



## TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE OF BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION

### RENTAL VESSELS SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET

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#### EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

All vessels must have certain safety equipment on board. The equipment must be in serviceable condition and some must be U.S. Coast Guard (U.S.C.G.) approved. Equipment requirements are based on the size of the boat and the number of persons on board. This section does not cover ALL equipment required or the complete details. It is an overview of the most important. To insure that you have the proper equipment on board, you should obtain a copy of the MD State and Federal Requirements for Recreational Boating.

##### A. LIFE JACKETS:

The most important safety equipment you need to carry is life jackets. While not required to be worn at all times for those thirteen and older, it is strongly recommended that all persons on board wear their life jackets. **If there is a child under the age of thirteen on board a boat that is less than 21 feet in length, that child MUST be wearing a life jacket while the vessel is underway.** This requirement does not apply when a vessel is moored or anchored or, when a child is below deck or in an enclosed cabin. Also, a child under the age of 4 must wear a life jacket that features additional safety precautions, as appropriate for an infant, toddler, or young child, so as to:

- Hold the child securely within the life jacket, including a strap that is secured between the child's legs to fasten together the front and back of the life jacket.
- Maintain the buoyancy of the child, including an inflatable headrest or high collar; and
- Ensure the ready accessibility of the child from the water, including a web handle.

There must be one (1) U.S.C.G. approved type I, II, III or V life jacket on board for each person. A type V life jacket must be worn AT ALL TIMES to be legal. For boats 16 feet or longer, one type IV throwable life ring is also required. Life jackets must be readily accessible, in serviceable condition and fit the person intended. A proper fit is a snug fit. A loose life jacket may slip off in the water. Remember, "Life Jackets Float, You Don't!"

##### B. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:

For boats under 26 feet in length, one (1) B-I U.S.C.G. approved fire extinguisher is required except on outboards with gas tanks not permanently installed or on vessels constructed so there are no areas that flammable gases will be entrapped. Even though fire extinguishers are not required on some outboard vessels, they are strongly recommended. On boats 26 feet in length to less than 40 feet in length, two (2) B-I or one (1) B-II U.S.C.G. fire extinguishers are required. On boats 40 feet in length to less than 65 feet in length, three (3) B-I or one (1) B-I and one (1) B-II are required.

##### C. VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS:

All vessels used on coastal waters, the Great Lakes, territorial seas and those waters connected directly to them, **up to a point where a body of water is less than two (2) miles wide**, must be equipped with U.S.C.G. approved visual distress signals. Boats less than 16 feet in length, open sailboats less than 26 feet in length not equipped with propulsion machinery and manually propelled vessels are not required to carry

day signals but must carry night signals when operating from sunset to sunrise. When using pyrotechnic devices, at least three (3) signals must be on board. Visual distress signals shall not be displayed unless assistance is required to prevent immediate or potential danger to the persons on board a vessel.

**D. BELL OR WHISTLE:**

Every vessel less than twelve meters in length must carry an efficient sound-producing device. Whistle, air horn or electric horn is acceptable. On vessels twelve meters or less than 20 meters, a bell is required in addition to a power whistle or power horn.

**E. CAPACITY PLATE**

A capacity plate is required on all motorized vessels less than 20 feet in length and propelled by machinery or oars as its main source of power. The capacity plate must be in view of the operator where it can be easily read. The capacity plate indicates the maximum horsepower engine the boat can handle and maximum person capacity by weight, and maximum weight capacity in pounds. Do not load your boat beyond the maximum requirements and configurations.

## **NAVIGATION RULES AND BOAT OPERATION**

### **Navigation Rules**

The following is a summary of the navigation rules (Rules of the Road). They are designed to give boaters basic operating procedures in various situations. The purpose of the navigation rules is to prevent collisions. There are no traffic lights or signs on the water. Boaters must know the rules in order to operate a vessel safely.

#### **Responsibilities:**

A boat operator is responsible for the safety of all passengers, their boat's wake and any damage caused by it, maintaining a proper lookout and safe speed, and using good seamanship. The foundation of the navigation rules is good seamanship. This means making the proper decisions and using good judgment while boating.

#### **Proper Lookout:**

Boat operators must maintain a proper lookout at all times while operating a boat. In front, to the rear and both sides. Boaters must constantly be on the lookout for objects in the water, other boats, obstructions, and people in the water. Always maintain a proper lookout.

#### **Safe Speed**

The navigation rules require that a boat be operated at a safe speed at all times. Unless specifically posted safe speed is determined by the boat operator and varies according to the weather, time of day or night, boat characteristics, other boat traffic, and water conditions. Boats should be operated at a speed that allows the operator to control the boat to avoid a collision.

#### **Risk of Collision**

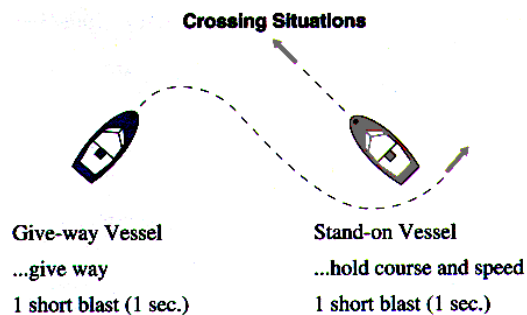
Risk of collision exists when there is a possibility that two boats will arrive at the same point on the water at the same time. Maintaining a proper lookout is important to insure that risk of collision is eliminated. The first indication of risk of collision is when an operator observes another boat at a constant bearing or constant relative position and a decreasing range. For example, if you observe a boat 600 yards away at 300 degrees and the boat stays at 300 degrees, you have risk of collision. If the boat changes bearing as you continue, you do not have risk of collision and will not meet in the same place at the same time. When risk of collision exists, the navigation rules make one boat a "stand-on" vessel and the other a "give-way" vessel. The risk of collision ends when both boats have avoided the collision by taking proper action under the rules of the road.

### Stand-On and Give-Way Vessels

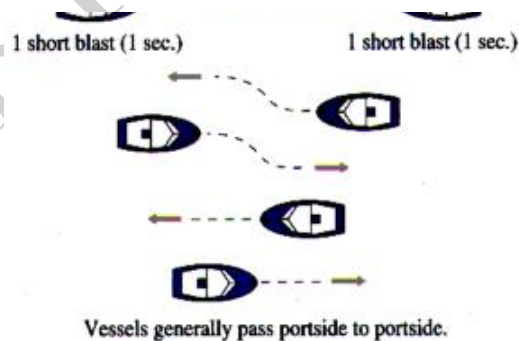
Under the Rules of the Road, the “stand-on” vessel is required to maintain course and speed. The give-way vessel is required to stop, slow down or properly change course to insure a collision does not occur. The operator of the stand-on vessel should not assume that the “give-way” vessel would take the proper action. Both boat operators are required to avoid a collision.

### Crossing Situation

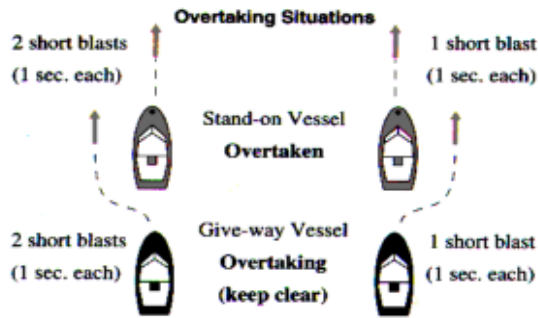
In the diagram below, the boat on the right is the “stand-on” vessel. The operator is required to maintain course and speed. The boat on the left is the “give-way” vessel. This is because all boats have a danger zone from dead ahead (12 o’clock) to starboard (right) 112.5 degrees (4 o’clock). In the crossing situation below, the boat on the right is in the danger zone of the boat on the left. Therefore, the boat on the left is required to give-way by stopping or slowing down and passing astern (behind) the boat on the right.



In the meeting situation below (two boats meeting head-on), both are the “give-way” vessels. Boats generally pass by turning to starboard and passing port side to port side. However, vessels may pass by turning to port and passing starboard to starboard if proper signals are given.



In the overtaking situations below, the boat being passed is the “stand-on” vessel. It must maintain its course and speed while the overtaking (give-way) vessel passes by. The overtaking boat is always the “give-way” vessel and it may pass on either side.



### **Sound Signals**

A sound signal should be used when within hearing distance of another boat. The signal indicates the boat's intent to maneuver. If in agreement, the boat about to be passed responds with the same signal.

Short blast – One second in duration

Prolonged blast – 4-6 seconds in duration

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 short blast:          | I intend to leave you on my port side (turn to the right)     |
| 2 short blasts:         | I intend to leave you on my starboard side (turn to the left) |
| 3 short blasts:         | I am operating in reverse                                     |
| 5 or more short blasts: | Doubt or danger   |

### **Other Important Rules of the Road**

Sailboats under sail only have the right of way over power-driven vessels unless the sailboat is overtaking the power-driven vessel or it is approaching a boat at anchor.

Sailboats under power or sail and power are considered power-driven vessels and are required to observe the Rules of the Road for power-driven vessels.

In narrow channels, recreational vessels must not hamper the operation of large vessels that cannot operate outside of the channels. Recreational vessels should operate to the starboard side of the channel. It is also recommended to stay clear of large vessels. They do not have the ability to maneuver to avoid a collision. They are also unable to stop quickly and are traveling faster than they appear to be. Avoid the wakes of large vessels as they can overturn a recreational vessel.

### **Night Operations**

Navigation lights are designed to identify the type of boat and it's situation – underway, at anchor, direction of travel, etc. Operation of a vessel at night can be very difficult and requires detailed knowledge of lighting and navigation. **IF YOU PLAN TO OPERATE AT NIGHT, BECOME KNOWLEDGEABLE OF LIGHTING CONFIGURATIONS AND NIGHT OPERATIONS BEFORE YOU VENTURE OUT. A BOATING SAFETY COURSE WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH THIS INFORMATION.**

### **Aids to Navigation (ATONS)**

ATONS are designed to designate safe channels and/or hazards for boaters. For our purposes, there are two systems involved. The first is the U.S. ATON or lateral system. The second is the Uniform State Waterway Marking System (USWMS). Under the Lateral System, the 3R rule of "red, right, returning" applies. When returning from sea, keep red aids on the right-hand (starboard) side of your vessel. Conversely, the green aids will be on the left (port) side of your vessel.

Nautical charts identify the location of ATONS (Nav aids) on the water. By matching the location of the ATON on the chart, with the ATON on the water, you will know where you are located. The phrase "Red, Right, Returning" is a common boating saying that means that when returning from sea, you should have red buoys on the right side of your vessel.

The other system of navigation aids is the Uniform State Waterway Marking System. These are primarily regulatory buoys providing important information. They are white cans with orange shapes and black lettering. A diamond shape on the marker indicates danger. A diamond shape with a cross in it indicates that boats must stay out. A circle gives messages concerning speed limits, areas to anchor, activities that may or may not be done in an area, etc. A square or rectangle has messages on it not related to regulations, but informational to the boater.

A white sphere with a blue band is a mooring buoy. This is the only buoy you may tie up to.

## **SAFETY TIPS AND OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **Boarding**

Stability is important when boarding a small boat. Always stay low in the boat and keep the weight as close to the center of the boat as possible. Equipment should be loaded into the boat one piece at a time to someone on board, distributed evenly and secured so it does not shift.

### **Capsizing**

If a small open boat capsizes, the best thing to do is stay with the boat. Boats are designed to float even when swamped or capsized. Stay with the boat until help arrives or flip the boat and paddle the swamped boat to safety.

### **Boat Handling**

All boats handle differently and inexperienced boat operators need experience with a capable boater. Take the time to learn how your boat operates and gain the experience necessary to safely handle a boat. Learn how to handle your boat in close quarters, how to properly launch, dock and anchor your boat. Obtain instruction from an experienced boater or make the time to take a safe boating course.

### **Weather**

Listen to the local weather forecast before going out and make your plans according to the weather. Never go out when small craft advisories are in effect or when the weather predictions indicate that you or your boat cannot handle the weather. Thunderstorms and squalls are quick moving storms that can create disaster for a boater. Keep a lookout for thunderheads and storms on the water. Get to safety when a storm approaches. DON'T WAIT!

### **Hypothermia**

About half the people who die on the water do not drown, they die of hypothermia. Hypothermia is the lowering of the body temperature and is intensified when exposed to water or cold air. Hypothermia can occur in warm water – even when you just go for a swim. Be aware of the symptoms of hypothermia – it starts with shivering and chills and continues with confusion, numbness and slurred speech. To treat a person suffering from hypothermia, warm the body slowly with blankets and get them emergency medical attention immediately.

### **Alcohol and Boating**

It is illegal to operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol. The effects of the sun, wind, waves, engine vibration and other environmental factors can make a boater tired after being out on the water for a short while. The addition of alcohol reduces a person's ability to safely operate a boat. Alcohol affects balance vision, coordination, and judgment. Important things you need to safely operate a boat. It is not only important for the boat operator to be sober, but the passengers as well. Falls overboard are a major cause of boating deaths. About one half of the boating accidents are alcohol related.

### **Water Skiing**

Water skiing is prohibited in Maryland between sunset and sunrise. The towing boat must have at least two people on board an observer and an operator, both of whom are at least 12 years of age. Certain marked areas prohibit water skiing. Water Skiers must wear a life jacket. A towrope may not be longer than 75 feet. Except for taking off from shore and landing, the towing boat must be at least 100 feet from shore, piers, bridges, people in the water, and other boats.

### **Personal Watercraft (Jet-Ski's, SeaDoo's, etc.)**

The following regulations govern the use of PWC's on all water of the State.

1. A person must be at least 16 years of age to operate a PWC. If born on or after July 1, 1972, that person must also have a NASBLA approved certificate of boating safety education.
2. Personal Watercraft may not be operated between sunset and sunrise.
3. All persons on board a PWC must wear a USCG approved Type I, II, III, or V Life Jacket.
4. All PWCs must be equipped with a self-circling device or a lanyard cut-off switch. The cut-off switch lanyard must be attached to the operator or the operator's clothing or PFD. Self-circling devices and cut-off switches may not be altered and must be functioning.
5. A PWC may not be used to tow a person on water skis, aquaplanes, tubes, or other similar devices UNLESS:
  - a. The PWC has the capacity to carry 3 persons which includes the driver, a rear facing observer and the skier: and
  - b. The PWC is specifically designed for skiing by the manufacturer.
6. On all water of the State, a PWC may not be operated at a speed in excess of 6 knots within 100 feet of any shore, wharf, pier, bridge abutment or persons in the water.
7. On Maryland waters of the Atlantic Ocean, a PWC may not be operated within 300 feet of persons in the water and surf fishermen.
8. A PWC may not be operated in excess of 6 knots within 100 feet of another vessel except in a crossing or overtaking situation as described in the Federal Rules of the Road.
9. A PWC may not exceed idle speed in areas where the water depth is 18 inches or less.
10. A PWC may not be operated in a negligent manner: (i.e., doing doughnuts in a congested area, playing games of chicken, jumping the wake of other boats, splashing, etc.)

**NOTE:** This publication is intended as a guide only. For State laws and regulations, see the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and the Code of Maryland Regulations, Title 08. Maryland laws and regulations can be found at the following web sites:

\* Laws: [www.lawlib.state.md.us](http://www.lawlib.state.md.us)

\* Regulations: [www.dsd.state.md.us](http://www.dsd.state.md.us)

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