engines ready for immediate maneuvering. An operator should be prepared to stop the vessel within the space of half the distance of forward visibility.

## CARBON MONOXIDE

It is a violation of California law to operate a vessel's motor or generator while a person is: (1) teak surfing, platform dragging, or bodysurfing behind the vessel, or (2) while someone is occupying or holding onto the swim platform, swim deck, swim step or swim ladder, **except** for a very brief period of time when a person is assisting with the docking or departure of the vessel, while exiting or entering the vessel, or while the vessel is engaged in law enforcement or emergency rescue activity.

Teak surfing or platform dragging means holding onto the swim platform, swim deck, swim step, swim ladder, or any portion of the exterior of the transom of a motorized vessel for any amount of time while the vessel is underway at any speed.

## RECKLESS OR NEGLIGENT BOAT OPERATION

No person shall operate any vessel or manipulate any water skis, aquaplane, or similar device in a reckless or negligent manner so as to endanger the life, limb, or property of any person. Examples of such operation include, but are not limited to:

1. Riding on the bow, gunwale, or transom of a vessel under way, propelled by machinery, when such position is not protected by railing or other reasonable deterrent to falling overboard; or riding in a position or manner which is obviously dangerous. These provisions shall not apply to a vessel's crew in the act of anchoring, mooring or making fast to a dock or another vessel, or in the necessary management of a sail.
2. Maneuvering towed skiers, or devices, so as to pass the towline over another vessel or its skier.
3. Navigating a vessel, skis, or other devices between a towing vessel and its tow or tows.
4. Operating under the influence of intoxicants or narcotics.

Other actions, such as speeding in confined or restricted areas, "buzzing" or "wetting down" others, or skiing at prohibited times or in restricted areas can also be construed to be reckless or negligent operation.

"Hit and run" - Any person involved in a boating accident resulting in injury, death or disappearance, who is convicted of leaving the scene without furnishing appropriate information to others involved or to any peace officer at the scene and/or rendering any reasonable assistance to any injured person, is liable for a fine of up to \$10,000 or imprisonment for up to one year, or both.

## INTOXICATED BOAT OPERATION

Alcohol is a factor in 24 percent of all fatal motorboat accidents in California. State law specifies that:

1. No person shall operate any vessel, water skis or similar device while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs. No person who is addicted to any drug shall operate any vessel, water skis or similar device.
2. No person 21 years of age or older shall operate any vessel, water skis or similar device who has .08% or more, by weight, of alcohol in their blood. A level of at least .05% but less than .08% may be used with other evidence in determining whether the person was under the influence of alcohol. A person under 21 years of age or older who has been arrested for operating a mechanically propelled vessel "under the influence" may be requested to submit to a chemical test to determine blood-alcohol content. Refusal may result in increased penalties upon conviction. A

person convicted of intoxicated boat operation could receive up to a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail.

3. No person under 21 years of age may operate a vessel, water skis or similar device who has .01% or more, by weight, of alcohol in their blood. Penalties may include a fine of up to \$250, and participation in an alcohol education or community service program.
4. If you are convicted of operating a vessel while intoxicated, the Department of Motor Vehicles may suspend or revoke your vehicle driver's license. Depending upon the number and type of vehicle and/or vessel violations accumulated, this suspension/revocation could be for up to 5 years, and result in fines of up to \$1,000.

## COURT-ORDERED BOATING EDUCATION

Any person convicted of any moving violation in the Harbors and Navigation Code, the Federal Rules of the Road and regulations adopted by the Department of Boating and Waterways while operating a vessel, shall be ordered by the court to complete and pass a boating safety course approved by the Department of Boating and Waterways.

Proof of completion and passage of the course must be submitted to the court within seven months of the time of the conviction.

## PERSONAL WATERCRAFT OPERATION

“Personal watercraft” means a vessel 13 feet in length or less, propelled by machinery, that is designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the vessel rather than in the conventional manner of sitting or standing inside the vessel.

Personal watercraft (PWC) are subject to the same laws governing the operation of motorboats of the same size. For proper display of registration numbers and stickers, see the Registration section of this booklet. For more information, see the Department of Boating and Waterways publication, *Safe Boating Hints for Personal Watercraft*.

Every person on board a personal watercraft (PWC) and any person towed behind a vessel **must wear** a Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III, or V life jacket. Exceptions: a person aboard a personal watercraft or being towed behind a vessel on water skis if that person is a performer in a professional exhibition, or preparing to participate or participating in an official regatta, marine parade, tournament or exhibition. In lieu of wearing a Type I, II, III, or V Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device, any person engaged in slalom skiing on a marked course, or any person engaged in barefoot, jump,

or trick water skiing may elect to wear a wetsuit designed for the activity and labeled by the manufacturer as a water ski wetsuit. A Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III, or V life jacket must be carried in the tow vessel for each skier electing to wear a wetsuit.

Lanyard/Self-Circling Device - The law requires a person operating a personal watercraft equipped with a lanyard cutoff switch to attach the lanyard to his or her person. Operating a personal watercraft equipped with a self-circling device is prohibited if the self-circling device has been altered.

Nighttime Operation Prohibited - The law prohibits the operation of personal watercraft at any time from sunset to sunrise, even if the PWC is equipped with the proper navigational lights.

Operator Age - It is an infraction for a person under 16 years of age to operate a motorboat of more than 15 horsepower, including personal watercraft. Any person who permits a person under the age of 16 to do so is also guilty of an infraction. A person 12 - 15 may operate a motorboat of more than 15 horsepower if supervised by a person on board who is at least 18 years of age.

Reasonable and Prudent Operation-California law holds that no person shall operate any craft in a reckless or negligent manner so as to endanger the life, limb or property of any person. Some examples are:

Navigating a vessel, skis, or other devices between a towing vessel and its tow or tows.

Operating under the influence of intoxicants or narcotics.

Jumping or attempting to jump the wake of another vessel within 100 feet of the other vessel constitutes unsafe operation. Other actions which constitute unsafe operation are operating a PWC toward any person or vessel in the water and turning sharply so as to spray the person or vessel; and operating at a rate of speed and proximity to another vessel so that either operator is required to swerve at the last minute to avoid collision.

## WATER-SKIING

When using a boat to tow a person on water skis or an aquaplane, there must be in the boat, in addition to the operator, one other person who can observe the person being towed. The observer must be at least 12 years of age.

Effective January 1, 2001, California law provides that any person being towed behind a vessel *must wear* a Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III, or V life jacket. Exceptions: the law does not apply to performers engaged in

professional exhibitions, official regattas, marine parades, or tournaments. Any person engaged in slalom skiing on a marked course, or barefoot, jump or trick water skiing, may instead wear a wetsuit designed for the activity and labeled by the manufacturer as a water ski wetsuit. However, for each skier who elects to wear a wetsuit, a Type I, II, III, or V life jacket still must be carried on board. Note: Inflatable personal flotation devices are not approved for use while water-skiing.

The towing of water-skiers from sunset to sunrise is prohibited by state law. Local laws may also restrict skiing at certain times during the day and in certain areas.

Water skis and aquaplanes must not be operated in a manner to endanger the safety of persons or property. Passing the towline over another vessel or skier is prohibited. Towing a skier or navigating between a vessel and its tow is prohibited. Towing a skier does not give the operator of the vessel any special privileges. The rules of the road must be observed.

Skiers being towed are considered to be persons on board for personal flotation device requirements. For more information on water-skiing, send for the free pamphlet titled "Safety Hints for Water-Skiing" from the Department of Boating and Waterways (see postcard in this booklet).

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## WATER-SKI FLAG



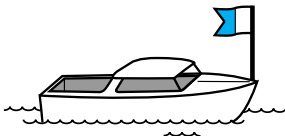
It is mandatory for the operator of a vessel involved in towing a skier to display, or cause to be displayed, a red or orange water-ski flag, to indicate:

- A downed skier
- A skier in the water preparing to ski
- A ski line extended for the vessel
- A ski in the water in the vicinity of the vessel

The flag must be no less than 12 inches on each side and be in the shape of a square or rectangle. The display of the ski flag does not in itself restrict the use of the water, but when operating in the area, boaters should exercise caution.

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## DIVING



*Required for use by vessels engaged in diving operations and restricted in their ability to maneuver.*

## ALPHA FLAG

Whenever the size of a vessel engaged in diving operations during daytime hours makes it impracticable to exhibit the daytime shapes required of a vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver, a rigid replica of the international blue-and-white code flag (Alpha) is required to be displayed. The flag must measure not less than 1 meter (3 ft. 3 in.) in height and must be visible all round the horizon.

For boats tending free-swimming divers where the diving does not interfere with the maneuverability of the boat, the alpha flag is not required and they may display the “divers down” flag.

### DIVERS DOWN FLAG

State law recognizes that a red flag with a white diagonal stripe – commonly called the divers down flag – indicates a person engaged in diving in the immediate area. Displaying the divers down flag is not required by law and does not in itself restrict the use of the water. When operating in an area where this flag is displayed, boaters should exercise caution.



*Recognized for use by persons engaged in diving.*

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## ACCIDENT REPORTING

Boat operators involved in an accident must provide their name, address and vessel registration number to other involved parties, provide assistance to any injured persons and, in case of a death or disappearance, report the accident without delay to law enforcement officials.

Boat operators or owners must also make a written report of a boating accident to the Department of Boating and Waterways when:

- A person dies, disappears, or is injured and requires medical treatment beyond first aid.
- Total damage to all vessels involved and other property is more than \$500 or there is complete loss of a vessel.

This report must be made within 48 hours of the accident in cases involving a disappearance, death that occurs within 24 hours of the accident, or injury that requires medical treatment beyond first aid. In all other incidents where a written accident report is required, the report must be made within 10 days of the accident.

An accident report form is contained in this booklet and may be used for such reports. Forms are available through most sheriff's and harbormaster's offices and many police departments. They may also be obtained by writing to the Department of Boating and Waterways. Failure to comply with the above requirements is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment up to six months, or both.



**BOATING ACCIDENT REPORT**

**INFORMATION: OPERATOR #1**

OPERATOR NAME AND ADDRESS		IS OWNER DIFFERENT THAN OPERATOR? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		OPERATOR EXPERIENCE		OPERATOR EDUCATION	
OWNER NAME AND ADDRESS				<input type="checkbox"/> UNDER 10 HOURS <input type="checkbox"/> 10 TO 100 HOURS <input type="checkbox"/> OVER 100 HOURS		<input type="checkbox"/> AMERICAN RED CROSS <input type="checkbox"/> USCG AUXILIARY <input type="checkbox"/> US POWER SQUADRON <input type="checkbox"/> STATE COURSE <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMAL <input type="checkbox"/> NONE	
AGE							

**INFORMATION: VESSEL #1**

THIS VESSEL ONLY	# INJURED	# DEAD	ESTIMATED DAMAGE	RENTED BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	# OF PERSONS ON BOARD	# OF PERSONS TOWED
BOAT NUMBER (CF OR DOC #)	MFR. HULL ID #	BOAT NAME		LENGTH		
BOAT MANUFACTURER	BOAT MODEL	YEAR BUILT	TYPE OF FUEL	# OF ENGINES	HORSEPOWER	
ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> RECREATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	FIRE EXTINGUISHER ON BOARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	FIRE EXTINGUISHER USED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS ON BOARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS ACCESSIBLE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS WORN <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
TYPE OF BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> OPEN MOTORBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> CABIN MOTORBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> PERSONAL WATERCRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> HOUSEBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> SAILBOAT (aux. engine) <input type="checkbox"/> SAILBOAT (sail only) <input type="checkbox"/> CANOE / KAYAK <input type="checkbox"/> RAFT <input type="checkbox"/> ROWBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	HULL MATERIAL <input type="checkbox"/> WOOD <input type="checkbox"/> ALUMINUM <input type="checkbox"/> FIBERGLASS <input type="checkbox"/> PLASTIC <input type="checkbox"/> RUBBER / VINYL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	PROPULSION <input type="checkbox"/> OUTBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> INBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> INBOARD / OUTBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> JET <input type="checkbox"/> SAIL ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> PADDLE / OARS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	OPERATION AT TIME OF ACCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/> CRUISING <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING DIRECTION <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING SPEED <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING SKIER / TUBER <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING SKIER- SKIER DOWN <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING ANOTHER VESSEL <input type="checkbox"/> BEING TOWED BY ANOTHER VESSEL SPEED _____ MPH			

**INFORMATION: OPERATOR #2**

OPERATOR NAME AND ADDRESS		IS OWNER DIFFERENT THAN OPERATOR? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		OPERATOR EXPERIENCE		OPERATOR EDUCATION	
OWNER NAME AND ADDRESS				<input type="checkbox"/> UNDER 10 HOURS <input type="checkbox"/> 10 TO 100 HOURS <input type="checkbox"/> OVER 100 HOURS		<input type="checkbox"/> AMERICAN RED CROSS <input type="checkbox"/> USCG AUXILIARY <input type="checkbox"/> US POWER SQUADRON <input type="checkbox"/> STATE COURSE <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMAL <input type="checkbox"/> NONE	
AGE							

**INFORMATION: VESSEL #2**

THIS VESSEL ONLY	# INJURED	# DEAD	ESTIMATED DAMAGE \$\$	RENTED BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	# OF PERSONS ON BOARD	# OF PERSONS TOWED
BOAT NUMBER (CF OR DOC #)	MFR. HULL ID#	BOAT NAME		LENGTH		
BOAT MANUFACTURER	BOAT MODEL	YEAR BUILT	TYPE OF FUEL	# OF ENGINES	HORSEPOWER	
ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> RECREATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	FIRE EXTINGUISHER ON BOARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	FIRE EXTINGUISHER USED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS ON BOARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS ACCESSIBLE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS WORN <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
TYPE OF BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> OPEN MOTORBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> CABIN MOTORBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> PERSONAL WATERCRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> HOUSEBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> SAILBOAT (aux. engine) <input type="checkbox"/> SAILBOAT (sail only) <input type="checkbox"/> CANOE / KAYAK <input type="checkbox"/> RAFT <input type="checkbox"/> ROWBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	HULL MATERIAL <input type="checkbox"/> WOOD <input type="checkbox"/> ALUMINUM <input type="checkbox"/> FIBERGLASS <input type="checkbox"/> PLASTIC <input type="checkbox"/> RUBBER / VINYL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	PROPULSION <input type="checkbox"/> OUTBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> INBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> INBOARD / OUTBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> JET <input type="checkbox"/> SAIL ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> PADDLE / OARS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	OPERATION AT TIME OF ACCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/> CRUISING <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING DIRECTION <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING SPEED <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING SKIER / TUBER <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING SKIER- SKIER DOWN <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING ANOTHER VESSEL <input type="checkbox"/> BEING TOWED BY ANOTHER VESSEL SPEED _____ MPH			

NAME OF PERSON COMPLETING THE REPORT _____		QUALIFICATION OF PERSON COMPLETING REPORT <input type="checkbox"/> OPERATOR <input type="checkbox"/> OWNER <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____
SIGNATURE OF PERSON COMPLETING THE REPORT _____		

# BOATING ACCIDENT REPORT

The operator of every recreational vessel is required by Section 656 of the Harbors and Navigation Code to file a written report whenever a boating accident occurs which results in death, disappearance, injury that requires medical attention beyond first aid, total property damage in excess of \$500, or complete loss of a vessel. Reports must be submitted within 48 hours in case of death occurring within 24 hours of an accident, disappearance, or injury beyond first aid. All other reports must be submitted within 10 days of the accident. Reports are to be submitted to the California Department of Boating and Waterways at 2000 Evergreen Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, California 95815-3888, (916) 263-8189. Failure to submit this report as required is a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1000 or imprisonment not to exceed 6 months or both.

DATE OF ACCIDENT (M/D/Y)		TIME OF ACCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	COUNTY	BODY OF WATER		LOCATION ON WATER					
# INJURED	# DEAD	TOTAL \$\$	LAW ENFORCEMENT ON ACCIDENT SCENE? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		AGENCY NAME						
WEATHER (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY): <input type="checkbox"/> CLEAR <input type="checkbox"/> RAIN <input type="checkbox"/> CLOUDY <input type="checkbox"/> SNOW <input type="checkbox"/> FOG <input type="checkbox"/> HAZY		WATER CONDITIONS <input type="checkbox"/> CALM (waves less than 6") <input type="checkbox"/> CHOPPY (waves 6"-2') <input type="checkbox"/> ROUGH (waves 2'-6') <input type="checkbox"/> VERY ROUGH (waves >6')		WIND CONDITIONS <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> LIGHT (0-6 mph) <input type="checkbox"/> MODERATE (7-14 mph) <input type="checkbox"/> STRONG (15-25 mph) <input type="checkbox"/> STORM (over 25 mph)		TEMPERATURE WATER VISIBILITY <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR <input type="checkbox"/> POOR		AIR STRONG CURRENT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
TYPE OF ACCIDENT (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY): <input type="checkbox"/> CAPSIZING <input type="checkbox"/> COLLISION WITH VESSEL <input type="checkbox"/> COLLISION WITH FIXED OBJECT <input type="checkbox"/> COLLISION WITH FLOATING OBJECT <input type="checkbox"/> FALL OVERBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> FALL IN BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____				CAUSE OF ACCIDENT (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY): <input type="checkbox"/> FIRE / EXPLOSION (fuel) <input type="checkbox"/> FIRE / EXPLOSION (other than fuel) <input type="checkbox"/> FLOODING / SWAMPING <input type="checkbox"/> SINKING <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCK BY BOAT / PROPELLER <input type="checkbox"/> SKIER MISHAP <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____				CAUSE OF ACCIDENT (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY): <input type="checkbox"/> IMPROPER LOOKOUT / INATTENTION <input type="checkbox"/> OPERATOR INEXPERIENCE <input type="checkbox"/> EXCESSIVE SPEED <input type="checkbox"/> MACHINERY FAILURE <input type="checkbox"/> EQUIPMENT FAILURE <input type="checkbox"/> IMPROPER LOADING <input type="checkbox"/> OVERLOADING			
<p><b>HAZARDOUS WEATHER / WATER</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> RESTRICTED VISION  <input type="checkbox"/> IGNITION OF SPILLED FUEL / VAPOR  <input type="checkbox"/> IMPROPER ANCHORING  <input type="checkbox"/> ALCOHOL USE  <input type="checkbox"/> FAILURE TO VENT  <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____</p>											

**DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED AND WHAT YOU COULD HAVE DONE TO PREVENT THIS ACCIDENT**  
(Explain the cause of death or injury, medical treatment, etc. Use sketch if helpful. If needed, continue description on additional paper.)

## VICTIM OR WITNESS INFORMATION

VICTIM / WITNESS NAME & ADDRESS	VICTIM / WITNESS STATUS	RIDING IN VESSEL #	AGE	INJURY DESCRIPTION	CAUSE OF DEATH	COULD VICTIM SWIM?	LIFE JACKET WORN?
	<input type="checkbox"/> INJURED <input type="checkbox"/> DEAD <input type="checkbox"/> WITNESS ONLY				<input type="checkbox"/> DROWNING <input type="checkbox"/> TRAUMA <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<input type="checkbox"/> INJURED <input type="checkbox"/> DEAD <input type="checkbox"/> WITNESS ONLY				<input type="checkbox"/> DROWNING <input type="checkbox"/> TRAUMA <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<input type="checkbox"/> INJURED <input type="checkbox"/> DEAD <input type="checkbox"/> WITNESS ONLY				<input type="checkbox"/> DROWNING <input type="checkbox"/> TRAUMA <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<input type="checkbox"/> INJURED <input type="checkbox"/> DEAD <input type="checkbox"/> WITNESS ONLY				<input type="checkbox"/> DROWNING <input type="checkbox"/> TRAUMA <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

# RADIO PROCEDURES - MARINE AND EMERGENCY DISTRESS

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## **SPEAK SLOWLY AND CLEARLY – CALL:**

**A.** If you are in distress (i.e., when threatened by grave and imminent danger) or are observing another vessel in distress, transmit the International Distress Call on Channel 16 “MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY THIS IS (state the call sign, or name if no call sign has been assigned, of the vessel in distress, spoken three times)”.

## **If aboard a vessel in trouble--state:**

1. WHO you are (your vessel's call letters and name).
2. WHERE you are (your vessel's position in latitude/longitude or true bearing and distance in nautical miles from a widely known geographical point; local names known only in the immediate vicinity are confusing).
3. WHAT is wrong.
4. Kind of assistance desired.
5. Number of persons aboard and the condition of any injured.
6. Present seaworthiness of your vessel.
7. Description of your vessel--length, type, cabin, masts, power, color of hull, superstructure, and trim.
8. Your listening frequency and schedule.

## **If observing another vessel in distress--give:**

1. Your position and, if possible, the bearing and distance of the vessel in difficulty.
2. Nature of distress.
3. Description of the vessel in distress (see Item 7 above).
4. Your intentions, course, and speed, etc.
5. Your radio call sign, name of your vessel, listening frequency, and schedule.

**NOTE: The international sign for an aircraft that wants to direct a surface craft to a vessel in distress is:** Circling the surface craft, opening and closing the throttle or changing propeller pitch (noticeable by change in sound) while crossing ahead of the surface craft, and proceeding in the direction of the vessel in distress. If you receive such a signal, you should follow the aircraft. If you cannot do so, try to inform the aircraft by any available means. If your assistance is no longer needed, the aircraft will cross your wake, opening and closing the throttle or changing the propeller pitch. If you are radio equipped, you should attempt to communicate with the aircraft on Channel 16 when the aircraft makes the above signals or makes any obvious attempt to attract your attention. In the event you cannot communicate by radio, be alert for a message block dropped from the aircraft.

**B.** If you need INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE FROM THE COAST GUARD (other than in a distress), call COAST GUARD on Channel 16 (The Distress and Calling Frequency). In this situation you will normally be shifted to a common working frequency (21, 22, or 23) allowing the DISTRESS frequency to remain open.

## **RADIO CHECKS:**

Do not use Channel 16 to call the Coast Guard merely for a radio check. Such use is prohibited by the Federal Communications Commission.

**NOTIFY THE COAST GUARD PROMPTLY AS SOON AS  
THE EMERGENCY TERMINATES**

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## FALSE SEARCH AND RESCUE CALLS

Any individual who reports to a state or local agency that an emergency exists knowing that the report is false is guilty of a misdemeanor. An emergency includes any condition which results in, or could result in, the response of a public official in an authorized emergency vehicle, vessel or aircraft.

It is a felony for any individual to report or cause any report to be made to any state or local government agency that an emergency exists, who knows or should know that the response to the report is likely to cause death or great bodily injury and such injury or death is sustained by any person as a result of the false report.

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# 85%

of the people who die  
in boating accidents  
would have survived if  
they'd been wearing a  
life jacket.



a message  
from  
Cal Boating



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[www.dbw.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.ca.gov)

## REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

Recreational vessels are required to carry specified safety equipment which may vary according to type of propulsion, type of construction, area and time of use, and number of people aboard. Unless otherwise noted, all required equipment must be Coast Guard approved and must be kept in good, serviceable condition, be readily accessible, and be of the proper type and/or size. Recreational vessels may carry extra equipment that is not Coast Guard approved—provided that the minimum requirements for approved equipment are satisfied. For equipment purposes, sailboats, canoes, rowboats, and inflatable rafts equipped with motors are considered to be “motorboats”. Requirements vary considerably for commercial vessels and vessels engaged in racing.

### SAILBOATS AND MANUALLY PROPELLED VESSELS

**Personal Flotation Devices:** Vessels less than 16 feet in length, and all canoes and kayaks, regardless of length, must carry one Type I, II, III, or V Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device for each person on board. They must be readily accessible and of an appropriate size for the intended wearer.

Vessels 16 feet and over, except canoes and kayaks, must have one Type I, II, III, or V Coast Guard-approved wearable device for each person aboard, plus at least one Type IV throwable device. The throwable device must be kept where it is immediately available. Wearable devices must be of an appropriate size for the intended wearer.

**Navigation Lights:** All vessels are required to display navigation lights between sunset and sunrise and during times of restricted visibility. In inland and international waters, sailing vessels under sail alone shall exhibit navigation lights shown on page 42. The tricolored lantern and the all-round green and red lights should *never* be used together.

A sailing vessel of less than 23 feet (7 meters) in length shall, if practicable, exhibit those lights prescribed, or have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision. A vessel under oars may display those lights prescribed for sailing vessels or have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.

**Sound Signaling Devices:** A vessel of less than 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) is not required to carry a whistle or bell, but must be able to provide some other means of making an efficient sound signal.

Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only): Boats less than 16 feet, manually propelled craft of any size, sailboats under 26 feet — of completely open construction and not equipped with propulsion machinery, and boats competing in an organized marine parade, regatta, race, or similar event are only required between sunset and sunrise to carry aboard devices that are suitable for night use (see page 43).

## MOTORBOATS LESS THAN 16 FEET IN LENGTH

Personal Flotation Device: One Type I, II, III, or V Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device must be carried for each person on board. They must be readily accessible and of an appropriate size for the intended wearer.

Fire Extinguisher: One Type B-I Coast Guard-approved fire extinguisher must be carried when no fixed fire extinguishing system is installed in machinery spaces. Extinguishers are not required for outboard motorboats less than 26 feet in length and of open construction. No portable extinguishers are required if an approved, fixed fire extinguishing system is installed in machinery spaces.

Backfire Flame Arrestor: A Coast Guard-approved backfire flame arrestor is required for inboard gasoline motors which are not exposed to the atmosphere above the level of the gunwale.

Muffling System: An effective muffling system is required for the exhaust of each internal combustion engine. Unmodified outboards usually meet legal requirements (see page 36).

Ventilation System: See page 36.

Sound Signaling Devices: A vessel of less than 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) must be able to provide a means of making an efficient sound signal but is not required to carry a whistle or bell.

Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only): Boats less than 16 feet of completely open construction and not equipped with propulsion machinery, and boats competing in an organized marine parade, regatta, race, or similar event are only required between sunset and sunrise to carry aboard devices that are suitable for night use (see page 43).

Navigation Lights: Navigation lights must be kept in serviceable condition and displayed between sunset and sunrise and at times of restricted visibility. For motorboats operating during these times, see page 40.

## 16 FEET TO LESS THAN 26 FEET

**Personal Flotation Devices:** One Type I, II, III, or V Coast Guard-approved wearable personal flotation device must be carried for each person aboard. They must be readily accessible and of an appropriate size for the intended wearer. In addition, the vessel must carry an approved Type IV throwable device which should be immediately available.

**Fire Extinguisher:** One Type B-I Coast Guard-approved fire extinguisher must be carried when no fixed fire extinguishing system is installed in machinery spaces. Extinguishers are not required for outboard motorboats less than 26 feet in length and of open construction. No portable extinguishers are required if an approved fixed fire extinguishing system is installed in machinery spaces.

**Backfire Flame Arrestor:** A Coast Guard-approved backfire flame arrestor is required for inboard gasoline motors which are not exposed to the atmosphere above the level of the gunwale.

**Muffling System:** An effective muffling system is required for the exhaust of each internal combustion engine. Unmodified outboards usually meet legal requirements (see page 36).

**Ventilation System:** See page 36.

**Sound Signaling Devices:** A vessel of less than 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) must be able to provide a means of making an efficient sound signal but is not required to carry a whistle or bell.

**Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only):** All boats 16 feet or more in length must carry devices aboard at all times. Boaters must carry: EITHER a) devices that are suitable for day use and devices suitable for night use, OR b) devices that can be used for both day and night use (see page 43).

**Navigation Lights:** Navigation lights must be kept in serviceable condition and be displayed between sunset and sunrise and at times of restricted visibility. For motorboats operating during these times, see page 40.

## MOTORBOATS 26 FEET TO LESS THAN 40 FEET

**Personal Flotation Devices:** One Type I, II, III, or V Coast Guard-approved wearable personal flotation device must be carried for each person aboard. They must be readily accessible and of an appropriate size for the intended wearer. In addition, the vessel must carry an approved Type IV throwable device which should be immediately available.

**Fire Extinguisher:** Two Type B-I or one Type B-II Coast Guard-approved fire extinguisher must be carried when no fixed fire extinguishing system is installed in machinery spaces. With a fixed system in the machinery space, one Type B-I fire extinguisher must be carried.

**Backfire Flame Arrestor:** A Coast Guard-approved backfire flame arrestor is required for inboard gasoline motors which are not exposed to the atmosphere above the level of the gunwale.

**Muffling System:** An effective muffling system is required for the exhaust of each internal combustion engine. Unmodified outboards usually meet legal requirements (see page 36).

**Ventilation System:** See page 36.

**Sound Signaling Devices:** A vessel of less than 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) must be able to provide a means of making an efficient sound signal but is not required to carry a whistle or bell. (See page 31 for vessels over 12 meters.)

**Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only):** All boats 16 feet or more in length must carry devices aboard at all times. Boaters must carry: EITHER a) devices that are suitable for day use and devices suitable for night use, OR b) devices that can be used for both day and night use (see page 43).

**Navigation Lights:** Navigation lights must be kept in serviceable condition and be displayed between sunset and sunrise and at times of restricted visibility. For motorboats operating during these times, see page 40.

## **MOTORBOATS 40 FEET TO 65 FEET IN LENGTH**

**Personal Flotation Devices:** One Type I, II, III, or V Coast Guard-approved wearable personal flotation device must be carried for each person aboard. They must be readily accessible and of an appropriate size for the intended wearer. In addition, the vessel must carry an approved Type IV throwable device which should be immediately available.

**Fire Extinguisher:** Three B-I or one B-I and one B-II Type Coast Guard-approved fire extinguishers must be carried when no fixed fire extinguishing system is installed in machinery spaces. With a fixed system in the machinery space, two Type B-I or one Type B-II extinguisher must be carried.

**Backfire Flame Arrestor:** A Coast Guard-approved backfire flame arrestor is required for inboard gasoline motors which are not exposed to the atmosphere above the level of the gunwale.



Muffling System: An effective muffling system is required for the exhaust of each internal combustion engine. Unmodified outboards usually meet legal requirements (see page 36).

Ventilation System: See page 36.

Sound Signaling Devices: Vessels 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) or more in length are required to carry a whistle and a bell.

Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only): All boats 16 feet or more in length must carry devices aboard at all times. Boaters must carry: EITHER a) devices that are suitable for day use and devices suitable for night, OR b) devices that can be used for both day and night use (see page 43).

Navigation Lights: Navigation lights must be kept in serviceable condition and displayed between sunset and sunrise and at times of restricted visibility. For motorboats operating during these times, see page 40.

## PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs)

The minimum requirements are:

- Except canoes and kayaks, all boats 16 feet or more in length: One wearable life jacket (Type I, II, III, or V) for each person on board and one throwable (Type IV) in each boat.
- Canoes and kayaks of any length and all other boats less than 16 feet in length: One I, II, III, or V PFD for each person on board.

Under state law, it is an infraction, punishable by a fine of up to \$250, to operate a vessel that is 26 feet or less in length unless *every child 11 years of age or younger on board is wearing a Type I, II, III, or V Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (life jacket)*. The law does not apply to:

- the operator of a sailboat on which every child under age 12 is restrained by a harness tethered to the sailboat, OR
- the operator of a vessel on which every child under age 12 is in an enclosed cabin.

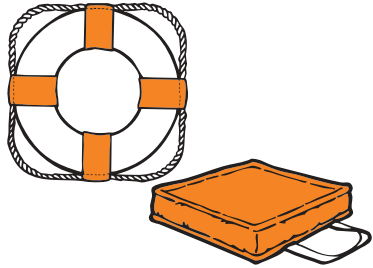
Inflatable PFDs - The U.S. Coast Guard approved inflatable PFDs in 1996. Only certain brands are U.S. Coast Guard approved and some are only appropriate for adults. Proper use of inflatable PFDs, including appropriate age limits, vary by manufacturer. Please review the owner's manual and information pamphlet carefully before purchasing an inflatable PFD. While activation upon impact is not a required feature, inflatables must be equipped, at a minimum, with both manual (pull) and oral (blow) inflation systems.

# PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs)



**Off-Shore Life Jacket  
(Type I PFD)**

Best in open, rough or remote water where rescue may be slow. Type I's float you best, turn most unconscious wearers face up in the water, and are highly visible.



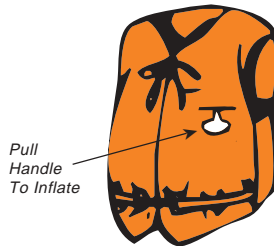
**Throwable Device  
(Type IV PFD)**

Use in calm inland water with heavy boat traffic where help is always nearby. Type IV's do not help unconscious persons, and are not designed for non-swimmers or children. Type IV's are not suitable for many hours in rough water.



**Near-Shore Buoyant Vest  
(Type II PFD)**

Good in calm, inland water, or where there is a good chance of fast rescue. Less bulk. Type II's will turn many, but not all, unconscious wearers face up in the water, but Type II's are not suitable for long hours in rough water.



**Hybrid Device  
(Type V PFD)**

High flotation when inflated. Good for continuous wear. However, may not adequately float some wearers unless this PFD is partially inflated. Type V's must be used according to approval conditions on label.



**Flotation Aid (Type III PFD)**

Good in calm, inland water or where there is a good chance of fast rescue. Generally the most comfortable PFD, Type III's are not good for use in rough water and the wearer may have to tilt head back to avoid face-down position in water.



They must be wearable (Type I, II, III, or V), not throwable-type, PFDs. Inflatables are not recommended for non-swimmers and are not intended for use while participating in tow sports, white water paddle sports or on personal watercraft.

In addition to the above requirements, all boats, powered or nonpowered, must carry at least one wearable Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device for every person aboard. PFDs bearing Coast Guard approval are identified by Types I, II, III, IV, or V. Coast Guard approval is shown by a stencil marking or tag on the PFD. This tag or marking shows the name and address of the manufacturer and the Coast Guard approval number. It also shows the amount of flotation in the device and the PFD Type (I, II, III, IV, V). Failure to have a sufficient number of approved devices aboard constitutes a violation of state and federal law.

California Boating Law requires that all Type I, II, and III PFDs must be readily accessible and all Type IV (throwable) PFDs must be immediately available. All PFDs must be kept in serviceable condition. If the PFD is badly torn, damaged, rotted, punctured or otherwise unserviceable, it no longer meets legal requirements and should be replaced.

*Every person on board a personal watercraft (PWC) and any person being towed behind a vessel must wear a Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III, or V life jacket, with exceptions (see "Water Skiing.")* Except for these requirements, the requirements for some Type V PFDs, and the requirements for children under age 12, California boating law does not require wearing life jackets while under way. However, it is highly recommended that all persons, especially non-swimmers, wear life jackets. All wearable life jackets must be of suitable size.

Non-approved devices such as ski belts may be carried aboard as excess equipment only. Buoyant cushions should never be worn on the back when in use.

## UNDERWATER MANEUVERING DEVICES

Persons using any underwater maneuvering device are exempt from wearing a personal flotation device. An underwater maneuvering device is any towed or self-powered apparatus designed for underwater use that a person can pilot through diving, turning and surfacing maneuvers.

For further details concerning the types and designs of PFDs, send for the free pamphlet titled "Safe Boating Hints For Personal Flotation Devices" from the Department of Boating and Waterways. (See postcard in this booklet.)



CARBON DIOXIDE  
EXTINGUISHER



HALON  
EXTINGUISHER



DRY CHEMICAL  
EXTINGUISHER

## FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Motorboats are required to carry readily accessible fire extinguishers accepted for marine use by the Coast Guard. The size and number of extinguishers accepted for use on motorboats depend on the size of the boat and whether or not there is a fixed extinguishing system installed aboard your boat. Fire extinguishers are not required for outboard pleasure boats less than 26 feet in length, not carrying passengers for hire, without permanently installed fuel tanks and which do not have spaces in which explosive or flammable gases or vapors can collect. (See Table A for specific requirements.) The minimum size approved for use aboard pleasure boats is the B-I size extinguisher.

All extinguishers must be readily accessible (preferably not stowed next to common fire sources), and they must be kept in a serviceable condition.

REMEMBER, the number required by law is only the minimum. Extra extinguishers provide additional safety.

An extinguisher is suitable for marine use when it bears either:

- A label that includes Coast Guard approval numbers, “Marine Type USCG,” or both markings.
- A label that states the extinguisher is listed with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and is suitable for marine use. It must be of the type and size described in Table B. UL-listed extinguishers must bear a UL rating of 5-B:C or higher. (All recently manufactured UL marine-type extinguishers will bear both the UL and Coast Guard label markings.)

All carbon tetrachloride extinguishers and others of the TOXIC vaporizing-liquid type, such as chlorobromomethane, are not approved and are not accepted as required fire extinguishers on any motorboats.

For further details concerning the types and designs for approved fire extinguishers, send for the free pamphlet titled “Safe Boating Hints for Fire Extinguishers” from the Department of Boating and Waterways. (See postcard in this booklet.)

## TABLE A - FIRE EXTINGUISHER REQUIREMENTS

Boat Length	Without fixed extinguishing system in machinery space	With fixed extinguishing system in machinery space
Less than 26 ft.	1 B-I	None
26 ft. to under 40 ft.	2 B-I or 1 B-II	1 B-I
40 ft. to 65 ft.	3 B-I or 1 B-II and 1 B-I	2 B-I or 1 B-II

## TABLE B - FIRE EXTINGUISHER CHARACTERISTICS

UL Listed extinguishers of the type and weight shown below may be selected to meet the type and size requirements for the corresponding Coast Guard classification (see Table A). For example, if a Coast Guard Type B, Size II extinguisher is required, a 10 lb. dry chemical extinguisher would be one of the equivalents. The following specifies only the minimum net agent weight. A larger extinguisher would be acceptable.

Coast Guard Classes	UL -Listed Equivalent	Dry Chemical lb.	Carbon Dioxide lb.	Halon 1211 / 1301 lb.
B-I	5-B:C	2	4	2 1/2
B-II	0-B:C	10	15	10

### MUFLING SYSTEMS

Any motorboat operated on the inland waters of this state, or coastal waters up to one mile from shore, must be muffled or otherwise prevented from exceeding the following noise levels when measured by the Stationary Sound Level Measurement Procedure for Pleasure Motorboats (SAE J2005):

- 90 dB (A) for engines manufactured before January 1, 1993.
- 88 dB (A) for engines manufactured on or after January 1, 1993.

All motorboat noises levels must be below 75 dB (A) when measured by the Shoreline Sound Level Measurement Procedure (SAE J1970).

Authorities generally agree that unbaffled exhaust pipes (stacks) do not meet any of the above noise level requirements.

### VENTILATION SYSTEMS

All motorboats or motor vessels, except open boats, made after 1940 and using gasoline as a fuel must have at least two ventilator ducts fitted with cowls or their equivalent for the efficient removal of explosive or flammable gases from the bilges of every engine and fuel tank compartment. If engine and fuel tank compartments are closed and separated, two such ventilation systems are required.

There must be at least one exhaust duct installed so as to extend from the open atmosphere to the lower portion of the bilge and at least one intake duct installed so as to extend to a point at least midway to the bilge or at least below the level of the carburetor air intake. The cowls must be located and trimmed for maximum effectiveness so as to prevent displaced fumes from being recirculated.

Boats built after July 31, 1980 that have a gasoline engine for electrical generation, mechanical power, or propulsion must be equipped with an operable ventilation system. A compartment containing a permanently installed gasoline engine must either be open to the atmosphere or ventilated by an exhaust blower system. The intake duct for an exhaust blower must be in the lower one-third of the compartment and above the normal level of accumulated bilge water. A combination of more than one exhaust blower may be used to meet specified requirements.

Boats equipped with outboard motors or inboard motors, not enclosed and of “open” construction, are exempt from ventilation requirements.

## BACKFIRE FLAME CONTROL DEVICES

Backfire flame control devices are designed to prevent open flame from leaving the carburetion system in the event of a backfire.

Vessels equipped with gasoline engines, except outboard motors, must have a backfire flame control device installed on the engine. These can be either:

- a Coast Guard-approved backfire flame arrestor, suitably secured to the air intake with flame-tight connection,
- a backfire flame arrestor marked “SAEJ-1928” or “UL 1111”, and suitably secured to the air intake with a flame-tight connection,
- an approved engine air and fuel induction system which provides adequate protection from propagation of backfire flame to the atmosphere, equivalent to that provided by an acceptable backfire flame arrestor, or
- a flame-tight metallic carburetor air intake attachment, located or positioned so backfire flames would be dispersed to the atmosphere outside the vessel. This latter device must be acceptable to the Coast Guard and be such that the flames will not endanger the vessel, persons on board, or nearby vessels and structures.

## MARINE SANITATION DEVICES

Federal law forbids dumping sewage, treated or untreated, or any waste derived from sewage, into the lakes, reservoirs, or fresh water impoundments of this state.

Federal regulations and equipment standards established jointly by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard govern the use of marine sanitation devices (MSDs).

It is a misdemeanor to disconnect, bypass, or operate a marine sanitation device (MSD) so as to discharge sewage into water, unless expressly authorized or permitted by law.

State law prohibits dumping any human waste in a marina, yacht harbor, fresh water lake, or fresh water impoundment, from any vessel tied to any dock, slip, or wharf that has toilet facilities available for the use of persons on the vessel.

A state or local peace officer who reasonably suspects that a vessel is discharging sewage in an area where the discharge is prohibited may board that vessel, if the owner or operator is aboard, for the purpose of inspecting the marine sanitation device for proper operation and placing a dye tablet in the holding tank.

## OILY WASTE DISCHARGE PLACARD

Federal law requires all boats 26 feet or longer to display an Oily Waste Discharge Placard in the engine compartment or near the fuel tank. For more information, call the U.S. Coast Guard toll-free boating safety information line, (800) 368-5647.

## MARINE POLLUTION PLACARD

Federal law now requires all boats 26 feet or more in length, when operating in waters under federal jurisdiction, to display an informational placard on the subject of the federal marine pollution prevention laws. Under the Marine Pollution (MARPOL) International Convention To Prevent Pollution From Ships, the discharge into the navigable waters of the U.S. of the following is prohibited:

- plastic, paper, rags, glass, metal, crockery, dunnage, or food in U.S. lakes, rivers, bays, sounds, and up to 3 miles from shore.
- any plastic, or any of the above items if not ground to less than an inch in size, between 3 and 12 miles from shore.
- plastic or dunnage 12 to 25 miles from shore.
- plastic outside 25 miles from shore.

The required placard details these prohibitions. The placard must be displayed in a prominent location where the crew and passengers can read it, must be at least 9 inches wide by 4 inches high, and must be made of durable material bearing letters at least 1/8 inch high. The placards can be purchased at marine supply dealers, or a free placard can be obtained by writing to the Department of Boating and Waterways, or by calling tollfree (888) 326-2822.

# MARINE POLLUTION (MARPOL) REGULATIONS

## LAKES, RIVERS, BAYS, SOUNDS AND 3 MILES FROM SHORE



### NOT LEGAL

Plastic and any garbage other than Graywater or Dishwater

### LEGAL

Graywater (drainage from shower, laundry, bath and wash basin drains), Dishwater (liquid drainage from manual or automatic washing of cooking utensils)



## 3 TO 12 MILES FROM SHORE



### NOT LEGAL

Plastic and if 1 square inch or larger: Food Waste, Paper, Rags, Glass, Crockery, Metal, Dunnage (lining & packing materials that float)

### LEGAL

Graywater, Dishwater, if ground to pieces smaller than 1 sq. inch: Food Waste, Paper, Rags, Glass, Crockery, Metal



## 12 TO 25 MILES FROM SHORE



### NOT LEGAL

Plastic and Dunnage (lining & packing materials that float)

### LEGAL

Graywater, Dishwater, Food Waste, Paper, Rags, Glass, Crockery, Metal



## OUTSIDE 25 MILES FROM SHORE



### NOT LEGAL

Plastic

### LEGAL

Graywater, Dishwater, Food Waste, Crockery, Metal, Dunnage (lining & packing materials that float)



## WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

All U.S. vessels 40 feet or more in length and equipped with a galley and berthing must, in addition, carry a Waste Management Plan, if the vessel operates beyond 3 miles from shore. The Waste Management Plan must be in writing, must designate the person who is in charge of carrying out the plan, and must describe procedures for collecting, processing, storing and properly disposing of garbage in keeping with the prohibitions described above.

## RUNNING LIGHTS - INLAND AND INTERNATIONAL

Operating a boat at night without lights is not only dangerous, it is against the law. Running lights make it possible for boat operators to properly interpret and react to the movements of other boats in darkness. *If a boat is used exclusively in the daylight hours, and not during periods of restricted visibility, running lights are not required.*

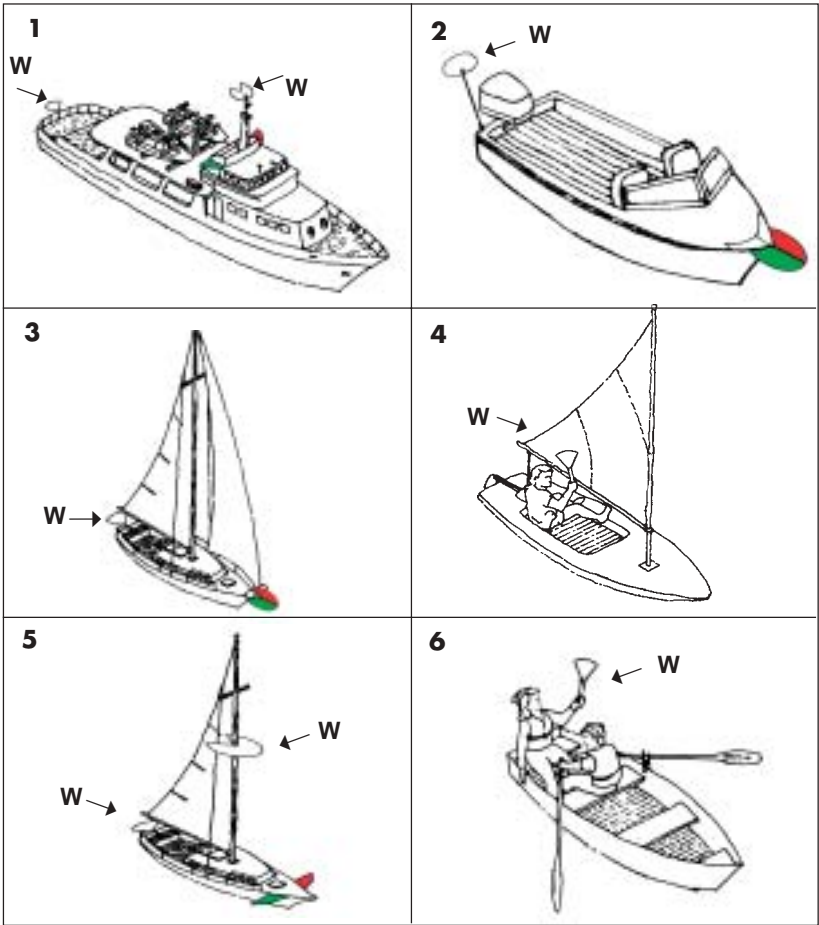
All vessels must show required running lights between sunset and sunrise and during periods of restricted visibility. Light requirements vary, based on vessel length and propulsion type. In most cases, requirements for a particular vessel are the same under both inland and international rules.

**Power-Driven Vessels:** A recreational powerboat under way is required to display a masthead light forward, red and green sidelights and a sternlight, as indicated in Figure 1. A recreational powerboat under 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) may instead display a 360° all-round sternlight and combination red and green sidelights (Figure 2).

**Sailing Vessels and Vessels Under Oar:** A sailing vessel operating under power of sail only must exhibit sidelights and a sternlight (Figure 3). A sailing vessel of less than 23 feet (7 meters) in length must, if practicable, exhibit sidelights and a sternlight or a lighted lantern showing a white light which must be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision (Figure 4). *A sailing vessel operating under machinery power only, or under power and sails, is considered a power-driven vessel, and must display the proper lights for a powerboat (Figure 5).*

A vessel under oars may: a) display those lights prescribed for sailing vessels, or b) have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which must be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision (Figure 6).

Boaters operating at night should be aware that there are other possible combinations of lights; the ones presented above are the most common.



**W=White**

## ANCHOR LIGHTS

An anchor light is an all-round white light exhibited where it can best be seen and is visible for two miles.

Power-driven vessels and sailing vessels at anchor must display anchor lights. Exceptions are: a) vessels less than 23 feet (7 meters) in length are not required to display anchor lights unless anchored in or near a narrow channel, fairway or anchorage, or where other vessels normally navigate, and b) vessels less than 65 feet 7 inches (20 meters) in inland waters when at anchor in a special anchorage area designated by the Secretary of Transportation are not required to exhibit an anchor light.

## VISUAL DISTRESS-SIGNALING DEVICES

Vessels operating on coastal waters must carry the required number of approved visual distress-signaling devices selected from Table C.

Coastal waters include: a) territorial seas and b) those waters directly connected to the territorial seas (bays, sounds, harbors, rivers, inlets, etc.) where any entrance exceeds 2 nautical miles between opposite shorelines to the first point where the largest distance between shorelines narrows to two miles. The carriage requirements for vessels operating on coastal waters are:

1. All boats 16 feet or more in length must carry devices aboard at all times. Boaters must carry: EITHER a) devices that are suitable for day use and devices suitable for night use OR b) devices that can be used for both day and night use.
2. Boats less than 16 feet; manually propelled craft of any size; sailboats under 26 feet of completely open construction and not equipped with propulsion machinery; and boats competing in any organized marine parade, regatta, race, or similar event are only required between sunset and sunrise to carry aboard devices that are suitable for night use.

**TABLE C - VISUAL DISTRESS REQUIREMENTS**

Boaters may select a group or any combination as long as it meets the specific requirement for their boat.

Number on Device	Device Description	Accepted use for	Number required to be carried
160.021	Hand red flare, distress signals	Day and night	3
160.022	Floating orange smoke distress signals	Day only	3
160.024	Pistol-projected parachute red flare distress signals	Day and night <sup>1</sup>	3
160.036	Hand-held rocket-propelled parachute red	Day and night	3
160.037	Hand-held orange smoke distress signals	Day only	3
160.057	Floating orange smoke distress signals	Day only	3
160.066	Distress signal for boats, red aerial pyrotechnic flare	Day and night <sup>2</sup>	3
160.072	Distress signal for boats, orange flag	Day only	1
160.013	Electric distress light for boat	Night only	1

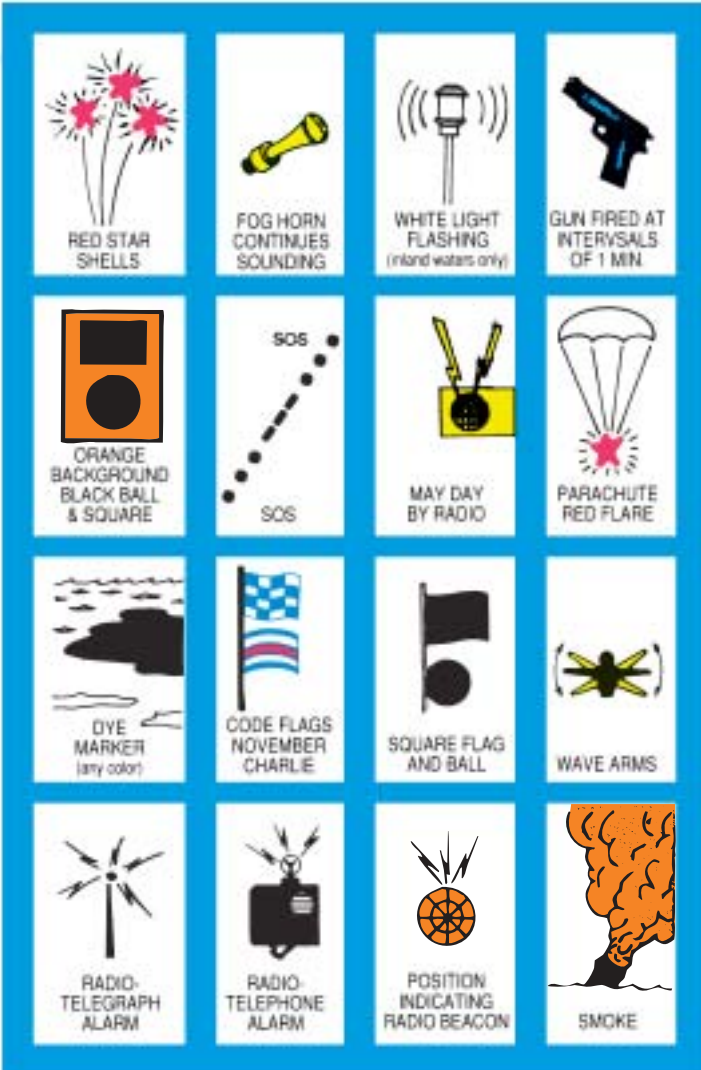
<sup>1</sup> These signals require use in combination with a suitable launching device approved under 46 CFR 160.028.

<sup>2</sup> These devices may be either self-contained or pistol launched, and either meteor or parachute assisted type. Some of these signals may require use in combination with a suitable launching device approved under 46 CFR 160.028.

All visual distress-signaling devices must be Coast Guard-approved, be readily accessible, and in serviceable condition. Devices carried aboard beyond the date stamped on each device will not meet legal minimum requirements.

## RECOGNIZED DISTRESS SIGNALS

The following are some of the signals that are recognized as indicating distress and need of assistance. On coastal waters, boaters must carry Coast Guard-approved visual distress-signaling devices (see page 43).



# RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Items  E = essential D = desirable	Less than 16 ft.			16 ft. to under 26 ft.			26 ft. to under 40 ft.			40 ft. to 65 ft.		
	Open waters	Semi-protected	Protected	Open waters	Semi-protected	Protected	Open waters	Semi-protected	Protected	Open waters	Semi-protected	Protected
Anchor, cable (line, chain, etc.)	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Bailing device (pump, etc.)	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Boat hook	-	-	-	D	D	D	E	E	E	E	E	E
Bucket (fire fighting/bailing)	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Compass	E	E	D	E	E	D	E	E	E	E	E	E
Distress signals *	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Emergency drinking water	E	D	-	E	D	-	E	D	-	E	D	-
Fenders	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
First-aid kit and manual (10- to 20-unit)	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Flashlight	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Heaving line	-	-	-	-	-	-	D	D	D	D	D	D
Light list	D	D	-	E	E	D	E	E	E	E	E	E
Local chart(s)	E	D	-	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Mirror (for signaling)	D	D	-	D	D	-	D	D	-	D	D	-
Mooring lines	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Motor oil and grease (extra supply)	-	-	-	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
Oars, spare	E	E	E	E	E	E	-	-	-	-	-	-
Radio direction finder	-	-	-	D	-	-	D	-	-	D	-	-
Radio, telephone	D	-	-	D	D	-	D	D	-	D	D	-
Ring buoy(s) (additional)	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
Shear pins (if used)	E	E	D	E	E	D	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depth sounding device, (lead line, etc.)	D	D	-	D	D	D	E	E	E	E	E	E
Spare batteries	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
Spare parts	E	D	-	E	E	D	E	E	D	E	E	D
Tables, current	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	D	D	-	E	E
Tables, tide	-	-	D	-	-	D	-	D	D	-	E	E
Tools	E	D	-	E	E	D	E	E	D	E	E	D

\* Distress signal devices are required on coastal waters on certain sized boats or during certain times.

## REGISTRATION

California law requires current registration of most vessels. This includes vessels that are moored, whether or not they are used. All vessels must be registered and numbered except:

1. Boats propelled manually.
2. Boats eight feet or less in length propelled solely by sail.
3. Certain vessels owned by public agencies.
4. Vessels documented by the Coast Guard.
5. Foreign vessels.
6. Ship's lifeboats used solely for lifesaving purposes.
7. Vessels having valid registration in the state of principal use and not remaining in California over 90 consecutive days.
8. Sailboards.

## HOW TO REGISTER

Application to register a vessel may be made at any office of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Upon receipt of the required information and fees, DMV will issue a Certificate of Number, a Certificate of Ownership, and a set of registration stickers. The boat registration number is the number (beginning with CF) shown on the certificates.

Upon registration, your vessel may be subject to Use Tax based on the purchase price if it is acquired out-of-state or from a private party. For additional information regarding Use Tax, contact your local Board of Equalization or DMV office.

The Certificate of Ownership is your evidence of title to the vessel and, therefore, should be kept in a safe place. Certificates issued will also contain the boat's identifying number (known as the hull identification number), which is the number permanently marked on the transom by the manufacturer or builder, or the number assigned by DMV and marked on the transom by the owner. The reverse side of the Certificate of Ownership is an application for transfer of ownership.

The Certificate of Number, or temporary Certificate of Number, must be available for inspection on the vessel whenever it is being used on the water. Proper display of the current registration stickers on the vessel next to the CF number is required to permit enforcement officers to determine, without boarding, that the vessel is currently registered.

## REGISTRATION FEES

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Original Registration (including stickers) .....	\$ 9.00
Renewal of Registration (two-year) .....	\$10.00
Renewal of Registration (for vessels purchased in even-numbered years) .....	\$ 5.00
Non-resident Original Registration .....	\$37.00
Boat Trailer Registration (initial) .....	\$20.00
Transfer of Ownership, Single .....	\$15.00
For each additional Transfer .....	\$15.00
Duplicate Certificate of Number .....	\$15.00
Duplicate Certificate of Ownership .....	\$15.00
Duplicate Set of Stickers .....	\$15.00
Repossession .....	\$15.00
Historical Vessel Plaque .....	\$20.00

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Although DMV is responsible for collection of biennial vessel registration fees, boat owners may still be subject to annual local county taxes. Boats are subject to personal property taxes assessed by the assessor in the county where your boat is principally located. Failure to pay personal property taxes assessed on a boat may result in the nonrenewal of the boat's registration. Questions concerning taxes on boats should be directed to the assessor of that particular county.

## DISPLAY OF NUMBERS AND STICKERS

Numbers and stickers issued at the time of registration must be placed on each side of the forward half of the vessel, usually on the bow, in the manner indicated below. If placement of a number on a flared bow would result in difficult reading, the number should be placed on some other part of the forward half of the vessel where it can be easily read.

For personal watercraft, the numbers and stickers must also be affixed on each side of the forward half of the vessel on a non-removable portion of the hull.



On inflatable boats or vessels so configured that a number will not properly adhere or cannot be clearly seen, the number should be painted on or attached to a backing plate along with the registration sticker. The registration stickers must be securely affixed 3 in. aft of, and in line with, the registration numbers. The number must be visible from each side of the vessel. No other numbers, letters, or devices may be placed in the vicinity of the state-assigned number.

To separate the numerals from the letters, spaces the width of the letter "C" or hyphens may be used between the prefix and the number, and between the number and the suffix. Letters and numerals must be at least three inches high, of block character, and of a color which will form a good contrast with the color of the hull or backing plate. In determining height and contrast, any border, trim, outlining, or shading around the number shall not be considered.

### CORRECT DISPLAY OF NUMBER

#### REGISTRATION STICKER



### NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The owner is required to notify DMV in writing whenever any of the following takes place:

1. The vessel has been destroyed or abandoned. This notice must be given within 15 days and be accompanied by the Certificate of Number and Certificate of Ownership.
2. The owner's address has been changed. This notice must be given within 15 days.
3. The vessel is sold. This notice must be provided within five calendar days and must include date of sale, a description of the vessel and name and address of the new owner.

Registration forms may be obtained from any local DMV office or authorized registration agent or by writing:

Department of Motor Vehicles  
Registration Processing Units  
P.O. Box 942869  
Sacramento, CA 94269-0001



**Changes in California Boating Law**  
**Effective January 1, 2005, California boating law specifies that:**

**CARBON MONOXIDE**

It is a violation of California law to operate a vessel's motor or generator while a person is: (1) teak surfing, platform dragging, or bodysurfing behind the vessel, or (2) while someone is occupying or holding onto the swim platform, swim deck, swim step or swim ladder, except for a very brief period of time when a person is assisting with the docking or departure of the vessel, while exiting or entering the vessel, or while the vessel is engaged in law enforcement or emergency rescue activity.

Teak surfing or platform dragging means holding onto the swim platform, swim deck, swim step, swim ladder, or any portion of the exterior of the transom of a motorized vessel for any amount of time while the vessel is underway at any speed.

**MOTORBOAT NOISE**

California's Motorboat Noise Law is extended to include coastal waters up to one mile from shore. In addition, new testing procedures (SAE J2005 and SAE J1970) will be used by peace officers to test motorboat noise levels. The new noise limits are not more restrictive than previous law, but allow for easier and safer testing.



# California Boating Safety Course

## A Guide to Better Boating

The Department of Boating and Waterways has available for the whole family a free home study boating safety course. The course, which includes a colorful handbook, can be completed at your own pace. Upon successful completion of the final examination (optional), a state certificate will be sent to you.

To get your copy, fill in your name and address below, affix postage on reverse and mail. Note: With each book ordered, two people can take the exam, as two answer cards are provided.

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### Free Boating Publications

The Department of Boating and Waterways publishes a series of free boating pamphlets. Fill in the quantity desired for each title you order, your name and address, and affix stamp. Large orders must have a street address, not a P.O. Box. Allow one month for delivery. Or, visit our website [www.dbw.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.ca.gov) to view our publications or order them on-line.

#### No. Copies

- ABCs Of The California Boating Law
- AquaSMART Activity Book for Kids (*English*)
- AquaSMART Activity Book for Kids (*Spanish*)
- BUI Information Card
- Basic Safety Rules For Boating Sticker
- Boater Alert: Hydrilla
- Boater's Pumpout Map & Guide - San Francisco Bay
- Boater's Pumpout Map & Guide - Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta
- Boating Education Class List
- Boating Films, Videos, Slide And Sound Catalog
- Boating Safety Card
- Boating Safety and Environmental Hints for Lake Tahoe

#### Boating Trail Guide Series:

- American River, North and Middle Forks
- American River, South Fork
- American River Parkway, Nimbus Dam to Sacramento River
- Colorado River, Blythe to Imperial Dam
- Colorado River, Davis Dam to Parker Dam
- Kern River, Upper and Lower
- Merced River, Bagby to El Portal
- Sacramento River, Redding to Woodson Bridge
- Sacramento River, Woodson Bridge to Colusa
- Smith River
- Tuolumne River, Don Pedro Dam to Yosemite National Park
- Trinity River

- California Boating Safety Course
- Chart Agents List (*Limit: 1 per order*)
- Clean Boating Habits
- Drowning Prevention Checklist
- Facts About Boating And Alcohol
- Facts About Boating Safety Classes

#### No. Copies

- Facts About Marine Pollution Laws
- How to Buy a Used Boat
- Marine Security
- Quiet Boating For Everyone
- Rescue Breathing Card

#### Safe Boating Hints Series:

- Lakes And Reservoirs
- Colorado River
- Delta
- Fire Extinguishers
- Hunters And Fishermen
- Morro Bay
- Northern Coast
- Paddle Craft
- Personal Flotation Devices
- Personal Watercraft
- Sacramento River
- Salton Sea
- San Francisco Bay

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- Southern Coast
- Safety Hints For Water-Skiing
- Safety Hints For Windsurfing
- Tomales Bay
- Towing Tips For Trailer Sailors

- Shipshape Sanitation, MSDs and Pumpouts

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