

## Information on Charter Boat / Fishing Guide Licensing in Minnesota

This information sheet is intended to assist you in complying with state and federal regulations.

### WHAT LICENSE DO I NEED?

One of the first steps in determining which license(s) you may need is to know whether the waters you will be operating on are subject to not only Minnesota laws and rules, but have been designated “Navigable Waters of the U.S.” by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Examples of these U.S. waters in Minnesota are Lake Superior, most of the Mississippi River or Lake of the Woods. On these waters you will need to comply with both state and federal requirements. On sole-state waters you will need to comply with only the state rules for charter boats (information located in this publication).

### FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

To find out the federal status of the lakes or rivers you will be using:

- 1) Click on this USCG’s 9<sup>th</sup> District website link: [www.uscg.mil/d9/D9Legal/waterwaydeterminations.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/d9/D9Legal/waterwaydeterminations.asp) then scroll down the page. Open and read through both “MINNESOTA” and “MINNESOTA SUPPLEMENT.” Note: that there are a few waters on the “MINNESOTA” list that are listed as not navigable.
- 2) You may also contact one of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) offices (listed below) by phone.
- 3) In 2012, Congress passed an act declaring that the waters of Mille Lacs Lake are not subject to the jurisdiction of the United States (for purposes including guide licensing). Note that Mille Lacs Lake still shows up on the outdated document on the web page link above as Navigable Waters of the U.S.
- 4) In February of 2009, the USCG determined that the Rum River is a “Navigable Waterway of the U.S.,” although it is not yet listed on the web page link above.

If the lake or river is listed as a “Navigable Waterway of the U.S.,” you will need to start the federal application process that follows to obtain your USCG Operator or Restricted Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel (OUPV or Six-Pack) License. This license allows you to carry six or fewer passengers for hire. The Restricted Operator version is specific as to which waters you may operate on, but the qualification process is more flexible:

- 1) Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) – You must have your TWIC prior to submitting your USCG application. The card is good for 5 years and there is a charge of \$129.75 (\$128 beginning Feb. 1, 2015). Start the process through this web site: <http://www.tsa.gov/stakeholders/transportation-worker-identification-credential-twic%C2%AE>  
– Or by calling 855-347-8371. There are six TWIC enrollment centers in Minnesota (listed later in this document). You will need to complete the application process at the center and return again (in person) to pick up your credentials about two weeks later.
- 2) USCG Licensing – Contact the National Maritime Center and order your application package 888-427-5662 or at <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/>. This package can be ordered at the same time as the TWIC application.

Complete the application information indicating the specific bodies of water on where you want to operate. This is important, since your test questions will be based on this information - if you are qualifying for the *Restricted OUPV License*. Also complete and send the other items from the package, listed below, at the same time:

- Complete the small vessel sea service form for the body(s) of water where you have experience operating a boat.
- Proof of a first aid and also a CPR course completion, less than one year old.
- Completed USCG physical exam form CG 719K.
- Drug test. (See the USCG application package for more details)
- A copy of both sides of your TWIC card

The completed information needs to be sent to the appropriate USCG Regional Exam Center. Your application package will give you the appropriate office, or see below for the two that handle Minnesota applications. There is a charge for the application.

An applicant must complete either an examination administered by the Coast Guard (OUPV or Restricted OUPV), or complete a USCG approved OUPV course in lieu of the examination. There is an exam fee. The USCG will advise you of where and when this will occur. If you qualify, your license will then be mailed to you.

## STATE OF MINNESOTA

If you are carrying passengers for hire on waters subject to only Minnesota laws and rules (often called “sole state waters”), the following requirements from the Minnesota Dept. of Labor and Industry apply, as of 2010, regardless of boat length:

- If you are carrying six or fewer passengers for hire there are no state licensing, permitting or inspection requirements – regardless of boat length. See exception noted below.
- If you are carrying more than six passengers for hire, regardless of boat length, you need to obtain a Minnesota Boat Master License from the Minnesota Dept. of Labor and Industry and have your boat inspected by that agency.
- If you have a USCG license to carry more than six passengers for hire and are required to have a USCG boat inspection, you are exempt from the Minnesota Boat Master License and inspection requirements.
- See the State of Minnesota section below for direct contact information on state licensing and inspection requirements, and any updates that may occur.

The Minnesota DNR currently licenses fishing charter boat operators or fishing guides only on Lake Superior and St. Louis River Estuary. If you guide or do fishing charters there, you will need to obtain a Minnesota DNR Lake Superior Guide’s License. A prerequisite to that is to have your USCG Operator of an Uninspected Passenger Vessel License (OUPV or Six-Pack). For more information on the Lake Superior Guide’s License, contact the DNR License Center – see contact information.

## CONTACT INFORMATION - Federal

Coast Guard – OUPV licensing information, contact the either of the offices listed below:

*Southern Minnesota*  
Marine Safety Detachment  
5600 American Blvd West  
Suite 750  
Bloomington, MN 55437  
Phone: 952-806-0021

*Northern Minnesota – incl. Mille Lacs Lake*  
USCG Marine Safety Unit  
600 S. Lake Avenue  
Duluth, MN 55802  
Phone: 218-720-5286

For questions concerning licensing or to submit a completed application:

*Southern Minnesota*  
USCG Regional Examination Center  
1222 Spruce Street, Room 7.105  
St. Louis, MO 63103-2846  
Phone: 888-427-5662  
Fax: 314-269-2733  
[www.uscg.mil/nmc/RECs/stl.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/RECs/stl.asp)

*Northern Minnesota – incl. Mille Lacs Lake*  
USCG Regional Examination Center  
420 Madison Ave., Ste. 700  
Toledo, OH 43604-1265  
Phone: 888-427-5662  
Fax: 419-259-7558  
[www.uscg.mil/nmc/RECs/tol.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/RECs/tol.asp)

Or, the USCG National Maritime Center at 888-427-5662 / <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/>

Transportation Workers Identification Credential (TWIC). For TWIC information, enrollment forms, etc.:  
<http://www.tsa.gov/stakeholders/transportation-worker-identification-credential-twic%C2%AE>  
or call 855-347-8371.

TWIC Enrollment Centers in Minnesota:

**Twin Cities**

IdentoGO  
 5705 W. Old Shakopee Rd.  
 Ste. 100  
 Bloomington, MN 55437-3127  
 Mon - Thurs: 9 a.m. - noon and 1 – 5 p.m.

IdentoGO  
 2781 Freeway Blvd.  
 Ste. 120  
 Brooklyn Center, MN 55430-1765  
 Mon. - Fri.: 8:30 a.m. – noon and 1 – 5 p.m.

*Duluth*

IdentoGO  
 4504 Grand Ave. N. Ste. 4B  
 Duluth, MN 55807-2740  
 Tues. - Thurs.: 10 a.m. - noon and 1 – 4 p.m.  
 Located at back of building

*Mankato*

IdentoGO  
 1613 N. Riverfront Dr.  
 Ste. A  
 Mankato, MN 56001-3278  
 Tues. – Thurs. 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

*Rochester*

Rochester International Airport  
 7600 Helgerson Dr. SW  
 Rochester, MN 55902-1838  
 Tues. – Thurs. 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
 Located pre-security, no boarding pass required

*St. Cloud*

IdentoGO  
 2946 W. Division Street  
 St. Cloud, MN 56301-3818  
 Monday: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
 Located inside Computer Renaissance

**State of Minnesota***Boat Master License*

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry  
 Construction Codes and Licensing Division  
 Licensing and Certification Services  
 443 Lafayette Rd. N  
 Saint Paul, MN 55  
 Phone: 651-284-5031 / 800-342-5354  
 email: [DLI.License@state.mn.us](mailto:DLI.License@state.mn.us)  
 Web: <http://www.doli.state.mn.us/CCLD/Boats.asp>

*Lake Superior Guide's License*

MN DNR License Center  
 500 Lafayette Road  
 St. Paul, MN 55155-40206  
 651-297-1230 or  
 877-348-0498

QUESTIONS? If you need help in working through this process or have questions, please feel free to contact Lt. Adam Block, MN DNR Boating and Water Safety Manager – Direct: 651-259-5057 or email [adam.block@state.mn.us](mailto:adam.block@state.mn.us)