

the **HANDBOOK!**

OF **TENNESSEE BOATING LAWS** AND **RESPONSIBILITIES**

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2011 EDITION

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Where To Find Additional Information

This handbook is a guide to Tennessee boating laws for recreational boaters.

- ◆ To stay up-to-date on new boating laws, call the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency at **615-781-6682** or visit our website at: **www.tn.gov/twra/boatmain.html**
- ◆ For federal boating laws, visit the U.S. Coast Guard's boating safety website: **www.uscgboating.org**

Information in this handbook does not replace what is specifically legal for boating in Tennessee, which is found in the Tennessee Boating Safety Act and federal laws.

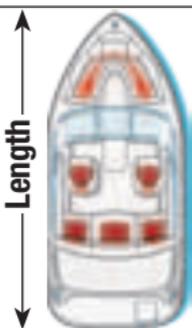
Before Going Out

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

Vessel Length Classes

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

Inboards



Outboards



Vessel Capacity

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

Fueling a Vessel

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

◆ **Before beginning to fuel:**

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

◆ **While filling the fuel tank:**

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

The most important safe fueling practice ...

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

◆ **After fueling:**

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

Additional Safety Procedures for PWCs

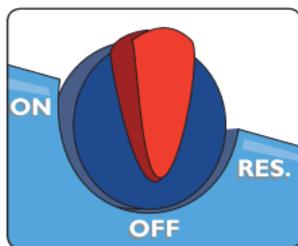
- ◆ Do not tip the PWC in order to fill it all the way up. If the tank is overfilled, the fuel may expand and spill into the water.
- ◆ After fueling, open the door of the engine compartment and sniff to check for any evidence of gas fumes. Do this before starting the engine. If you do smell gas fumes,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



Fuel Selector Switch on a PWC

This switch can help you avoid becoming stranded without fuel.

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



Preventing Theft

Defend against theft of your vessel and equipment.

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

Filing a Float Plan

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

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

Pre-Departure Checklist

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

- ✓ Check the weather forecast for the area and timeframe during which you will be boating.
- ✓ Make sure that the steering and throttle controls operate properly and all lights are working properly.
- ✓ Check for any fuel leaks from the tank, fuel lines, and carburetor.
- ✓ Check the engine compartment for oil leaks.
- ✓ Check hose connections for leaks or cracks, and make sure hose clamps are tight.
- ✓ Drain all water from the engine compartment, and be sure the bilge plug is replaced and secure.
- ✓ Check to be sure you have a fully charged engine battery and fire extinguishers.
- ✓ If so equipped, make sure the ignition safety switch and wrist lanyard are in good order.
- ✓ Make sure you have the required number of personal flotation devices (PFDs), and check that they are in good condition.
- ✓ Leave a float plan with a reliable friend or relative.

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

Encountering Other Vessels

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

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

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

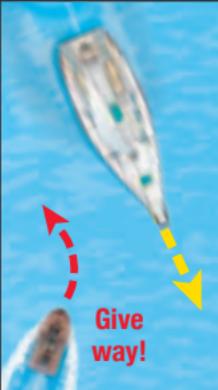
Encountering Vessels With Limited Maneuverability

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

Navigation Rules

There are two terms that help explain these rules.

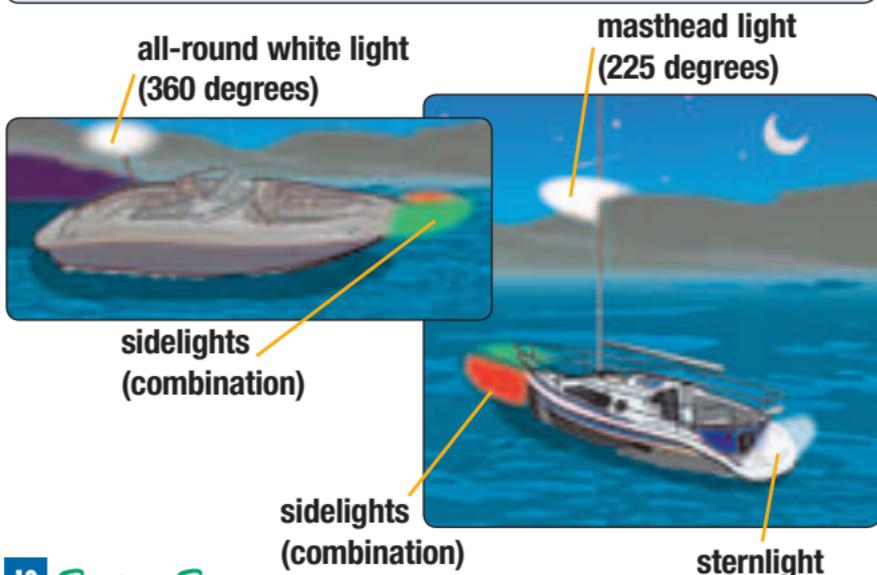
- ◆ **Stand-on vessel:** The vessel that should maintain its course and speed
- ◆ **Give-way vessel:** The vessel that must take early and substantial action to avoid collision by stopping, slowing down, or changing course

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

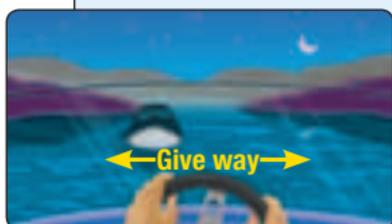
Nighttime Navigation

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

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



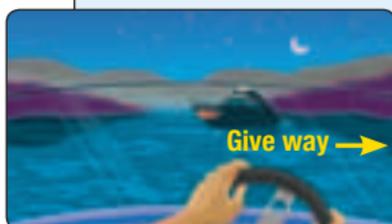
Encountering Vessels at Night



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



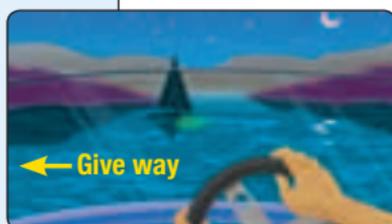
When you see a green and a white light, you are the stand-on vessel. However, remain alert in case the other vessel operator does not see you or does not know the navigation rules.



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

Encountering a Sailboat at Night

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



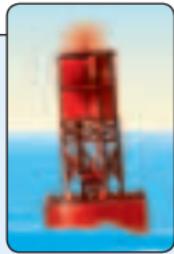
U.S. Aids to Navigation System (ATON)

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

Lateral Markers

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

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



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

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



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

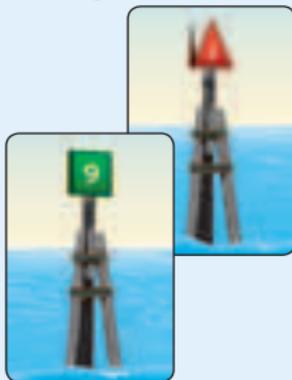


Cans are green cylindrical-shaped buoys marked with odd numbers.



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

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



Red Right Returning

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

Western Rivers System

This system of markers is used on the Mississippi River and its tributaries above Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and on some other rivers that flow toward the Gulf of Mexico. The major difference from the U.S. Aids to Navigation System's lateral markers is that navigation markers on the Western Rivers System are not numbered. The numbers that are displayed below the daymark shape are not associated with the right or left side of the channel. On the Western Rivers System, these numbers indicate distance from a river mouth.



Non-Lateral Markers

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

Mooring Buoy

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





Information

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



Controlled

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



Exclusion

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

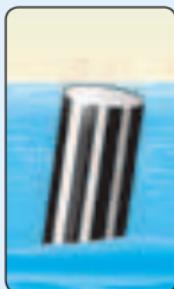


Danger

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

Other Non-Lateral Markers

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



Inland Waters Obstruction

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

Weather Emergencies

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

What To Do If Caught in Severe Weather

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

- If the engine stops, drop a “sea anchor” on a line off the bow to keep the bow headed into the wind and reduce drifting while you ride out the storm. In an emergency, a bucket will work as a sea anchor.
- If the sea anchor is not sufficient, anchor using your conventional anchor to prevent your boat from drifting into dangerous areas.

VHF Frequencies Broadcasting NOAA Weather Reports

162.400 MHz	162.450 MHz	162.500 MHz	162.550 MHz
162.425 MHz	162.475 MHz	162.525 MHz	

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

Channel 6 Intership safety communications.

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

Channel 13 Navigational use by commercial, military, and recreational vessels at bridges, locks, and harbors.

Channel 16 Distress and safety calls to U.S. Coast Guard and others, and to initiate calls to other vessels; often called the “hailing” channel. (Some regions use other channels as the hailing channel.) When hailing, contact the other vessel, quickly agree to another channel, and then switch to that channel to continue conversation.

Channel 22 Communications between the U.S. Coast Guard and the maritime public, both recreational and commercial. Severe weather warnings, hazards to navigation, and other safety warnings are broadcast on this channel.

Channels 24-28 Public telephone calls (to marine operator).

Channels 68, 69, and 71 Recreational vessel radio channels and ship to coast.

Channel 70 Digital selective calling “alert channel.”

Other Boating Emergencies

A safe boater knows how to prevent and respond to other boating emergencies.

Falling Overboard

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

Capsizing or Swamping

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

Hypothermia

◆ If you are boating in cold water:

- Dress in several layers of clothing under your PFD or wear a wetsuit or drysuit.
- Learn to recognize the symptoms of hypothermia. Symptoms begin with shivering and bluish lips and nails, and progress to a coma and, ultimately, death.

◆ To reduce the effects of hypothermia:

- Put on a PFD if not wearing one. It helps you to float without excessive movement and insulates your body.
- Get as much of your body out of the water as possible.
- Don't take your clothes off unless necessary—clothes can help you float and provide insulation.
- Don't thrash or move about. Excess motion consumes energy and increases loss of body heat.
- Draw your knees to your chest and your arms to your sides, protecting the major areas of heat loss.
- If others are in the water with you, huddle together with your arms around their shoulders.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

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

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



Specifically for PWCs

Although a personal watercraft (PWC) is considered an inboard vessel and comes under the same rules and requirements of any other vessel, there are specific considerations for the PWC operator.

Steering and Stopping a PWC

steering control



steering nozzle

- ◆ PWCs are propelled by drawing water into a pump and then forcing it out under pressure through a steering nozzle at the back of the unit. This “jet” of pressurized water is directed by the steering control—when the steering control is turned, the steering nozzle turns in the same direction. For example, if the steering control is turned right, the nozzle turns right and the jet of water pushes the back of the vessel to the left, which causes the PWC to turn right.

Remember—no power means no steering control ...

Most PWCs and other jet-drive vessels must have power in order to maintain control. If you allow the engine on these PWCs to return to idle or shut off during operation, you lose all steering control. The PWC will continue in the direction it was headed before the engine was shut off, no matter which way the steering control is turned. New PWCs allow for off-throttle steering.

- ◆ **Most PWCs do not have brakes.** Always allow plenty of room for stopping. Just because you release the throttle or shut off the engine does not mean you will stop immediately. Even PWCs that have a braking system do not stop immediately.

Ignition Safety Switches

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



Reboarding a Capsized PWC

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

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



Courtesy When Encountering Other Vessels

- ◆ Jumping the wake of a passing boat, or riding too close to another PWC or boat, creates risks and is restricted or even prohibited in some states. The vessel making the wake may block the PWC operator's view of oncoming traffic and also conceal the PWC operator from approaching vessels.
- ◆ Excessive noise from PWCs often makes them unwelcome with other vessel operators and people on shore. Be a courteous PWC operator.
 - Vary your operating area, and do not keep repeating the same maneuver.
 - Avoid congregating with other PWC operators near shore, which increases annoying noise levels.
 - Avoid making excessive noise near residential and camping areas, particularly early in the morning.
 - Avoid maneuvers that cause the engine exhaust to lift out of the water because that increases noise levels.
 - Do not modify your engine exhaust system if it increases the noise. Improperly modified exhausts will not make your PWC faster and may raise the noise to an illegal level.

Environmental Considerations

When operating your personal watercraft, consider the effect you may have on the environment.

- ◆ Make sure that the water you operate in is at least 30 inches deep. Riding in shallow water can cause bottom sediments or aquatic vegetation to be sucked into the pump, damaging your PWC and the environment.



- ◆ Avoid causing erosion by operating at slow speed and by not creating a wake when operating near shore or in narrow streams or rivers.
- ◆ Do not dock or beach your PWC in reeds and grasses. This could damage fragile environments.
- ◆ Take extra care when fueling your PWC in or near the water. Oil and gasoline spills are very detrimental to the aquatic environment. Fuel on land if possible.
- ◆ Never use your PWC to disturb, chase, or harass wildlife.

Other PWC Considerations

- ◆ Remember that everyone on board a PWC must wear a life jacket (PFD).
- ◆ Keep hands, feet, loose clothing, and hair away from the pump intake area. Before cleaning debris away from the pump intake, be sure to shut off the engine.
- ◆ Keep everyone clear of the steering nozzle unless the PWC is shut off. The water jet can cause severe injuries.
- ◆ Frequently inspect your PWC's electrical systems (e.g., starter and engine gauge connections) to ensure there is no potential for electrical spark. Gas fumes could collect in the engine compartment and an explosion could occur. After fueling, sniff the engine compartment for any evidence of gas fumes.
- ◆ Never exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity for your PWC.
- ◆ Know your limits, and ride according to your abilities.
- ◆ See page 45 for other requirements specific to PWCs.



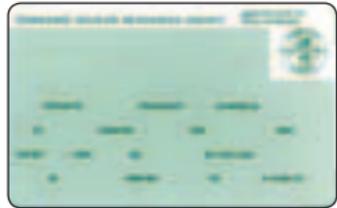
Before Going Out



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

Registering Your Vessel

- ◆ You must have a Tennessee Certificate of Number (registration card) and validation decals to operate your vessel legally on public waters in Tennessee. The only exceptions are:
 - Vessels propelled only by paddles or oars
 - Vessels registered in other states and using Tennessee waters for 60 days or less
- ◆ *The Certificate of Number must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is operated.*
- ◆ The registration number and validation decals must be displayed as follows.
 - Number must be painted, applied as a decal, or otherwise affixed to both sides of the bow where no other number may be displayed.
 - Number must read from left to right on both sides of the bow.
 - Number must be in at least three-inch-high, plain, vertical **BLOCK** letters.
 - Number's color must contrast with its background.
 - Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen: **TN-3717-ZW** or **TN 3717 ZW**.
 - Decals may be placed to the left or right of the registration number on both sides of the bow.
- ◆ If your vessel requires registration, it is illegal to operate it or allow others to operate your vessel unless it is registered and numbered as described above.



Validation Decal



Spaces or hyphens should appear here.

Other Facts About Registration

- ◆ The Certificate of Number is valid for one, two, or three years, at the option of the owner.
- ◆ Vessel registration may be renewed in one of three ways:
 - Online at www.tn.gov/twra/boatmain.html
 - By mail to Boat Registration, TWRA, P.O. Box 41729, Nashville, TN 37204
 - In person at any business which sells TWRA hunting and fishing licenses
- ◆ The owner of a numbered vessel must notify TWRA within 15 days if:
 - You change your address.
 - The vessel is lost, stolen and/or recovered, destroyed, abandoned, or sold.
- ◆ If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Number or validation decals, you must apply to the TWRA for a duplicate. The processing fee is \$6.00.
- ◆ Larger recreational vessels owned by U.S. citizens may (at the option of the owner) be documented by the U.S. Coast Guard. Call the USCG at **1-800-799-8362** for more information.
 - Documented vessels must be registered in Tennessee and carry the Certificate of Number on board. They are not required to display the registration number.
 - The validation decals must be placed on both sides of the vessel on the windows closest to the main operator station. Sailboats may place the decals on both sides of the bottom of the main mast.

Where To Register

Before registering your vessel for the first time, you must pay the sales tax to the dealer or at your county clerk's office. You then will receive an application that shows the sales tax has been paid. After completing the application, submit it to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA).

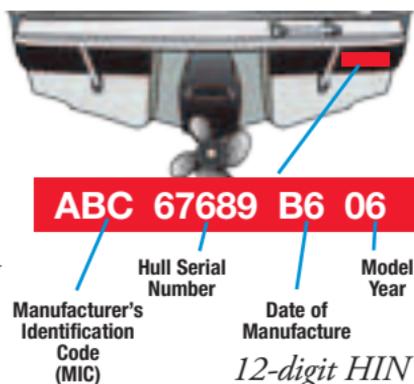
- ◆ Mail it to:
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Boating Division
P.O. Box 41729
Nashville, TN 37204
- ◆ Or fax it to: **615-781-6522**
- ◆ Or take it to the Nashville TWRA office located in the Ellington Agricultural Center

Vessel Registration Fees

Length of Vessel	One-Year Registration	Two-Year Registration	Three-Year Registration
16 feet and under	\$13	\$24	\$35
Over 16 feet to less than 26 feet	\$25	\$48	\$71
26 feet to less than 40 feet	\$38	\$72	\$107
40 feet or longer	\$51	\$97	\$142

Hull Identification Number

All vessels built after 1972 must have a 12-digit Hull Identification Number. All homemade boats built in Tennessee must apply for a new HIN by contacting the TWRA Boating Division.



Who May Operate a Vessel

◆ Those born after January 1, 1989

- Tennessee residents must successfully complete the TWRA Boating Safety Exam and carry on board the Boating Safety Education Certificate issued by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) when operating a vessel on Tennessee waters. Only the TWRA-issued certificate will be accepted as meeting the requirements of Tennessee law. This does not apply to non-residents or persons who rent a vessel.
- Non-residents within this age category must show proof of successful completion of a NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators) approved boating safety course.
- Operators of vessels powered by engines of 8.5 horsepower or less and operators of sailboats under sail alone are not required to possess the Boating Safety Education Certificate.

◆ To operate a motorized vessel of more than 8.5 horsepower

- Those less than 12 years old must have a supervisor on board who is at least 18 years old and able to take immediate control of the vessel. The supervisor, if born after January 1, 1989, also must have a Boating Safety Education Certificate issued by TWRA.
 - Those 12 years old or older operating alone must have a Boating Safety Education Certificate issued by TWRA.
- ◆ Those less than 16 years of age may not *rent* a personal watercraft (PWC).

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

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

- ◆ All vessels must have at least one wearable (Type I, II, III, or V) USCG–approved PFD (life jacket) for each person on board.
- ◆ In addition to the above requirement, one Type IV (throwable) USCG–approved PFD must be on board and immediately available on vessels 16 feet or longer (except canoes and kayaks).
- ◆ Children 12 years of age and younger must wear a USCG–approved life jacket at all times while on the open deck of a recreational vessel that is not anchored, moored, or aground.
- ◆ A USCG–approved life jacket must be worn by each person on board vessels being operated within specifically marked areas below dams.
- ◆ Each person on board a personal watercraft (PWC) must wear a USCG–approved Type I, II, or III PFD.
- ◆ Inflatable PFDs are not approved for PWC use, whitewater activities, or persons younger than 16 years of age.
- ◆ A ski belt may not be counted as one of the required PFDs on board your vessel. A ski belt may be worn while skiing, but an approved PFD for the skier must be on board the vessel.
- ◆ Besides being USCG–approved, all PFDs must be:
 - *In good and serviceable condition.*
 - *Readily accessible*, which means you are able to put the PFD on quickly in an emergency.
 - *Of the proper size for the intended wearer.* Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.



TYPE I: Offshore Life Jackets

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



TYPE II: Near-Shore Vests

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



TYPE III: Flotation Aids

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



TYPE IV: Throwable Devices

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



TYPE V: Special-Use Devices

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

Navigation Lights

The required navigation lights must be displayed between sunset and sunrise and during periods of restricted visibility.

Power-Driven Vessels When Underway

If less than 65.6 feet long, these vessels must exhibit the lights as shown in illustration 1. Remember, power-driven vessels include sailboats operating under engine power. The required lights are:

- ◆ Red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least two miles away—or if less than 39.4 feet long, at least one mile away—on a dark, clear night.
- ◆ An all-round white light or both a masthead light and a sternlight. These lights must be visible from a distance of at least two miles away on a dark, clear night. The all-round white light (or the masthead light) must be at least 3.3 feet higher than the sidelights.

Unpowered Vessels When Underway

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

- ◆ **If less than 65.6 feet long**, these vessels must exhibit the lights as shown in illustration 2. The required lights are:
 - Red and green sidelights visible from at least two miles away—or if less than 39.4 feet long, at least one mile away.
 - A sternlight visible from at least two miles away.
- ◆ **If less than 23.0 feet long**, these vessels should:
 - If practical, exhibit the same lights as required for unpowered vessels less than 65.6 feet in length.
 - If not practical, have on hand at least one lantern or flashlight shining a white light as in illustration 3.

All Vessels When Not Underway

All vessels are required to display a white light visible in all directions whenever they are moored or anchored outside a designated mooring area between sunset and sunrise.

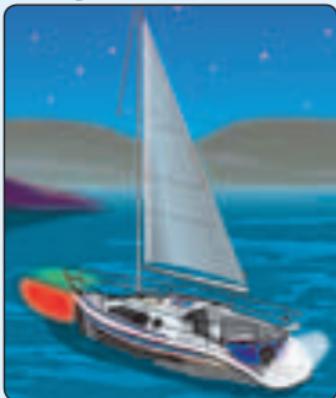
1. Power-Driven Vessels Less Than 65.6 Feet



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



2. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 65.6 Feet



An alternative to the sidelights and sternlight is a combination red, green, and white light, which must be exhibited near the top of the mast.

3. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 23.0 Feet



Vessel operators should never leave shore without a flashlight. Even if you plan to return before dark, unforeseen developments might delay your return past nightfall.

Fire Extinguishers

- ◆ All vessels, including PWCs, are required to have a Type B fire extinguisher on board if any of the following conditions exist.
 - Vessel is 26 feet or longer.
 - Vessel carries passengers for hire.
 - Vessel has closed compartments under thwarts or seats where portable fuel tanks may be stored.
 - Vessel has double bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not filled completely with flotation material.
 - Vessel has closed living spaces.
 - Vessel has closed storage compartments where combustible or flammable materials may be stored.
 - Vessel has permanently installed fuel tanks.
- ◆ Approved types of fire extinguishers are identified by the following marking on the label—"Marine Type USCG Approved"—followed by the type and size symbols and the approval number.
- ◆ Extinguishers should be placed in an accessible area—not near the engine or in a compartment, but where they can be reached immediately. Be sure you know how to operate them, and inspect extinguishers regularly to ensure they are in working condition and fully charged.

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

Fire Extinguisher Requirements

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

Length of Vessel	Without Fixed System	With Fixed System*
Less than 26 ft.	one B-I	None
26 ft. to less than 40 ft.	two B-I <i>or</i> one B-II	one B-I
40 ft. to less than 65 ft.	three B-I <i>or</i> one B-II and one B-I	two B-I <i>or</i> one B-II

* refers to a permanently installed fire extinguisher system

Ventilation Systems

The purpose of ventilation systems is to avoid explosions by removing flammable gases. Properly installed ventilation systems greatly reduce the chance of a life-threatening explosion.



- ◆ All gasoline-powered vessels, constructed in a way that would entrap fumes, must have at least two ventilation ducts fitted with cowls to remove the fumes.
- ◆ If your vessel is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes both after fueling and before starting your engine.
- ◆ If your vessel is not equipped with a power ventilation system (for example, a personal watercraft), open the engine compartment and sniff for gasoline fumes before starting the engine.

Backfire Flame Arrestors

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

Mufflers and Noise Level Limits

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

- ◆ The noise level of any motorized vessel must not exceed 86 decibels at a distance of 50 feet or more from the vessel.
- ◆ The use of cutouts is prohibited.
- ◆ It is illegal to modify the muffling system if it results in a noise level greater than the legal limit.

Sound-Producing Devices

Some sound signals that you should be familiar with are:

◆ Restricted Visibility

- **One prolonged blast** at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by power-driven vessels when underway.
- **One prolonged blast plus two short blasts** at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by sailboats under sail.

◆ Warning

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

If on State Waters	
<i>Less than 39.4 feet long (includes PWCs)</i>	Some means to make an efficient sound signal required
<i>39.4 feet long or longer</i>	Whistle <i>and</i> a bell required
If on Federally Controlled Waters	
<i>Less than 65.6 feet long (includes PWCs)</i>	Whistle or horn audible for at least one-half mile required
<i>65.6 feet long or longer</i>	Whistle or horn <i>and</i> a bell audible for at least one mile required

Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

- ◆ VDSs are not required on vessels on Tennessee waters.
- ◆ Vessels on federally controlled waters must be equipped with visual distress signals that are U.S. Coast Guard–approved, in serviceable condition, and readily accessible.
- ◆ All vessels, regardless of length or type, are required to carry night signals when operating between sunset and sunrise. Most vessels must carry day signals also; exceptions to the requirement for day signals are:

- Recreational vessels that are less than 16 feet in length
 - Non-motorized open sailboats that are less than 26 feet in length
 - Manually propelled vessels
- ◆ If pyrotechnic VDSs are used, a minimum of three must be carried in the vessel. Also, pyrotechnic VDSs must be dated and may not be carried past their expiration date.
- ◆ The following examples satisfy U.S. Coast Guard requirements:
- Three handheld red flares (day and night)
 - Three orange smoke signals (day only) and one electric light (night only)

Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals



Orange Smoke

Day Signal



Red Meteor

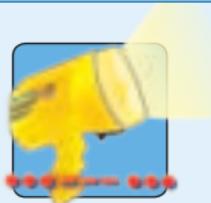
Day and Night Signal



Red Flare

Day and Night Signal

Non-Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals



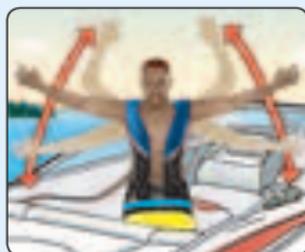
Electric Light

Night Signal



Orange Flag

Day Signal



Arm Signal

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

Federally Controlled Waters

Vessels must observe federal requirements on these waters:

- Coastal waters
- The Great Lakes
- Territorial seas
- Waters which are two miles wide or wider and are connected directly to one of the above

Other Equipment

Diver-Down Flag

- ◆ State law requires that scuba divers and snorkelers display a diver-down flag to mark the diving area.
 - Scuba divers or snorkelers should not place a flag where it will obstruct traffic or create a hazard to navigation on a river, inlet, or navigation channel.
 - Vessel operators must not operate within 50 feet of a displayed diver-down flag and must reduce speed to idle speed when within 200 feet of the flag.
 - Divers and snorkelers must stay within 50 of their diver-down flag. After dusk, the flag must be illuminated so that it can be seen at a distance of 300 feet or more.
- ◆ Two types of flags are used to indicate diving activity.



Divers Flag



Alfa Flag

A rectangular red flag with a white diagonal stripe is used to mark the diving area and also must be displayed on vessels on state waters. When flown from a vessel, the flag must be at least 20 x 24 inches.

A blue and white International Code Flag A (or Alfa flag) must be displayed on vessels on state or federally controlled waters. The flag must be at least 3.3 feet (one meter) high and visible from all directions.

- ◆ Any vessel used in the diving operation must display from its mast both a divers flag and an Alfa flag visible from all directions. After dusk, these flags must be illuminated so that they can be seen at a distance of 300 feet or more.

Unlawful Operation

Tennessee law states that it is unlawful to operate a watercraft in a reckless, negligent, or dangerous manner. Violations are punishable by a fine of up to \$2,500 and up to six months in jail. Specifically, the following operating practices are illegal.

- ◆ **Reckless Operation** of a vessel is any act that endangers the life, limb, or property of another person. Examples of illegal, reckless operation are:
 - Operating a vessel in a swimming area
 - Weaving your vessel through congested waterway traffic
 - Steering toward another object or person in the water and swerving at the last possible moment in order to avoid collision or spray others nearby
 - Jumping the wake of another vessel in a way that endangers another's life, safety, or property
 - Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife with your vessel
- ◆ **Improper Speed or Distance** is not maintaining a proper speed and distance while operating a vessel. Specifically, it is illegal to:
 - Operate at an excessive rate of speed in crowded or dangerous areas or during periods of restricted visibility.
 - Operate a vessel at greater than "slow, no wake speed" in any areas marked as "No Wake."
 - Operate within 300 feet of a commercial vessel dock at greater than "idle speed."
 - Jump the wake of another vessel within 100 feet of that vessel.

"Slow, No Wake Speed" or "Idle Speed" means the slowest speed at which it is still possible to maintain steering. The vessel should not produce a wake at this speed.

- ◆ **Riding on the Bow, Gunwales, or Transom** is allowing passengers to ride on a vessel in places where there may be a chance of falling overboard while underway at greater than idle speed.
- ◆ **Unsafe Condition** is operating a vessel in a condition that causes a hazard to the occupants or others on the waterways. For any of these problems, an enforcement officer may instruct the operator to immediately take corrective action or return to the nearest mooring.
 - There are insufficient personal flotation devices, fire extinguishers, backfire flame arrestors, ventilation, or navigation lights.
 - The vessel is overloaded or overpowered.
 - Any other unsafe condition exists.

Boating Near Dams—Beware!

- ◆ Fishing and boating immediately below any dam is dangerous and should be avoided.
 - Large volumes of water can be discharged within a matter of seconds through hydroelectric dams due to the demand for electricity or flood control.
 - Many upstream and downstream areas around dams are designated as restricted areas, and boaters should refrain from entering those areas.
 - Cold water released through tributary dams may be a hazard, even during the summer. Cold-water temperatures (below 77° F) can cause cold shock, short-term swim failure, or hypothermia.
- ◆ To protect yourself and your passengers:
 - Take special precautions when fishing below a dam by boat. Always wear and buckle a PFD (life jacket) and leave the motor running, even if drift fishing.
 - Never anchor your boat in the area below a dam, and never anchor your boat from the stern.
 - Immediately move to a safer area if a siren sounds or strobe lights flash. These are warnings that the water conditions are about to change drastically.

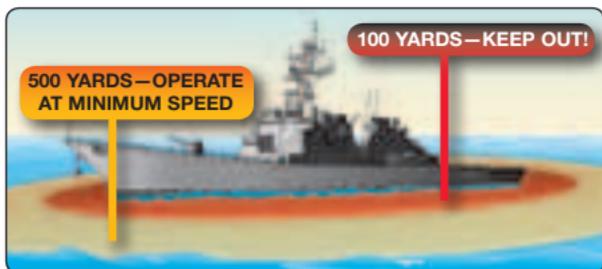
Obstructing Navigation

It is illegal to:

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

Homeland Security Restrictions

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



Alcohol and Drugs

- ◆ Tennessee law prohibits anyone from boating under the influence (BUI)—that is, operating any vessel propelled by a motor or sail while under the influence of alcohol or any combination of alcohol, a controlled substance, or drugs.
- ◆ Alcohol and drugs cause impaired balance, blurred vision, poor coordination, impaired judgment, and slower reaction times. Alcohol is a major contributor to boating accidents and fatalities.
- ◆ Tennessee law states that a person is presumed to be under the influence if the concentration of alcohol in his or her blood is 0.08% or greater.
- ◆ Tennessee law establishes the following penalties.
 - Those convicted of boating under the influence are subject to a fine of up to \$2,500 upon a first or second offense, and up to \$5,000 for the third offense.
 - In addition, those convicted of BUI may receive a jail sentence of up to one year (with mandatory probation) and lose operating privileges for one to ten years.
 - Federal penalties also may be imposed.
- ◆ By operating a vessel on Tennessee waters, you have consented to a sobriety test if requested by a law enforcement officer. Refusal to be tested is a separate offense and may result in loss of operating privileges for up to six months.



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

Marine Events

Permits from the TWRA are required for tournaments, regattas, races, parades, and exhibitions that may restrict waterway navigation or require additional patrol by wildlife officers. The free permit may be requested by applying to TWRA at least 30 days before the event.

TWRA Access Areas

These additional restrictions apply in TWRA Access Areas.

- ◆ Disorderly conduct and use of intoxicants or other behavior-modifying substances are prohibited.
- ◆ The use of firearms is prohibited except during regular hunting season. Target shooting is prohibited at all times.
- ◆ Swimming from or near boat ramps or in a way that interferes with the launching or removal of vessels is prohibited.

Boating Accidents

- ◆ An operator involved in a boating accident must:
 - Stop their vessel immediately at the scene of the accident *and ...*
 - Assist anyone injured in the accident, unless doing so would endanger his or her own vessel or passengers.
- ◆ Every vessel operator involved in a reportable accident must notify the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) immediately. The operator also must file a written accident report form with TWRA.
 - The accident report form must be filed within 48 hours if:
 - A person dies or disappears *or ...*
 - Someone is injured requiring medical treatment beyond first aid.
 - The accident report form must be filed within ten days if damage exceeds \$2,000.
- ◆ Accident report forms are available from any TWRA office or on the TWRA website at www.tn.gov/twra.
- ◆ Failure to report a boating accident is a criminal offense and may result in prosecution by TWRA.

Enforcement

The TWRA enforces and administers the provisions of the Tennessee Boating Safety Act.

- ◆ TWRA enforcement officers assist boaters as well as enforce laws and provide control when necessary.
- ◆ Every TWRA officer has the authority to stop and board any vessel. They may issue citations. When necessary, they may arrest, on sight and without warrant, any person they see violating a provision of the Boating Safety Act.
- ◆ The U.S. Coast Guard has enforcement authority on federally controlled waters.

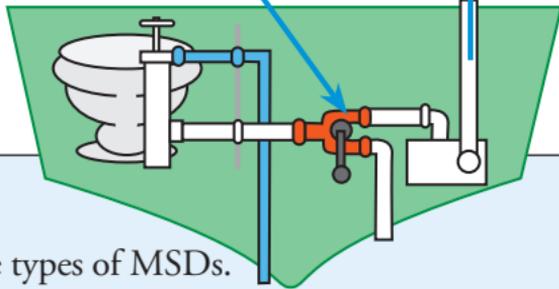
Discharge of Waste

- ◆ If you have a recreational vessel with installed toilet facilities, it must have an operable marine sanitation device (MSD) on board.
- ◆ It is illegal to discharge raw (untreated) sewage into any public waters.
- ◆ Public waters are classified as either “discharge” (capable of accepting treated sewage) or “no discharge” (waste must be retained in a holding tank and properly discharged on shore).
 - Discharge into public waters is restricted to Type I or II MSDs and only on those waters classified as “discharge.”
 - The discharge and no discharge reservoirs are listed on page 48.
- ◆ All installed MSDs must be U.S. Coast Guard–certified.
- ◆ Marinas and docks operating on public waters must provide a sewage removal service.

Typical Marine Sanitation Device

"Y" valve must always be closed on "no discharge" waters

Drainage to pump-out station



Types of MSDs

- ◆ There are three types of MSDs.
 - Types I and II MSDs are usually found on large vessels. Waste is treated with special chemicals to kill bacteria before the waste is discharged. Types I and II MSDs with "Y" valves that would direct the waste overboard must be secured so that the valve cannot be opened. This can be done by placing a lock or non-reusable seal on the "Y" valve or by taking the handle off the "Y" valve in a closed position.
 - Type III MSDs provide no treatment and are either holding tanks or portable toilets. Collected waste should be taken ashore and disposed of in a pump-out station or onshore toilet.
- ◆ Vessels 65 feet or less in length may use a Type I, II, or III MSD. Vessels more than 65 feet in length must install a Type II or III MSD.

Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

- ◆ You are not allowed to discharge oil or hazardous substances into the water.
- ◆ You are not allowed to dump oil into the bilge of the vessel without means for proper disposal.
- ◆ You must dispose of oil waste at an approved reception facility. On recreational vessels, a bucket or bailer is adequate for temporary storage prior to disposing of the oil waste at an approved facility.



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

- ◆ Immediately call the U.S. Coast Guard at **1-800-424-8802**.
 - ◆ Also call the TWRA.
-
- ◆ If boating on federally controlled waters and your vessel is 26 feet or longer, you must display a 5 x 8-inch placard made of durable material, fixed in a conspicuous place in the machinery spaces or at the bilge pump control station, stating the Federal Water Pollution Control Act's law.

Discharge of Trash

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

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

Specifically for PWCs

Tennessee law defines a PWC as “a mechanically propelled vessel that is designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the vessel rather than being operated in a conventional manner by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling inside the vessel.” PWC operators must obey the laws that apply to other vessels as well as obey additional requirements that apply specifically to the operation of personal watercraft.

Requirements Specific to PWCs

- ◆ *Everyone* on board a PWC **must wear** a U.S. Coast Guard–approved Type I, II, or III life jacket, called a personal flotation device (PFD), at all times. Inflatable PFDs are not approved for use on personal watercraft.
- ◆ There are age and education requirements for operators of personal watercraft. See “Who May Operate a Vessel.”
- ◆ PWCs must be equipped with an ignition safety switch, and the operator must attach the lanyard of the switch to his or her wrist or PFD.
- ◆ PWCs may be operated only during daylight hours (between sunrise and sunset).
- ◆ PWCs must be operated in a safe and responsible manner. It is illegal to:
 - Jump the immediate wake (within 100 feet) of another vessel.
 - Weave your PWC through congested waterway traffic.
 - Steer toward another object or person in the water and swerve at the last possible moment in order to avoid collision or spray others nearby.
 - Operate the PWC close to boat ramps, docks, or the shoreline at more than idle speed.
 - Chase, harass, or disturb wildlife with your PWC.
 - Persons who allow an underage operator to use a PWC may be prosecuted.

Specifically for Skiing



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

Requirements for Towing Skiers

- ◆ It is illegal for vessels to tow persons on water skis, a surfboard, or any other device between sunset and sunrise or during inclement weather.
- ◆ The towing vessel must be able to observe the towed person(s). The towing vessel must have either:
 - A person at least 12 years old, in addition to the boat operator, on board observing the towed person(s) *or ...*
 - The required number of wide-angle (170-degree field of vision) rearview mirror(s).
 - If the towing vessel is a PWC, the PWC must be equipped with two wide-angle rearview mirrors.
 - If the towing vessel is a boat (other than a PWC), the boat must be equipped with at least one wide-angle rearview mirror.
- ◆ All persons being towed behind a vessel on water skis or any other device must wear an adequate and effective life preserver, buoyant vest, or life belt. If the device worn by the skier is not U.S. Coast Guard–approved, an approved life jacket (PFD) must be on board the towing vessel.
- ◆ The operator of the towing vessel and the skier must not operate in a manner that endangers the safety of persons or property. A safe speed and distance from other vessels, persons in the water, docks, piers, and shorelines must be maintained.

Protecting Tennessee's Waterways



Aquatic Nuisance Species

Introducing non-native species into Tennessee waters can upset the balance of the ecosystem, harming the environment. Aquatic nuisance species, such as bighead and silver carp, Eurasian watermilfoil, hydrilla, New Zealand mudsnail, purple loosestrife, round goby, quagga mussel, and zebra mussel, are most often spread between waterways by hitching a ride on vessels and trailers. When transplanted into new waters, these organisms proliferate, displacing native species and damaging the water resource and your vessel.

To prevent spreading aquatic nuisance species:

- Inspect your vessel, motor, live wells, and trailer, and remove any aquatic nuisance species you see before leaving the area.
- Drain water from your boat, motor, bilge, live wells, and bait containers before leaving the area.
- Dispose of unwanted bait and other animals or aquatic plants in the trash.
- To remove or kill species that were not visible when leaving the area, either wash your boat and equipment with hot water or air-dry them for at least five days.

Outboard Emissions

New federal emission standards for marine engines are being phased in gradually. Many manufacturers are meeting these requirements now with clean-burning engines already available. The new technology provides easier starting, faster acceleration, quicker throttle response, improved fuel economy, and reduction of fumes and noise.

Tennessee's Reservoirs



A Mississippi River System

B Tennessee River System

C Cumberland River System

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Reelfoot Lake | 12. Dale Hollow Lake |
| 2. Pickwick Lake | 13. Chickamauga Lake |
| 3. Kentucky Lake | 14. Watts Bar Lake |
| 4. Lake Barkley | 15. Fort Loudoun Lake |
| 5. Cheatham Lake | 16. Tellico Lake |
| 6. J. Percy Priest Lake | 17. Norris Lake |
| 7. Old Hickory Lake | 18. Cherokee Lake |
| 8. Tims Ford Lake | 19. Douglas Lake |
| 9. Cordell Hull Lake | 20. Boone Lake |
| 10. Center Hill Lake | 21. South Holston Lake |
| 11. Nickajack Lake | 22. Watauga Lake |

Discharge & No Discharge Reservoirs

Discharge Reservoirs

Barkley	Mississippi River
Caulderwood	Nickajack
Cheatham	Old Hickory
Chickamauga	Pickwick
Cordell Hull	Reelfoot
Cumberland River	South Holston
Ft. Loudon	Tellico
Kentucky	Tennessee River
McKeller	Watts Barr
Melton Hill	

No Discharge Reservoirs

Beech River Lakes	Lake Graham
Boone	Nolichucky
Center Hill	Normandy
Cherokee	Norris
Chilhowee	Ocoee 1,2,3
Dale Hollow	Tims Ford
Douglas	Watauga
Ft. Patrick Henry	Wilbur
Great Falls	Woods
J. Percy Priest	

Tennessee's Required Equipment Checklist



	PWC	Boat Less Than 16 Ft.	Boat 16 Ft. To Less Than 26 Ft.
Certificate of Number On Board	✓	✓ 1	✓ 1
Registration Number Displayed	✓	✓ 1	✓ 1
Validation Decals Displayed	✓	✓ 1	✓ 1
PFDs: Type I, II, or III	✓ 2	✓ 3,4	✓ 3,4
PFD: Type IV			✓
Type B-I Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓
Backfire Flame Arrestor	✓	✓ 5	✓ 5
Ventilation System	✓	✓	✓
Muffler	✓	✓	✓
Sound Signaling Ability	✓	✓	✓
Daytime Visual Distress Signals			✓ 6
Nighttime Visual Distress Signals	7	✓ 6	✓ 6
Navigation Lights	7	✓	✓

1. Not required for vessels propelled only by paddles or oars.
2. Each person on board a PWC must *wear* a PFD (life jacket) at all times.
3. Children 12 years of age and younger must *wear* a USCG–approved life jacket at all times while on the open deck of a recreational vessel that is not anchored, moored, or aground.
4. Each person on board vessels being operated within specifically marked areas below dams must *wear* a PFD at all times.
5. Required on boats with inboard engines or stern drives.
6. Required when boating on federally controlled waters.
7. Certain items do not apply to PWCs because they are not allowed to operate between sunset and sunrise.

TENNESSEE WILDLIFE RESOURCES AGENCY



Central Office—Nashville

P.O. Box 40747, Nashville, TN 37204

Boating Safety	615-781-6682
Boat Registration	615-781-6585
TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf)	615-781-6691

Region I

200 Lowell Thomas Drive, Jackson, TN 38301

West Tennessee	731-423-5725
Toll-Free (In-State)	1-800-372-3928

Region II

Ellington Agricultural Center,
P.O. Box 41489, Nashville, TN 37204

Middle Tennessee	615-781-6622
Toll-Free (In-State)	1-800-624-7406

Region III

464 Industrial Blvd., Crossville, TN 38555

Cumberland Plateau	931-484-9571
Toll-Free (In-State)	1-800-262-6704

Region IV

3030 Wildlife Way, Morristown, TN 37814

East Tennessee	423-587-7037
Toll-Free (In-State)	1-800-332-0900

U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety

229 Great Circle Road, Suite 148, Nashville, TN 37228

.	615-736-5421
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For emergencies, contact your nearest TWRA office.

Local Sheriff's departments also can contact TWRA officers or call:

Tennessee Emergency Management Agency	615-741-0001
Toll-Free (In-State)	1-800-262-3300

www.tn.gov/twra