

THE HANDBOOK of Vermont Boating Laws and Responsibilities

Provided by



The Vermont State Police, partnered with the Vermont Warden Service, are responsible for the safety education of Vermont boaters. The Boat Vermont safe boating program is recognized nationally and approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). Many insurance companies offer a discount for successful completion.



Safe Boating Program

Now! Boating safety certification is now required by law for many Vermont boaters. You have **two** ways to obtain your certification.

1. Over the Internet...


Learn what you need to be a safe boat operator online! The complete study course with exciting visuals awaits you on the Internet. Interactive graphics help you learn and retain information on boating safely in Vermont. Successfully complete the online test, and you will receive the official State of Vermont boating safety education certificate.

Start today at www.boat-ed.com/vermont.

2. In a classroom...

Share the learning experience with other interested students and a qualified instructor. The Vermont State Police can help you find a classroom course in your area.

Visit vsp.vermont.gov or
vtfishandwildlife.com for information
or call 802-878-7111.



THE
HANDBOOK

OF

VERMONT

BOATING LAWS

AND

RESPONSIBILITIES

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Stay up to date on new boating laws!

Be sure to stay abreast of new boating laws and requirements.

- For state boating law information, contact the Vermont State Police or Vermont Warden Service.
 - Visit the website at vsp.vermont.gov or vtfishandwildlife.com.
 - Call **802-878-7111**.
- For federal boating laws, visit the U.S. Coast Guard's boating safety website at www.uscgboating.org.
- For the most recent information regarding the lake-specific regulations of the *Vermont Use of Public Waters Rules*, visit dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/vermont-use-public-waters-rules.

Information in this handbook does not replace what is specifically legal for boating in Vermont, which is found in the Vermont Statutes and federal laws.

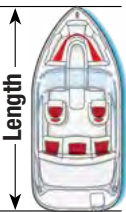
Before Going Out

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.
- Personal watercraft (PWC) 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.
- Wipe up any spilled fuel.

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:**

- Open all windows, ports, doors, and other openings.
- Sniff the bilge and engine compartment for fuel vapors.

Additional Safety Procedures for PWC

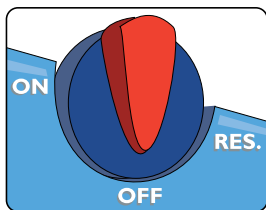
- Do not tip the PWC in order to fill it all the way up. If the tank is overfilled, the fuel may expand and spill into the water.
- After fueling, open the door of the engine compartment and sniff to check for any evidence of gas fumes. Do this before starting the engine. If you do smell gas fumes, determine 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-lit 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 ensure a good time while operating your vessel by performing this pre-departure check.

- ✓ Check the weather forecast for the area and time frame 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 engine cut-off switch (ECOS) 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.

On the Water

Safe navigation on Vermont waterways is everyone's responsibility. All operators are equally responsible for taking action 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.

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

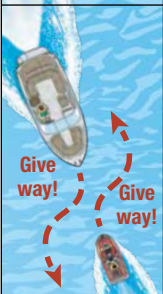
- When operating a power-driven vessel, you must give way to:
 - Any vessel not under command, such as an anchored or disabled vessel
 - Any vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver, such as a vessel towing another or laying cable, or one constrained by its draft, such as a large ship in a channel
 - 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

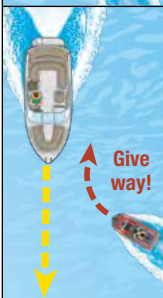
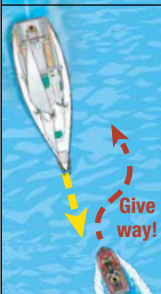


Meeting Head-On

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

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

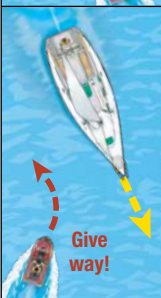
Power vs. Sail



Crossing Situations

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

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



Overtaking

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

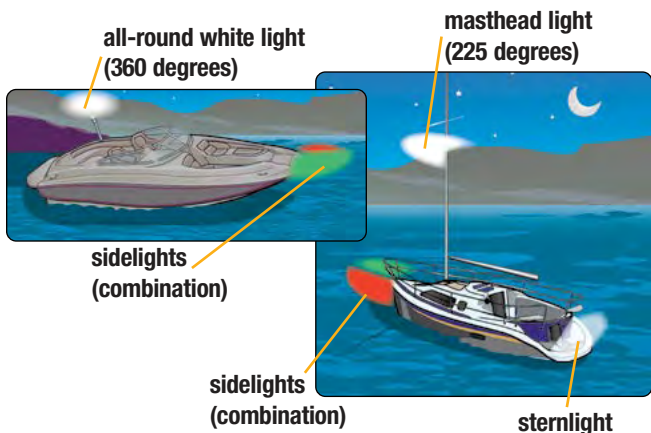
Power vs. Sail: The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.



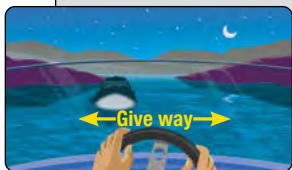
Nighttime Navigation

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.

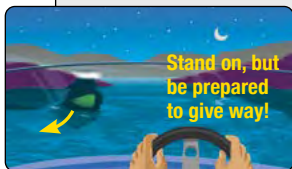
- **Sidelights:** These red and green lights are called sidelights (also called combination lights) because they are visible to another vessel approaching from the side or head-on. The red light indicates a vessel's port (left) side; the green indicates a vessel's starboard (right) side.
- **Sternlight:** 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.



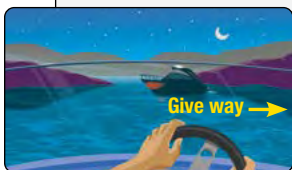
Encountering Vessels at Night



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.



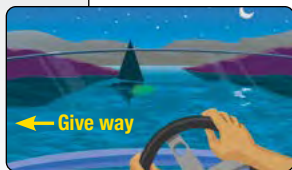
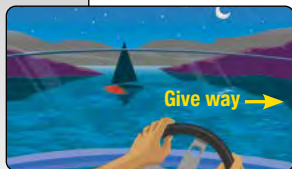
When you see a green and a white light, you are the stand-on vessel. However, remain alert in case the other vessel operator does not see you or does not know the navigation rules.



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.



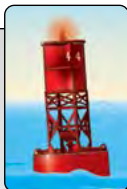
U.S. Aids to Navigation System (ATON)

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 (ATON).

Lateral Markers

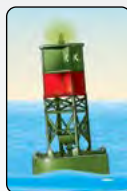
These navigation aids mark the edges of safe water areas; for example, directing travel within a channel. The markers use a combination of colors and numbers, which may appear on either buoys or permanently placed markers.

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



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

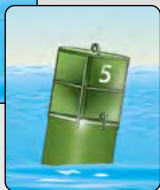
Red and green colors and/or lights indicate the preferred (primary) channel. If green is on top, the preferred channel is to the right as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream; if red is on top, the preferred channel is to the left.



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



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



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

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



Red Right Returning

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

Non-Lateral Markers

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



Information

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



Controlled

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



Exclusion

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



Danger

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

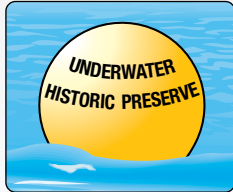
Other Non-Lateral Markers

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



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

Underwater Historic Preservation Area Markers are yellow special-purpose buoys that mark historic and archeological sites located on the bottomlands of the waters of Vermont.



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.



Specifically for PWC

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

steering control



steering nozzle

Steering and Stopping a PWC

- PWC 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...

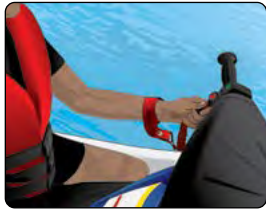
Most PWC and other jet-drive vessels must have power in order to maintain control. If you allow the engine on a PWC or other jet-propelled vessel to return to idle or shut off during operation, you may lose all steering control. Many PWC will continue in the direction they were headed before the engine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

- **Most PWC 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 PWC that have a braking system do not stop immediately.

Engine Cut-Off Switch (ECOS)

- Most PWC and powerboats come equipped by the manufacturer with an important device called an emergency engine cut-off switch (ECOS). If properly worn, this safety device is designed to shut off the engine if the operator is thrown from the proper operating position. The USCG requires that operators of vessels equipped with an ECOS use the device at all times.

- A lanyard is attached to the switch and the operator's wrist or PFD. The 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 ECOS, 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.



Remember...

Beginning April 2021, a new federal rule requires operators of recreational vessels less than 26 feet in length to use the ECOS if the vessel is equipped with such a device. Operators must use the ECOS whenever the vessel is operating on plane or above displacement speed.

Be sure to check with the state boating agency where you are boating to determine how this new USCG rule applies locally. For more information on this requirement, visit www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/engine-cut-off-switch-faq.php.

PWC Courtesy and Environmental Considerations

- Avoid jumping the wake of a passing boat, or riding too close to another PWC or boat, which creates risks and is restricted or even prohibited in some states.
- 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 operate a PWC in water less than 30 inches deep.
- 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. Fuel on land if possible.

Before Going Out

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

Registering Your Vessel

- You must have a Vermont Certificate of Registration and validation stickers to operate any vessel propelled by a motor legally on the public waters of Vermont. The only exceptions are:
 - Non-motorized vessels
 - Vessels legally registered in another state or country that have not been within the State of Vermont for more than 60 days
 - Vessels documented by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- Vessels documented by the USCG or registered legally in another state or country must validate their registration numbers by obtaining a validation sticker from the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) if the vessels are used in the waters of Vermont for at least 60 days in any calendar year.
- The Certificate of Registration and validation stickers are obtained by submitting the proper application and fee to the DMV.
- *The Certificate of Registration (registration card) must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is operated.*
- The registration number and validation stickers must be displayed as follows.
 - Number must be painted, applied as a decal, or otherwise affixed to both sides of the bow.

VERMONT AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION • DEPT. OF MOTOR VEHICLES 100 STATE STREET • MONTPELIER, VT 05603-0001					
NAME	YEAR	COLOR	REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE		
Sea Ray	2008	Red	VERMONT		
VEHICLE REGISTRATION NO. YEAR					
Gas ABC67689B606					
REGISTRATION	PLATE	PROP.	USE	LAP. SET. OF	
18	10	FG	Inboard	Pleasure	May 2024
REGISTRATION NAME					
John Doe					
103 South Main Street					
Waterbury, VT 05671-2101					



**Spaces or hyphens
should appear here.**

Validation Sticker



- Number must read from left to right on both sides of the bow.
- Number must be in at least three-inch-high **BLOCK** letters. Number's color must contrast sharply with its background.
- Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen: **VT 3717 ZW** or **VT-3717-ZW**.
- No other numbers may be displayed on either side of the bow.
- Stickers must be displayed on both sides. The sticker on the port side must precede the registration number. The sticker on the starboard side must follow the registration number.

Where to Title and Register Your Vessel

Your Certificate of Registration, validation stickers, and title can be obtained by submitting the proper application and fee to:

Department of Motor Vehicles
120 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05603-0001

To obtain registration/title and validation sticker application forms:

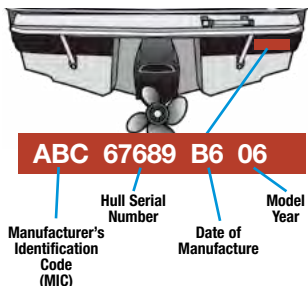
- Call the Vermont DMV at **802-828-2000**.
- Visit the DMV website at dmv.vermont.gov and download registration forms.
- Visit any DMV office, any State Police office, or a participating Town Clerk office.
- Visit any marine dealers and marinas.

Other Facts About Titling and Registering

- All motorized vessels that are 16 feet long or longer and 15 years old or newer must be titled as well as registered. The application to obtain the title to your vessel is a part of the same form used to register the vessel.
- The registration fee includes the validation stickers.
- Registration is valid for one year from date of issue. You may not register for a partial year. The same registration number remains with your vessel from year to year unless you fail to renew.
- If you change your address or transfer ownership of your vessel, you must notify the DMV within 15 days of the change.
- If your registered vessel is lost, stolen, or abandoned, you must report it to local authorities and to the DMV within 15 days.
- If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Registration or a sticker, you must apply for a duplicate and submit a processing fee.
- Larger recreational vessels owned by U.S. citizens may (at the option of the owner) be documented by the USCG. Owners of documented vessels must apply for and display Vermont validation stickers.
- A vessel of less than 10 horsepower (hp) used as a tender to a registered vessel will be deemed registered at no additional cost. The vessel must have the same registration number as the registered vessel painted or attached to both sides of the vessel's bow followed by the number "1."

Hull Identification Number (HIN)

- The Hull Identification Number (HIN) is a unique, 12-digit number assigned by the manufacturer to vessels built after 1972.
- These numbers:
 - Distinguish one vessel from another.
 - Are engraved in the fiberglass or on a metal plate permanently attached to the transom.



- You should write down your HIN and put it in a place separate from your vessel in case warranty problems arise or your vessel is stolen.
- If the HIN is missing or non-existent, such as with a homemade vessel, apply for an identification number from the DMV.
 - If the vessel does not need a title or is valued at less than \$1,000, a number will be assigned and mailed to you. You will attach it to the vessel.
 - If the vessel requires a title or is valued at \$1,000 or more, a DMV Inspector will attach the HIN.

Vessel Identification Sticker for Your Canoe, Kayak, or Rowboat

These stickers have enabled authorities to return lost non-powered vessels to their owners and have saved countless hours of unnecessary searches. Stickers may be obtained at boating safety events or from a Marine Patrol Officer.



Schedule of Fees

For the most recent information regarding the schedule of fees for motorboats, validation stickers, and other fees, visit dmv.vermont.gov/registrations/fees.

Buying or Selling a Vessel

- If a vessel is purchased from a marine dealer, it may be registered and titled through the dealer. You pay the registration and title fees to the dealer, and the dealer issues a temporary registration valid for 30 days. You receive your permanent registration and title from the DMV by mail.
- If you sell a vessel, you must:
 - Give the new owner a bill of sale, including the HIN.
 - Transfer registration within 15 days of the sale if it is a registered vessel.
 - Notify the DMV within 30 days if your vessel has, or should have had, validation stickers.
 - Have each owner shown on the title properly sign the back of the title, selling it to the new owner.
- To transfer vessel registration to a new owner:
 - The former owner completes the reverse side of the current registration certificate and sends it to the DMV, along with the other items listed under “What You Need to Register and Title a Vessel.” Date of sale and the name and address of the new owner must be completed on the back of the registration certificate.
 - If the new owner wishes to retain the registration number on the purchased vessel, the new owner must complete a new registration and title application and Vermont Sales & Use Tax Return and send both, with the correct fees, to the DMV (see address under “Where to Title and Register Your Vessel”).
 - In Vermont, you may transfer your registration if you purchase a new vessel. When transferring the registration, the new vessel may be registered for the remainder of the current registration year. File the new application and Vermont Sales & Use Tax Return, and pay the transfer fee plus any additional fee for the change in length. The validation stickers are not transferable to the new vessel. The owner must apply for new validation stickers.

What You Need to Register and Title a Vessel

Obtain New Registration and/or Title

- Registration and title application
- If a previously owned vessel, Vermont Sales & Use Tax Return, proof that Vermont Sales & Use Tax has been paid, or proof of tax paid in another state
- Title if a previously owned vessel or Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin (MCO) for a new vessel
- Proper fees

Transfer Registration and Title

- Registration and title application
- Vermont Sales & Use Tax Return, proof that Vermont Sales & Use Tax has been paid, or proof of tax paid in another state
- Previous registration certificate showing to whom your old vessel was sold or assigned
- Title, properly assigned
- Visual verification of the HIN by a certified law enforcement officer
- Proper fees

Obtain Validation Stickers

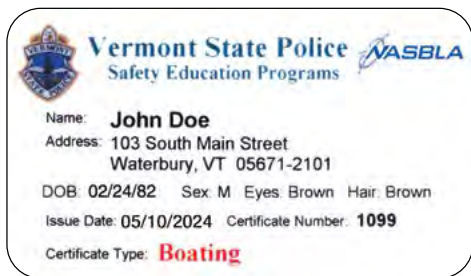
- Application for vessel validation
- Proof of valid registration or documentation from another state or province
- Vermont Sales & Use Tax Return, proof that Vermont Sales & Use Tax has been paid, or proof of tax paid in another state
- Proper fees

Obtain Title for a Homemade Vessel

- Registration and title application
- MCO to a Homemade Vessel (available from DMV)
- Application for assignment of Vermont HIN to a vessel
- Proper fees

Who May Operate a Vessel

- All persons born after January 1, 1974, must complete an approved boating safety education course successfully to operate any motorized vessel legally (this includes personal watercraft or PWC).
- The boating safety education course must be approved by the Vermont Department of Public Safety. Those successfully completing a course are issued a certificate by the Vermont State Police, which is valid for the student's lifetime. Those younger than 12 years of age but older than 10 years of age must take a classroom course.
- Persons required to have completed the course must carry the course certificate on board when operating a motorized vessel.
- Those born after January 1, 1974, are exempted from the above if they:
 - Are licensed by the USCG to operate a commercial vessel *or...*
 - Operate the vessel only on a private lake or pond *or...*
 - Are not a resident of Vermont and have proof that they have passed an approved boater education course in another state.
- No one under 12 years of age may operate any vessel powered by a motor of more than 6 hp legally, even if the person has completed a boating safety education course successfully.
- No one under 16 years of age may operate a PWC legally, even if the person has completed a boating safety education course successfully.



Marine Events

- To hold a marine parade, regatta, race, tournament, exhibition, or any other event on Vermont waters, you must obtain authorization from the Vermont State Police.
- The person in charge of the event must apply to the Vermont State Police for a permit at least 30 days prior to the event.



Enforcement

The boating laws of Vermont are enforced by the troopers of the Vermont State Police, wardens of the Vermont Warden Service, USCG officers, and any other authorized peace officer or law enforcement officer. The USCG also has enforcement authority on all federally controlled waters.

- An operator must stop his or her vessel when signaled to do so by an officer wearing an identifying insignia or by a law enforcement vessel sounding a siren or flashing a blue light. It is illegal to fail to stop or to try to elude the officer.
- The officer has the authority to stop and board your vessel in order to check that you are complying with state and federal laws.



Required Equipment

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

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

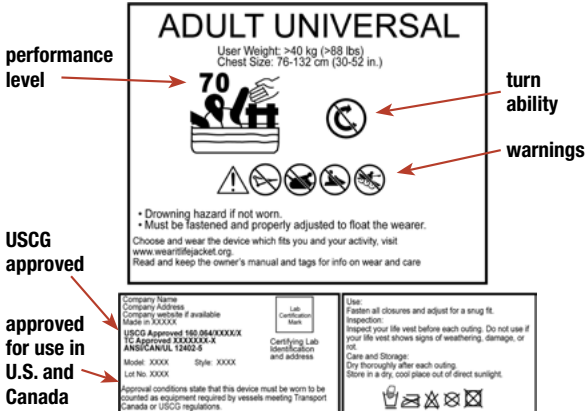
- All vessels, except sailboards, must carry one USCG–approved wearable personal flotation device (PFD), sometimes called a life jacket, for each person on board.
- Children under 12 years of age must *wear* a USCG–approved wearable PFD at all times while underway on the open deck of any vessel.
- A person under 16 years of age must *wear* a USCG–approved wearable PFD at all times while on board a sailboard.
- If a person chooses to wear a PFD that is not USCG approved (when not specifically required), a properly fitting USCG–approved PFD must be carried on board the vessel to meet the state and federal carriage requirements.
- Everyone on board a PWC must *wear* a USCG–approved wearable PFD.
- Anyone being towed behind a vessel must *wear* a USCG–approved wearable PFD. Ski belts are not approved PFDs.
- All PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition and must be readily accessible. Wearable PFDs must be of the proper size for the intended wearer. Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.

PFD Label

Every USCG–approved PFD has a label that contains important information. While boating, you may encounter old- or new-style PFD labels.

Not all PFDs available are USCG approved. Regardless if the PFD label is in the old or new style, there must be a USCG approval number, and the PFD must be used in accordance with the labeling information to meet the legal requirements.

- The older, legacy labels have a type number (Types I–V).
 - The type number indicates the conditions and the intended use for which the PFD is designed.
 - PFDs with these labels may still be used in the country where they are approved as long as they are in serviceable condition.
- The new labels have a performance level icon that contains a number, typically ranging from 50 to 150.
 - A lower number means the PFD is intended for near-shore activities in calm waters. PFDs designed for near-shore use offer greater mobility and comfort. However, they will not turn most unconscious persons face up.
 - A higher number means the PFD is intended for offshore activities. PFDs designed for offshore use offer greater flotation, turning ability, and stability.
 - PFDs with these labels are approved for use in both the U.S. and Canada.



Warnings

Some PFDs are **not** approved for certain activities:

- Water-skiing
- PWC or wakeboarding
- Tubing
- Whitewater paddling

Turn Ability

- The PFD will turn an unconscious person face up. Test before use.
- The PFD will not turn an unconscious person face up.

Engine Cut-Off Device Requirement

Any vessel operated with 3 or more hp, with open helm stations, that is less than 26 feet in length, and equipped with an engine cut-off switch (ECOS), shall utilize the ECOS link while operating on plane or above displacement speed, while operating on federally navigable waterways. Lake Champlain, Lake Memphremagog, and Wallace Pond fall within this requirement.

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.
- A masthead light and a sternlight visible from a distance of at least three miles away—or if less than 39.4 feet long, an all-round white light or both a masthead light and a sternlight visible from 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 from 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

Effective April 20, 2022, any non-rechargeable (disposable) fire extinguisher that is older than 12 years should be removed from service. Refer to the date of manufacturing stamped on the bottle; for example, “05” means “2005.”

- Federal law requires all vessels, including PWC, to have a Type B fire extinguisher on board if one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - Any inboard engine
 - Closed compartments where portable fuel tanks may be stored
 - Double bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not filled completely with flotation material
 - Closed living spaces
 - Closed storage compartments in which flammable or combustible materials may be stored
 - Permanently installed fuel tanks (any tank where the removal of the tank is hampered by the installation of tie-down straps or clamps)
- In Vermont, vessels less than 26 feet in length that do not carry passengers for hire are exempt from this requirement if the vessel is constructed in a way that flammable or explosive gases and vapors cannot be trapped in any compartment or space in the vessel.
- Approved types of fire extinguishers are identified by the following marking on the label—“Marine Type USCG Approved”—followed by the size and type symbols and the approval number.
- When required by the USCG, fire extinguishers must be on board the vessel and readily accessible—where they can be easily reached. When deciding on a place to store a fire extinguisher, make sure to consider how easy it is to reach in the event of a fire. It is recommended that the fire extinguisher be conspicuously and securely mounted on its intended hanger or bracket.

The following information is **effective April 20, 2022**.

- Vessels that have a **model year** of 2018 and newer may carry only 5-B or 20-B rated fire extinguishers with date stamp.
- Vessels with a model year between 1953 and 2017 may carry either:
 - Unexpired 5-B or 20-B rated fire extinguishers *or...*
 - B-I or B-II rated fire extinguishers that are in good and serviceable condition.

Model Year means the period beginning June 1 of a year and ending on July 31 of the following year and being designated by the year in which it ends.

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

Fire Extinguisher Requirements

Classification	Foam	Carbon Dioxide	Dry Chemical
type & size	minimum gallons	minimum pounds	minimum pounds
5-B	1¼	4	2
20-B	2½	15	10
Length of Vessel	Without Fixed System	With Fixed System*	
Less than 26 ft.	one 5-B	none	
26 ft. to less than 40 ft.	two 5-B (or one 20-B)	one 5-B	
40 ft. to less than 65 ft.	three 5-B (or one 20-B and one 5-B)	two 5-B (or one 20-B)	
*refers to a permanently installed fire extinguisher system			

Note: One 20-B portable fire extinguisher may be substituted for two 5-B portable fire extinguishers. For vessels with a model year between 1953 and 2017, one 20-B/B-II portable fire extinguisher may be substituted for two 5-B/B-I portable fire extinguishers.

- Extinguishers must not be expired or appear to have been previously used. They must be maintained in good and serviceable condition. Good and serviceable condition means that the fire extinguisher on board:
 - Is charged and indicates it is charged if the extinguisher has a pressure gauge reading or indicator *and...*
 - Has a pin lock that is firmly in place *and...*
 - Does not show visible signs of significant corrosion or damage *and...*
 - Has a discharge nozzle that is clean and free of obstructions.

Fire Extinguisher Charge Indicators

Check the charge level of your fire extinguishers regularly. Replace them immediately if they are not fully charged.



green button

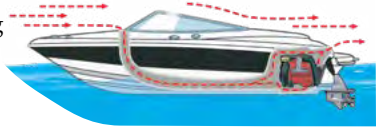
To check this style of extinguisher, depress the green button. If it is fully charged, the green button should pop back out immediately.



On this style of fire extinguisher, the needle indicator should be in the "full" range.

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 PWC), open the engine compartment and sniff for gasoline fumes before starting the engine.

Backfire Flame Arrestors

Backfire flame arrestors are designed to prevent the ignition of gasoline vapors in case the engine backfires.

- All powerboats (except outboards) that are fueled with gasoline must have an approved backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor.
- Backfire flame arrestors must be:
 - In good and serviceable condition *and...*
 - USCG approved (must comply with SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 standards).
- Periodically clean the flame arrestor and check for damage.

Mufflers

All vessel engines must be equipped with an effective muffling device or underwater exhaust. Vessel operators may not hear sound signals or voices if the engine is not adequately muffled.

- The noise level of any motorized vessel measured at a distance of 50 feet or more from the vessel must not exceed 82 dBA in normal operating environments.
- The use of cutouts is prohibited.

Sound-Producing Devices

- Vessels less than 39.4 feet (12 meters) in length, which includes PWC, must have some way of making an efficient sound signal. Examples are a handheld air horn, an athletic whistle, an installed horn, etc. A human voice is not acceptable.
- Vessels that are 39.4 feet (12 meters) or more in length must have a sound-producing device that can produce an efficient sound signal. The sound signal should be audible for one-half mile and should last for 4 to 6 seconds.

Common Sound Signals

Restricted Visibility

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

Warning

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

Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

- Vessels on federally controlled waters must be equipped with visual distress signals (VDSs) that are USCG 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

- *Note:* Although Lakes Champlain and Memphremagog are under federal control, VDSs are not required on these waters.
- If pyrotechnic VDSs are used, they must be dated. Expired VDSs may be carried on board, but a minimum of three unexpired VDSs must be carried in the vessel.
- VDSs are classified as day signals (visible in bright sunlight), night signals (visible at night), or both day and night signals. VDSs are either pyrotechnic (smoke and flames) or non-pyrotechnic (non-combustible).



Day

Handheld Orange Smoke (Pyrotechnic)
 Floating Orange Smoke (Pyrotechnic)
 Orange Flag (Non-Pyrotechnic)

Night

Electric Light (Non-Pyrotechnic)

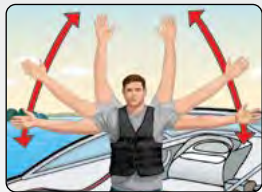
Day and Night

Red Meteor (Pyrotechnic)
 Red Flare (Pyrotechnic)

Federally Controlled Waters

Vessels must observe federal requirements on these waters:

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



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.

On the Water

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

Unlawful Operation

Vermont law states that these dangerous operating practices are illegal.

- **Careless and Reckless Operation** of a vessel or the reckless manipulation of water skis, a surfboard, or a similar device is operating in a manner that causes danger to the life, limb, or property of any person. Examples of illegal, reckless operation are:
 - Boating in restricted areas without regard for other boaters or persons, posted speeds and wake restrictions, diver-down flags, etc.
 - Boating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Failing to follow the navigation rules shown under “Encountering Other Vessels”
 - Weaving through congested waterway traffic
 - Swerving at the last possible moment in order to avoid collision
 - Causing danger or damage from the wake of your vessel
 - Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife with your vessel
- **Overloading** is loading the vessel beyond a safe carrying capacity, taking into consideration the weather and other operating conditions.

- **Improper Speed or Distance** is not maintaining a proper speed or distance while operating a vessel or while towing a person on water skis or any similar device. Specifically, the following actions are illegal:
 - Operating a vessel (except sailboards) at greater than **“no wake speed”** within 200 feet of:
 - The shoreline
 - A person in the water
 - A canoe, rowboat, or other vessel
 - An anchored or moored vessel with a person on board
 - An anchorage or dock
 - Operating a vessel at speeds of five miles per hour or greater within 200 feet of a marked swimming area
 - Operating a vessel at speeds that may cause danger, injury, or damage. Be aware of and obey all regulatory markers, including areas marked as “no wake”

“No Wake Speed” means operating your vessel at a speed at which the vessel does not produce a wake, not to exceed five miles per hour.

- **Violating Underwater Historic Preservation Area Requirements** is the failure to follow the requirements that govern operation in areas marked “State of Vermont Underwater Historic Preserve.” Vessels may not operate in these areas. Additional requirements also apply in these areas.
 - A vessel may secure to a yellow buoy only if diving at the preserve. These vessels must be 35 feet in length or less and display a diver-down flag. No more than one vessel may moor to a yellow buoy.
 - When a vessel is secured to a yellow buoy, all other vessels must stay at least 200 feet from the buoy.
 - A vessel may not anchor within 200 feet of a yellow buoy.

Alcohol and Drugs

Vermont law prohibits anyone from boating while intoxicated (BWI) due to alcohol, drugs, or any combination.

- Vermont law states that a person is considered to be intoxicated if he or she has a concentration of alcohol of 0.08% or more (based on a chemical analysis of breath or blood) or is under the influence of alcohol or any other drug to a degree that he or she is incapable of operating safely.
- Vermont law establishes the following penalties.
 - Upon first conviction, offenders lose the privilege to operate any vessel (except for a non-motorized canoe or rowboat) for up to one year, must complete successfully an alcohol program at their own expense, and are fined up to \$750.
 - Upon subsequent convictions, the fine is increased up to \$1,000.
 - A person boating while intoxicated who causes the death of someone will, upon conviction, be imprisoned for up to 15 years, fined up to \$10,000, or both imprisoned and fined.
 - A person boating while intoxicated who causes serious bodily injury to someone will, upon conviction, be imprisoned for up to 15 years, fined up to \$5,000, or both imprisoned and fined.
- Vermont law has special provisions for operators under 21 years of age.
 - It is unlawful for those under 21 years to operate with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.02% or more.
 - For a first violation, the offender loses the privilege to operate any vessel (except for non-motorized canoe or rowboat) for at least six months and must complete successfully an alcohol program at their own expense. For subsequent violations, privilege to operate is lost for one year or until the person is 21 years old, whichever is longer.



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

- A person under 21 years old who refuses to submit to a breath test is subject to the same penalties as BWI.
- By operating a vessel on Vermont waters, you have consented to be tested for alcohol or drugs if requested by a law enforcement officer.

Accidents and Casualties

- An operator involved in a boating accident must:
 - Stop his or her vessel *immediately* at the scene **and...**
 - Assist anyone injured in the accident or minimize any danger caused by the accident, unless doing so would seriously endanger his or her vessel or passengers **and...**
 - Give his or her name, address, and identifying number of his or her vessel in writing to anyone injured from the accident and to the owner of any damaged property.
- The operator also must file an accident report with the Vermont DMV within 36 hours of the accident if:
 - A person dies or disappears **or...**
 - A person is injured requiring treatment beyond first aid **or...**
 - Damage to the vessel and other property exceeds \$2,000.
- Accident report forms are available from any office of the Vermont DMV or any office of the Vermont State Police.

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.

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 in a way that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.
- Moor or attach a vessel to a buoy (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.

Diver-Down Flags

- Scuba divers or snorkelers must display a diver-down flag to mark their diving area.
- Vessels must not operate within 200 feet of a displayed diver-down flag.



Divers Flag



Alfa Flag

A rectangular red flag, at least 12 x 12 inches, with a white diagonal stripe is required on Vermont waters.

A blue-and-white International Code Flag A (or Alfa flag) is required on federal and international waters.

Discharge of Trash

- It is illegal to dump refuse, garbage, or plastics into any state or federally controlled waters.
- 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.

Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

- It is illegal to discharge oil or hazardous substances.
- You are not allowed to dump oil into the bilge of the vessel without means for proper disposal.
- You must discharge oil waste to a reception facility. On recreational vessels, a bucket or bailer is adequate.
- You must immediately notify the National Response Center (**1-800-424-8802**) if your vessel discharges oil or hazardous substances in the water. You also must call Vermont Emergency Management (**1-800-641-5005**) and report the discharge.
- 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 Sewage and Waste

- It is illegal for a vessel to discharge sewage into the waters of Vermont.
- All vessels equipped with a marine toilet must have a wastewater holding system to prevent the discharge of waste products into surrounding waters.
- Any holding tank or marine toilet that is designed to allow discharge into the water (such as a those with a Y valve) must have the openings sealed shut. Also any discharge lines, pipes, or hoses must be disconnected and stored while the vessel is on Vermont waters.
- Residential use of vessels with overnight sleeping facilities is prohibited on waters that do not have sanitary waste pump-out facilities.

Specifically for PWC

PWC operators must obey laws that apply to other vessels as well as obey additional requirements that apply specifically to the operation of PWC.

Requirements Specific to PWC


- Everyone on board a PWC must *wear* a USCG–approved wearable PFD.
- An operator of a PWC equipped with a lanyard-type ECOS must attach the lanyard to his or her person, clothing, or PFD.
- PWC may be operated only during the hours between sunrise and sunset.
- You must be at least 16 years of age to operate a PWC.



Sharing Your PWC...Safely!

Sharing the fun of your PWC with friends is all part of the boating experience. Before you share your PWC, however, make sure that others you allow to operate it understand their responsibilities as an operator. They need to know that they have the same responsibilities as any other vessel operator, including obeying the navigation rules.

In addition:

- Make sure that anyone you allow to operate your PWC meets the minimum age and education requirements for PWC operation in Vermont and the local waterway you are using.
- 
- Show new operators how to start and reboard the PWC while on shore or in shallow water.
 - Explain how to steer and control the PWC. Tell all new operators and remind experienced operators that ***power is required for steering control!***
 - Make sure that the operator understands how to use the ECOS and attaches the lanyard to his or her person or PFD before starting the engine.
 - Have anyone new to PWC go out in an uncongested area first. Tell them to stay clear of other PWC, boats, or persons in the water.
 - Explain how to recognize a “slow, no wake” speed marker and what to do when approaching one.

Specifically for Skiing

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

Requirements for Towing Skiers

- All persons being towed behind a vessel on water skis or any other device must *wear* a USCG–approved wearable PFD. Ski belts are not approved PFDs.
- Every vessel towing a person(s) on water skis or any other device must have a person who is at least 12 years old on board, in addition to the vessel operator, in a position to observe the towed person(s).
- If towing a skier with a PWC, the PWC should be rated for at least three people—the operator, the observer, and the skier.
- A reasonable distance from other vessels, people, and property must be maintained so as not to endanger life or property. Unless necessary for landing or leaving shore, it is illegal to cause the towed device or person being towed to approach within 100 feet of:
 - A person swimming
 - A canoe, rowboat, or other small vessel with a person on board
- Some areas less than 200 feet from the shoreline may be designated for water-skiing. These areas may have special rules governing their use. (See “Lake-Specific Rules Regulating the Use of Particular Public Waters” online at dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/vermont-use-public-waters-rules.)

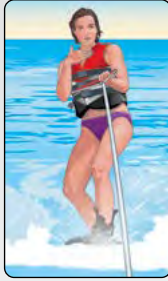


Hand Signals for Skiers

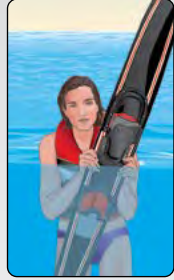
Knowing proper hand signals will help the skier(s) communicate with their boat operator or the observer.



Skier OK



Stop



Skier down—watch!



Speed up



Slow down



Speed OK



Turn left



Turn right

Stop the Spread of Nuisance Species

An increasing number of non-native aquatic plants and animals are invading Vermont waters. When moved into new waters, these species rapidly multiply, causing significant economic and ecological damage. Do your part to help prevent the spread of nuisance species.

- Inspect your vessel, trailer, and equipment (motor, anchors, centerboards, rollers, axles, etc.), and remove any plants and animals you see before leaving the area.
- Discard unused bait in the trash, or leave it with someone fishing in the same body of water.
- Drain water from the motor, live well, bilge, and transom wells while on land and before leaving the area.
- Rinse your vessel, propeller, trailer, and equipment with tap water (preferably hot) or at a car wash.
- Dry vessel and equipment in the sun for at least five days.
- Learn how to identify aquatic nuisance species.
- Report sightings of aquatic nuisance species to:
Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Water Quality Division
802-828-1535
dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/aquatic-invasives

Notice:

- The transport of all aquatic plants and aquatic plant parts, zebra mussels, quagga mussels, or other specified aquatic nuisance species to or from any Vermont surface water is illegal in Vermont (under Vermont Statutes Annotated, Title 10, Chapter 50, §1454 regarding the transport of aquatic plants and aquatic nuisance species). The law defines an aquatic plant as “a plant that naturally grows in water, saturated soils, or seasonally saturated soils, including algae and submerged, floating-leafed, floating, or emergent plants.”
- Effective July 1, 2010, any person who violates this law may be subject to a fine of up to \$1,197 per violation.

Types of Aquatic Nuisance Species

Introducing non-native species into Vermont waters can upset the balance of the ecosystem, harming the environment. Below are some common nuisance species.



Eurasian Watermilfoil A prolific aquatic plant found in Lake Champlain and many inland lakes in Vermont. It interferes with boating and displaces native plants. It is spread easily when plant fragments are caught and moved via boat trailers, propellers, anchors, or wet wells. Plant fragments can initiate new plants and become well established.

Zebra Mussel A tiny D-shaped mollusk, well established in Lake Champlain. It can clog water intake pipes, damage vessel engines, obscure historic shipwrecks, and alter native species populations. Adult zebra mussels can attach to and be moved on vessel hulls, engines, and other equipment. Microscopic larvae can get trapped and moved in water of vessel engines, bilges, bait buckets, and live wells.

Water Chestnut A prolific annual plant found in southern Lake Champlain, Lake Bomoseen, and a few inland lakes. It interferes with boating, hunting, and fishing and displaces native plants. It is spread by seeds or rosettes caught in vessels and equipment.

Alewife A small bait fish recently found in Lake St. Catherine. The alewife may displace smelt and other native forage fish. It can be introduced to new bodies of water if accidentally or intentionally caught and used for bait or if dumped from bait buckets or live wells.

Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules

In addition to state and federal regulations, many public waters have specific rules for watercraft such as speed limits or vessel prohibitions.

For more details about Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules, including a full list of general and lake-specific rules, please visit dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/vermont-use-public-waters-rules, or scan this QR Code to access these lake-specific rules.



SCAN ME



Vermont Required Equipment Checklist



	PWC	Boat Less Than 16 Ft.	Boat 16 Ft. to Less Than 26 Ft.
Boating Safety Education Certificate	✓1	✓1	✓1
Certificate of Registration on Board	✓	✓	✓
Validation Decals Displayed	✓	✓	✓
Wearable PFDs	✓2	✓2	✓2
Throwable Device			✓3
Type 5-B Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓
ECOS	✓	✓4	✓4
Backfire Flame Arrestor	✓	✓5	✓5
Ventilation System	✓	✓	✓
Muffler	✓	✓	✓
Horn, Whistle, or Bell	✓	✓	✓
Daytime VDSs			4, 7
Nighttime VDSs	6	4, 7	4, 7
Navigation Lights	6	✓	✓

1. Applicable if operator is born after January 1, 1974.
2. Those on a PWC must *wear* a PFD at all times. Those under the age of 12 must *wear* a PFD while underway on an open deck.
3. Required on vessels 16 feet or longer operating on U.S. waterways determined navigable by the USCG, including Lake Champlain, Lake Memphremagog, and Wallace Pond.
4. Required when boating on federally controlled waters.
5. Required on all powerboats (except outboards).
6. Certain items are not applicable to PWC because they are only allowed to operate between sunrise and sunset.
7. Not required on Vermont waters but recommended.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Headquarters: 45 State Dr.
Waterbury, VT 05671
802-244-8727

REGIONAL OFFICES

Berlin
578 Paine Turnpike North
Berlin, VT 05602
802-229-9191

Derby
35 Crawford Road
P.O. Box 410
Derby, VT 05829
802-334-8881

New Haven
P.O. Box 83
New Haven, VT 05472
802-388-4919

Royalton
2011 VT Route 107
Bethel, VT 05032
802-234-9933

Rutland
124 State Place
Rutland, VT 05701
802-773-9101

St. Albans
140 Fisher Pond Road
St. Albans, VT 05478
802-524-5993

St. Johnsbury
1068 US Route 5,
Suite #1
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
802-748-3111

Shaftsbury
96 Airport Road
Shaftsbury, VT 05262
802-442-5421

Westminster
1330 Westminster
Heights Road
Putney, VT 05346
802-722-4600

Williston
3294 St. George Rd.
Williston, VT 05495
802-878-7111



Al Johnson
Boating Law
Administrator

Sgt. Jacob Metayer
Marine Division Supervisor

Website: vsp.vermont.gov



Sgt. Jenna Reed
Boating Education & Law
Enforcement Coordinator

Website:
vtfishandwildlife.com

GET YOUR FREE SAFETY INSPECTION FROM THE VERMONT STATE POLICE

Upon successful completion of a safety inspection, the boat owner is awarded a safety inspection decal that signifies compliance with Vermont's boating equipment requirements. Affix this decal on the port (left) front half of the vessel.

