

**A Guide to Boating Law and Safety**



# **ABCs of California Boating**

**SAFETY FIRST**



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
**California Natural Resources Agency**  
**California State Parks**  
**DIVISION OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS**

**Owner/Boat Information**

Name of Owner \_\_\_\_\_

California Boater Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Boat \_\_\_\_\_

Boat CF # \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Contact Information**

Owner's Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Information**

Home Marina Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Harbormaster Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Marine Law Enforcement Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Other Important Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## A Guide to Boating Law and Safety

# ABCs of California Boating

## DEAR CALIFORNIA BOATER:

You are among California's four million recreational boaters who visit marinas, lakes, rivers and the ocean seeking an enjoyable outdoor recreational experience. In order to ensure that your experience is a safe and enjoyable one, it is important for you to know and follow the regulations and guidelines found in this booklet.

The *ABCs of California Boating* is based upon the California Harbors and Navigation Code, Vehicle Code, Penal Code, and California Code of Regulations, but uses everyday terms rather than legal language in most instances. Not all provisions of law pertaining to boating are included. Consequently, the booklet is not suitable for use in law enforcement or in litigation.

This booklet is one of many resources available through the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW). The division brings together a body of knowledge as the state's expert in recreational boating-related matters, including public access, safety and education, marine law enforcement, and consumer and environmental protection.

Recreational boaters provide the funding for DBW through state fuel taxes paid by boaters when gas is purchased, interest and principal repayment of DBW loans by boating facility owners, state registration fees paid by boaters for motorized recreational boats, and license fees paid by yacht and ship brokers and salespersons.

Visit [www.BoatCalifornia.com](http://www.BoatCalifornia.com) to learn more about DBW and about the resources available to you.

Have a safe and pleasant boating season.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
California Natural Resources Agency  
California State Parks  
DIVISION OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS

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# PREPARATION

## Mandatory Boater Education Requirements

The California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) recommends that all recreational boaters take a state-approved boating safety course. These courses are listed on the DBW website under “Safety and Education” and “Aquatic Centers.”


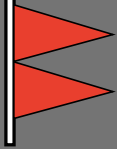
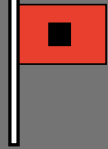
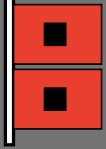



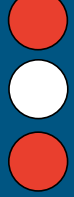
Beginning on January 1, 2018, recreational power boat operators who are aged 20 and younger shall be required to carry a boater education card. Once issued by DBW, the California Boater Card remains valid for a boat operator’s lifetime. DBW will issue the cards to persons who provide proof that an approved vessel operator examination has been passed since January 1, 2015. Approved courses may be found online at [www.CaliforniaBoaterCard.com](http://www.CaliforniaBoaterCard.com).

The California Boater Card requirement will be phased in over the next several years based on operator age:

Year	Operator Age
January 1, 2018	Persons 20 years of age or younger
January 1, 2019	Persons 25 years of age or younger
January 1, 2020	Persons 35 years of age or younger
January 1, 2021	Persons 40 years of age or younger
January 1, 2022	Persons 45 years of age or younger
January 1, 2023	Persons 50 years of age or younger
January 1, 2024	Persons 60 years of age or younger
January 1, 2025	All persons regardless of age



California  
**BOATER  
CARD**

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

**NOTE:** In some areas, the display of storm advisory flags has been discontinued. Boaters should check current weather conditions before starting their trip.

## Weather

Before getting underway, check the latest local conditions such as weather, currents, rapids, flow levels, and hazards, including low-head dams. The latest coastal conditions and wave forecasts can be found on the DBW Web site. Detailed information can also be obtained by tuning to local radio stations or the National Weather Radio broadcasts on frequencies of 162.400, 162.425, 162.450, 162.475, 162.500, 162.525, and 162.550 MHz in areas where available or by consulting local news sources.

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

## Safety Communications

According to the U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Center, a VHF marine radio is the single most important radio system a recreational boat owner/operator should have onboard. If you are cruising more than a few miles offshore, you should also have a MF/HF radio telephone or mobile satellite telephone, an Emergency Position Indicating Radio



Beacon (EPIRB). For added safety have a second VHF radio or cellular telephone to use during a marine emergency and receive high seas marine weather warnings.

Marine radios may require an FCC license depending on international travel areas and use. For information about marine radios, visit <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/>. EPIRBs must be registered with NOAA. For registration information, visit [www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov](http://www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov).

Cellular telephones on recreational vessels are not a substitute for the regular maritime radio distress and safety systems, however they do have a place on board for boating on waterways where there is cell phone coverage.

## Fueling

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

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

## Boat Capacity

Single-hull motorboats less than 20 feet in length that were manufactured after 1972 must display capacity and safe horsepower information. The maximum weight in people, gear and motors is offered as a guide to boaters and should not be exceeded.

While local, state, and federal laws may differ, please, keep in mind that other states may cite operators who exceed capacity and horsepower limitations. Some insurance companies will not insure craft exceeding horsepower maximums, and some boat manufacturers will void any applicable warranties for the same reasons. Boaters using vessels and personal watercraft without capacity plates should refer to the owner's manual and state law.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard

## Loading

As the operator, it's your responsibility to see that supplies are carefully loaded and all passengers are properly seated. For safety onboard, remember to:

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

## File a Float Plan

Before you go boating, it is a best practice to let a reliable family member or friend know where you are going and when you will return. This is known as "filing a float plan." If you do not return on time, your friend or family member can contact the Coast Guard or other rescue agency and will be able to tell them where you had planned to be and information about your boat, so they can locate you.

If you have a change in plans, or will be delayed, notify the person holding your float plan. Finally, close your plan by notifying the holder you have arrived home safely, and if the holder has reported you overdue, notify all applicable rescue authorities of your safe return.

Do not file your plan with the Coast Guard. A sample plan is on the next page. It is also available to download at [www.dbw.ca.gov/PDF/FloatPlanForm.pdf](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/PDF/FloatPlanForm.pdf). The Coast Guard and other organizations also offer float plan apps for cell phones.

**CHECKLIST AND FLOAT PLAN**

**CHECKLIST**

**Before going on the water:**

1. File a Float Plan (see below)
2. Give consideration to basic safety items, including the following:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Vessel in good condition	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra starting battery
<input type="checkbox"/> Vessel properly loaded	<input type="checkbox"/> Life jackets/Throwable devices (Coast Guard-approved)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ample supply of fuel	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguishers (Coast Guard-approved)
<input type="checkbox"/> Check weather reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual distress signals
<input type="checkbox"/> Compass and charts	<input type="checkbox"/> Oars or paddles
<input type="checkbox"/> Good anchoring equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marine VHF radio
<input type="checkbox"/> Bailing Device	<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight
<input type="checkbox"/> Spare parts	<input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone
<input type="checkbox"/> First-aid kit	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tools	
3. Cancel your Float Plan when you return

**FLOAT PLAN**

**Operator:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name and address of operator* *Phone number*

Searches for an overdue boat have a much greater chance of being successful if the Coast Guard or other rescue agencies have certain facts. For your own safety and before going on the water, complete this form and leave it with a reliable family member or friend who will notify authorities if necessary. You can also text or email a float plan, but be sure to include all relevant information.

If overdue, contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Name and phone number of rescue agency near point of departure*

**Vessel:**

Name	CF Number	Length
Power, Inboard - Outboard	Rig, If Sail	Hull Color
Type/Style	Range	Speed

**Persons:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Number Persons Aboard*

**Radio:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Frequencies*

**Departure from:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Place* *Date/Time Depart*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Car Parked License #*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Trailer Parked License #*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Where Parked*

**Destination:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Place* *Stops en Route* *Date/Time Return*

**DISCLAIMER:** *The Float Plan and checklist is not a definitive list of everything that may be required for safe boating on any particular boat or boating excursion. Knowing what is required is the responsibility of each individual boater.*

**Important:** *Don't forget to **cancel** your Float Plan when you return.*

*Checklist and Float Plan also available at: [www.dbw.ca.gov/PDF/FloatPlanForm.pdf](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/PDF/FloatPlanForm.pdf)*

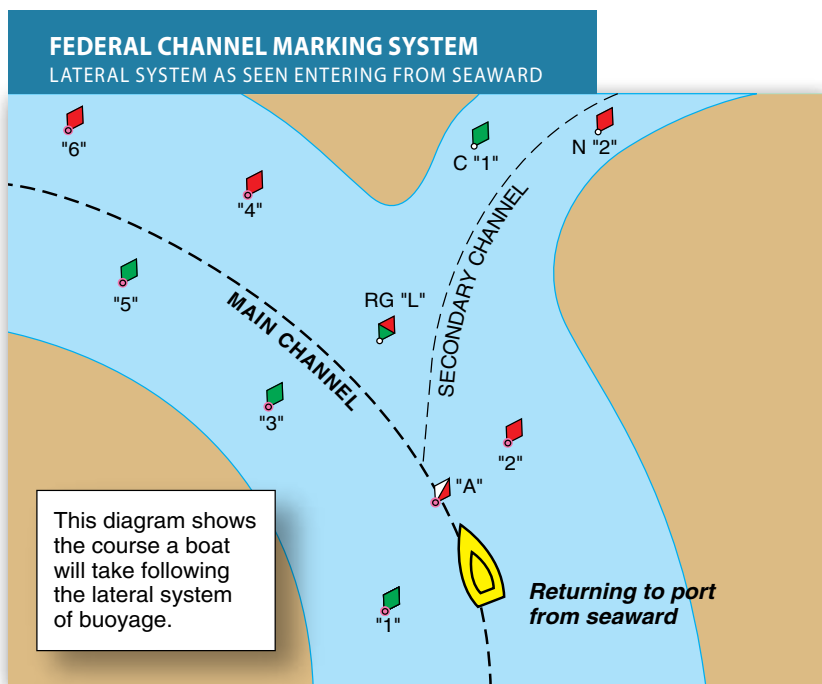
# WATERWAY MARKINGS

## Federal Lateral System

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

The expression "red right returning" has long been used by seafarers as a reminder that the red buoys are kept to the starboard (right) side when proceeding from the open sea into port (upstream). Likewise, green buoys are kept to the port (left) side (see chart below).

Conversely, when proceeding toward the sea or leaving port, red buoys are kept to port side and green buoys to the starboard side. Red buoys are always even numbered, and green buoys are odd numbered. Red and white vertically striped buoys mark the center of the channel.



## Uniform State Waterway Marking System

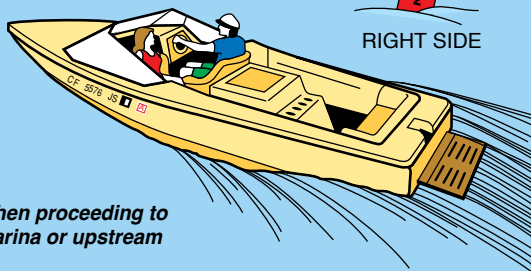
Most waterways used by California boaters are located entirely within the boundaries of the state. The California Uniform State Waterway Marking System has been devised for these waters. For examples of such markers, see chart below.

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

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

### CALIFORNIA WATERWAY MARKER SYSTEM

#### INFORMATION AND REGULATORY MARKS



*When proceeding to marina or upstream*



**BOATS KEEP OUT**  
Explanations may be placed outside the crossed diamond shape. Examples: dam, rapids, swim area



**DANGER**  
The nature of danger may be indicated by words inside the diamond shape. Examples: shoal, reef, wreck, dam



**CONTROLLED AREA**  
Type of control is indicated within the circle. Examples: 5 MPH, No Anchoring



**INFORMATION**  
Official information is displayed. Examples: directions, distances, locations



**MARKER ON PILING**



**MARKER ON SPECIAL PURPOSE BUOY**



**DUAL PURPOSE MARKER ON LAND**


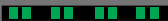



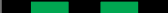


**MOORING BUOY**


## MAIN CHANNEL BUOYS

### PORT SIDE:

Odd number aids, green light only

FIXED	
FLASHING (2)	
FLASHING	
OCCULTING	
QUICK FLASH	
ISO	








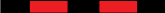
 "1" "3" "5" "7"

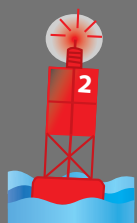
#### LIGHTED BUOY:


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

### STARBOARD SIDE:

Even number aids, red light only

FIXED	
FLASHING (2)	
FLASHING	
OCCULTING	
QUICK FLASH	
ISO	



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

#### LIGHTED BUOY:

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

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

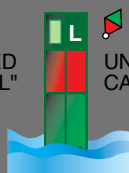
Topmost band denotes preferred channel. Letter has no lateral significance. Used for identification and location purposes.

COMPOSITE GROUP FLASHING (2 + 1) 

#### STARBOARD



LIGHTED BUOY "L"



UNLIGHTED CAN "L"

#### PORT



LIGHTED BUOY "L"



UNLIGHTED NUN "L"



DAYMARK



DAYMARK

## Mooring to Buoys

Tying up to or hanging on to any navigation buoy (except a mooring buoy) or beacon is prohibited. For examples of these types of buoys, see chart on page 8 and 9.

## Aids to Navigation

Navigation aids assist vessel operators in verifying their position and cautioning them of dangers and impediments. Listed below are the common identifiers as seen on pages 6–9:

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

### SAFE WATER AIDS

**SAFE WATER BUOY MARKS MIDCHANNEL:**  
No numbers—may be lettered, white light only

MORSE CODE (A) 



 "A"

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

UNLIGHTED

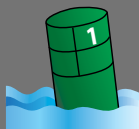


SPHERICAL




MR

### SECONDARY CHANNEL BUOYS, STARTS NEW NUMBERING SYSTEM



**PORT**


 C "1"  
UNLIGHTED  
CAN BUOY:  
Odd number,  
leave to port.



DAYMARK



**STARBOARD**

 N "2"  
UNLIGHTED  
NUN BUOY:  
Even number, leave  
to starboard.



DAYMARK



## RULES OF THE WATERWAYS

### Navigation Rules

The inland navigation rules, commonly called “Rules of the Road,” govern the operation of boats and specify light and sound signals on inland waters in order to prevent collisions. Existing law requires that a complete copy of the inland navigation rules must be kept for reference on board all boats of 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) or more in length operating on inland waters. A copy of the *Navigation Rules International—Inland booklet*, published by the Coast Guard, may be ordered for a nominal fee from: USCG Navigation Center Navcen. Please call 703-313-5900 or go to [www.navcen.uscg.gov](http://www.navcen.uscg.gov) for availability and price.

### Boater Responsibility





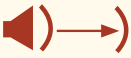
Nothing in the rules of the road shall exonerate the operator of a vessel from the consequences of neglecting to comply with the inland rules of the road, or from neglecting any precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen, or by the special circumstances of the case.

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

### Navigation Signals

The law prescribes signals for vessels in sight of each other to indicate the intended course of a vessel when necessary for safe navigation. Motorboats should not use cross signals (i.e., answer one blast with two blasts or two blasts with one blast).



NAVIGATION SIGNALS	
 <b>1 blast</b>	Sounding one short blast (1 second) of the horn or whistle shows intention to direct course of vessel to own starboard (right).
 <b>2 blasts</b>	Sounding two short blasts shows intention to direct course of vessel to own port (left).
 <b>3 blasts</b>	Sounding three short blasts indicates that the vessel's engines are going astern (in reverse).
 <b>5 blasts</b>	Sounding five or more short and rapid blasts is a danger signal used when the other vessel's intentions are not understood or its indicated course is dangerous.
 <b>Prolonged blast</b>	Sounding a prolonged blast (4 to 6 seconds) indicates restricted visibility (see Fog Signals, page 14).

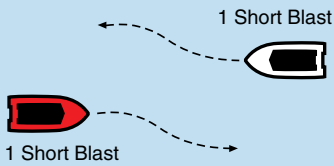
## Meeting or Crossing Situations

When motorboats are in sight of one another and meeting or crossing at a distance within half a mile of each other, each vessel shall indicate its intended maneuver with one of the following signals:

- **One short blast** = I intend to leave you on my port side.
- **Two short blasts** = I intend to leave you on my starboard side.
- **Three short blasts** = I am operating astern propulsion.

Upon hearing the one- or two-blast signal, the other vessel shall, if in agreement, sound the same signal and take steps to affect a safe passing. If the proposed maneuver is unsafe, the danger signal (five or more short and rapid blasts) should be sounded, and each vessel shall take appropriate action until a safe passing agreement is made.

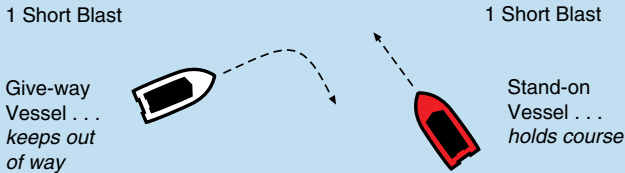
**HEAD-ON SITUATION**



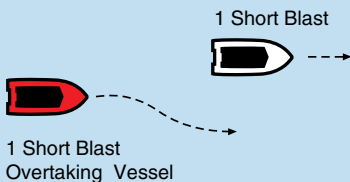
When meeting head-on, or nearly so, either vessel shall signal its intention with one short blast which the other vessel shall answer promptly. Both vessels should alter their course to starboard (right) so that each will pass to the port (left) side of each other.

When crossing, the vessel that has the other on the starboard (right) side shall keep out of the way and avoid crossing ahead of the other vessel. The give-way vessel (the vessel required to keep out of the way) shall take early and substantial action to keep well clear of the other vessel (the stand-on vessel), which should hold course and speed. However, the stand-on vessel may take action to avoid collision by maneuvering as soon as it becomes apparent that the give-way vessel is not taking appropriate action.

**CROSSING SITUATION**

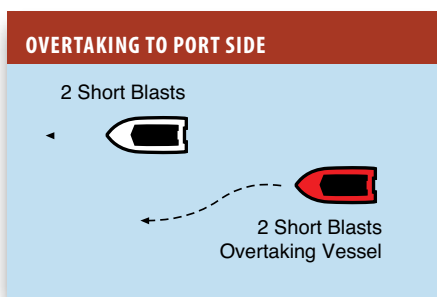


**OVERTAKING TO STARBOARD**



**Overtaking Situations**

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



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

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

## Other Situations

- If your boat nears a bend in a channel where vessels approaching from the other direction cannot be seen, you should signal with a prolonged blast (four to six seconds). Approaching boats within hearing should answer with the same signal. If your signal is answered by a boat on the farther side of the bend, then usual signals for meeting and passing should be given upon sighting. If your signal goes unanswered, the channel may be considered clear.
- Keep your boat to the starboard side of narrow channels whenever safe and practicable.
- Sound one prolonged blast when leaving a dock or berth.
- Keep out of the way of sailing vessels where courses involve the risk of collision.
- In narrow channels, do not hamper the safe passage of vessels such as deep-draft liners and freighters, which can navigate only inside such channels.
- Paddlers should stay near the shore and cross channels with care, carry an efficient sound signaling device such as a loud whistle, use a white navigation light when paddling at night or in low visibility and never paddle alone.

## Rules for Sailing Vessels

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

- When each has the wind on a different side, the vessel with the wind on the port side shall keep out of the way of the other.
- When both have the wind on the same side, the vessel that is to windward shall keep out of the way of the vessel that is to leeward.

- If a vessel with the wind on the port side sees a vessel to windward and cannot determine with certainty whether the other vessel has the wind on the port or the starboard side, she shall keep out of the way of the other.

The windward side shall be deemed to be the side opposite to that on which the mainsail is carried or, in the case of a square-rigged vessel, the side opposite to that on which the largest fore-and-aft sail is carried.

*Note: International sailing rules are the same as those above.*



## Fog Signals

The law also prescribes signals to identify vessels navigating in or near areas of restricted visibility. Upon hearing a fog signal apparently forward of the beam, you should reduce speed to the minimum at which the boat can be kept on course, unless it has been determined by radar or other means that the risk of collision does not exist. If necessary, use reverse propulsion. In any event, navigate with extreme caution until any danger is over.

**For motorboats:** When making your way through the water, you should sound one prolonged blast at intervals of not more than two minutes. If you are in the water,

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

**For sailboats or vessels not under command, restricted in ability to maneuver, towing or pushing another vessel, or engaged in fishing with nets, or trawling:** You should sound—at intervals of not more than two minutes—one prolonged followed by two short blasts.

**For boats at anchor:** You should ring—at intervals of not more than one minute—a bell rapidly for about five seconds. In addition, one short blast followed by one prolonged and one short blast may be sounded to an approaching vessel to give warning of your position and of the possibility of collision.

*Note: Boats less than 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) in length have the option to make an efficient sound signal instead, at intervals of not more than two minutes. Boats less than 65 feet 7 inches (20 meters) are not required to sound signals when anchored in a federally designated anchorage area.*

# OPERATIONAL LAW

## Peace Officers

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

Peace officers are also authorized to order the operator of an unsafe vessel to shore. Your vessel can be ordered to the nearest safe moorage if an unsafe condition is found that cannot be corrected on the spot and if the officer determines that continued operation would be dangerous.

Any vessel approaching, overtaking, being approached, or being overtaken by a moving law enforcement vessel operating with a siren or an illuminated blue light, or any vessel approaching a stationary law enforcement vessel displaying an illuminated blue light, shall:

- Immediately slow to a speed sufficient to maintain steerage only.
- Alter its course, within its ability, so as not to inhibit or interfere with operation of the law enforcement vessel.
- Proceed, unless otherwise directed by the law enforcement vessel operator, at the reduced speed until beyond the law enforcement vessel's area of operation.

## Trailing

The law prohibits you from towing a trailered vessel containing a passenger, except when you are launching or retrieving a vessel. For more information, please visit: <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/Pubs/Trailer/TrailerSailors.pdf>.

## Stolen Vessels

If a numbered vessel is stolen, the legal owner should notify local law enforcement as soon as possible. The owner shall also notify the local law enforcement agency if the vessel reported stolen is recovered. For more information, please visit: [http://www.dbw.ca.gov/Pubs/Marine\\_Secur/MarineSecurity.pdf](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/Pubs/Marine_Secur/MarineSecurity.pdf).

## County and City Laws

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

## Age Restrictions

No person under 16 years of age may operate a boat with a motor of more than 15 horsepower, except for a sailboat that does not exceed 30 feet in length or a dinghy used directly between a moored boat and the shore (or between two moored boats). The law allows children 12–15 years of age to operate boats with a motor of more than 15 horsepower or sailboats over 30 feet if supervised on board by an adult at least 18 years of age who is in possession of a California Boater Card as required by law. Violating these provisions constitutes an infraction.

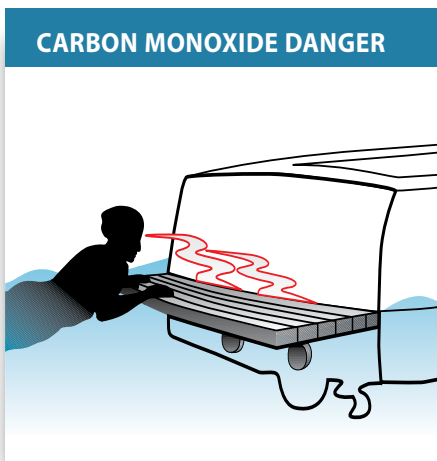
## Speed

Speed is limited by law for certain conditions and areas. The maximum speed for motorboats within 100 feet of a bather (but not a water skier) and within 200 feet of a bathing beach, swimming float, diving platform or lifeline, passenger landing being used, or landing where boats are tied up is 5 miles per hour.

A safe speed should be maintained at all times so that: (1) action can be taken to avoid collision; and (2) your boat can stop within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions. In restricted visibility, motorboats should have the engines ready for immediate maneuvering. You should be prepared to stop the vessel within the space of half the distance of forward visibility.

## Carbon Monoxide

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



Teak surfing or platform dragging means holding onto the swim platform, swim deck, swim step, swim ladder, or any portion of the transom exterior of a motorized vessel for any amount of time while the vessel is underway at any speed. The law requires that a set of carbon monoxide warning stickers be placed on the transom and helm of all new and used motorized boats sold in California. For a pamphlet on the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning and a set of warning decals, please visit: <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/BoaterInfo/CODanger.aspx>.

## Reckless or Negligent Operation of a Vessel

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



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

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

## Hit-and-Run Accidents

Any person involved in a boating accident that results in injury, death or disappearance who is convicted of leaving the scene without either: (1) furnishing appropriate information to others involved or to any peace officer at the scene; and/or (2) rendering any reasonable assistance to any injured person, is liable for a fine of up to \$10,000 or imprisonment for up to four years, or both. A person responsible for an accident that results in serious injury or death can be subject to a conviction of manslaughter and sentenced to an additional five years in state prison for fleeing the scene.

## Operation of a Vessel While Intoxicated

Alcohol is a factor in about 50 percent of all fatal motorboat accidents in California. State law specifies that:

1. No person shall operate any vessel, water skis or similar device while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs. No person who is addicted to any drug shall operate any vessel, water skis or similar device.
2. No person 21 years of age or older shall operate any vessel, water skis or similar device who has 0.08 percent or more, by weight, of alcohol in his or her blood. A level of at least 0.05 percent, but less than 0.08 percent, may be used with other evidence in determining whether the person was under the influence of alcohol. A person under 21 years of age or older who has been arrested for operating a mechanically propelled vessel "under the influence" may be requested to submit to a chemical test to determine blood-alcohol content. A person convicted of operating a vessel while intoxicated could receive up to a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail.
3. No person under 21 years of age may operate a vessel, water skis or similar device who has 0.01 percent or more of alcohol in his or her blood by weight. Penalties may include a fine of up to \$250 and participation in an alcohol education or community service program.

### » CALIFORNIA BOATER EDUCATION CARD REQUIREMENTS

begin January 1, 2018.

The law requires boating safety education for California recreational power boat operators (see page 1).

## Designated Driver Theory

Designating a driver is not enough on vessels. The concept works well in cars, but drunken passengers on boats can easily fall overboard, swim near the propeller or cause loading problems by leaning over the side or standing up in small vessels, causing vessels to capsize. Everyone who drinks alcohol on board is at risk. If you do drink, wear a life jacket.

## Court-Ordered Boating Education

Any person convicted of a moving violation of the Harbors and Navigation Code or Federal Rules of the Road, or while operating a vessel in violation of the Anthony Farr and Stacey Beckett Boating Safety Act of 2004 (Carbon Monoxide law), shall be ordered by the court to complete and pass a boating safety course approved by DBW.

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



## Personal Watercraft Operation

A personal watercraft (PWC), popularly known as a jet ski, is a vessel 13 feet in length or less, propelled by machinery, that is designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing or kneeling on the vessel rather than in the conventional manner of sitting or standing inside the vessel. PWCs are subject to the same laws governing the operation of motorboats of the same size. Boaters on board a PWC without capacity plates should reference the owner's manual and state law.



**Registration:** For proper display of registration numbers and stickers, see the "Registration" section of this booklet.

**Life Jackets:** Every person on board a PWC and anyone being towed behind a vessel must wear a Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III or V life jacket.

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

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

**Operator Age:** It is an infraction for anyone under 16 years of age to operate a motorboat of more than 15 horsepower, including a PWC. Any person who permits someone under age 16 to do so is also guilty of an infraction. Children 12–15 years of age may operate a motorboat of more than 15 horsepower if supervised by an adult on board who is at least 18 years of age.

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

- Navigating a vessel, skis or other devices between a towing vessel and its tow or tows.
- Operating under the influence of intoxicants or narcotics.
- Jumping or attempting to jump the wake of another vessel within 100 feet of the other vessel, which constitutes unsafe operation.

**Note:** Other actions that constitute unsafe operation include: (1) operating a PWC toward any person or vessel in the water and turning sharply so as to spray the person or vessel; and (2) operating at a rate of speed and in proximity to another vessel so that either operator is required to swerve at the last minute to avoid collision. A free PWC Course can be taken online at: [www.dbw.ca.gov/BoaterInfo/PWCOnline](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/BoaterInfo/PWCOnline)

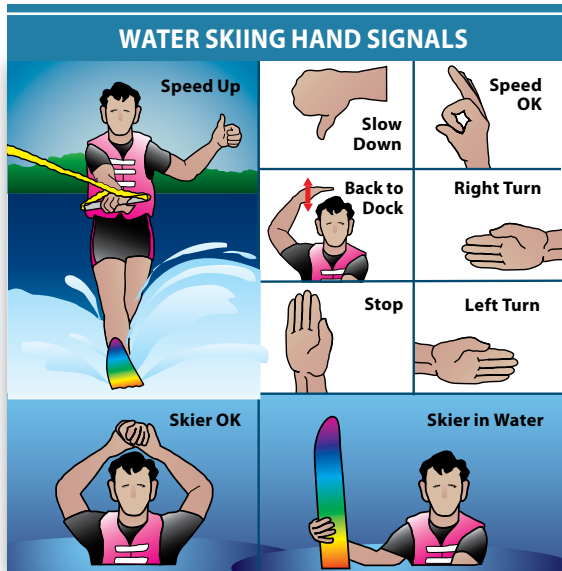
## Water Skiing

When using a boat to tow someone on water skis or an aquaplane, there must be one other person in the boat—in addition to the operator—who can observe the person being towed. The observer must be at least 12 years of age. Other tow sports, such as wake boarding, knee boarding, and tubing, must follow the same rules and guidelines as skiers.

**Life Jackets:** Effective Jan 1, 2001, California law provides that any person being towed behind a vessel must have on a wearable Coast Guard-approved life jacket. Exceptions: The law does not apply to performers engaged in professional exhibitions, official regattas, marine parades or tournaments. Any person engaged in slalom skiing on a marked course or in barefoot, jump or trick water skiing, may instead wear a wetsuit designed for the activity and labeled by the manufacturer as a water ski wetsuit. However, for each skier who elects to wear a wetsuit, a wearable Coast Guard-approved life jacket still must be carried on board.

**Note:** *Inflatable personal flotation devices are not approved for use while water skiing.*

**Towing:** Water skis and aquaplanes must not be operated in a manner to endanger the safety of people or property. Passing the towline over another vessel or skier and towing a skier or navigating between a vessel and its tow are prohibited. Towing a skier does not give the vessel operator any special privileges. You must observe the rules of the road.



The towing of water skiers from sunset to sunrise is prohibited by state law. Local laws may also restrict skiing at specific times during the day and in certain areas. For more information, please visit: [www.dbw.ca.gov/Pubs/Watski/TowingSports.pdf](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/Pubs/Watski/TowingSports.pdf).

**Water Ski Flag:** The operator of a vessel involved in towing a skier must display, or cause to be displayed, a red or orange water ski flag to indicate:

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

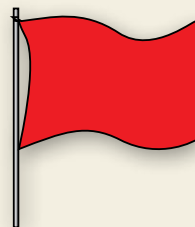
The flag must be no less than 12 inches on each side and be in the shape of a square or rectangle. The display of the ski flag does not in itself restrict the use of the water, but when operating in the area, boaters should exercise caution.

## Diving

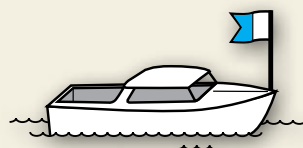
**Alpha Flag:** Whenever the size of a vessel engaged in diving operations during daytime hours makes it impracticable to exhibit the daytime shapes required of a vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver, a rigid replica of the international blue-and-white code flag (Alpha) is required to be displayed.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

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

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

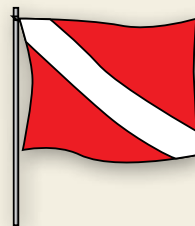


**WATER SKIING FLAG**



**ALPHA FLAG**

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



**DIVERS DOWN FLAG**

Recognized for use by people engaged in diving.

# EMERGENCY AND ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

## Radio and EPIRB Procedures/Marine Emergency Distress

**A. If you are in distress** (i.e., threatened by grave and imminent danger) or observe another vessel in distress, transmit the International Distress Call on Channel 16: “MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY — THIS IS \_\_\_\_\_.”

State the call sign of the vessel in distress—or the name of your boat if no call sign has been assigned—and repeat it three times. **SPEAK SLOWLY AND CLEARLY.**

### If you are aboard the vessel in trouble, state:

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

### If you observe another vessel in distress, give:

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

**If no one responds to your distress call, the Coast Guard recommends that you turn on your EPIRB and repeat the call at intervals until an answer is received.**

**NOTE: The international sign for an aircraft that wants to direct a surface craft to a vessel in distress is:** Circling the surface craft, opening and closing the throttle or changing propeller pitch (noticeable by change in sound) while crossing ahead of the surface craft, and proceeding in the direction of the vessel in distress. If you receive such a signal, you should follow the aircraft. If you cannot do so, try to inform the aircraft by any available means.

If your assistance is no longer needed, the aircraft will cross your wake, opening and closing the throttle or changing the propeller pitch. If you are radio-equipped, you should attempt to communicate with the aircraft on Channel 16 when the

aircraft makes the above signals or makes any obvious attempt to attract your attention. In the event you cannot communicate by radio, be alert for a message block dropped from the aircraft.

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

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

**C. After the emergency is over, notify the Coast Guard promptly.**

## Accident Reporting

Boat operators involved in an accident must: (1) provide their name, address and vessel registration number to other involved parties; (2) render assistance to any injured people; and (3) in case of a death or disappearance, report the accident without delay to law enforcement officials.

Boat operators or owners must also make a written report of a boating accident to DBW within 48 hours when:

- A person dies within 24 hours of the accident, disappears, or is injured and requires medical treatment beyond first aid.
- Total damage to all vessels involved and other property is more than \$500 or there is complete loss of a vessel.

In all other incidents requiring a written accident report, the report must be made within 10 days of the accident. Failure to comply with the above requirements is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment up to six months, or both.

This booklet contains an accident report form that may be used for such incidents. Forms are also available through some sheriffs' and harbormasters' offices and police departments. They may also be obtained by contacting DBW or by visiting [www.dbw.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.ca.gov) and clicking on "Publications."

## False Search and Rescue Calls

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

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

# REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

## General Information

Recreational vessels are required to carry specified safety equipment, which may vary according to type of propulsion, type of construction, area and time of use, and number of people aboard. Unless otherwise noted, all required equipment must be:

- Coast Guard-approved
- Kept in good, serviceable condition
- Readily accessible
- Of the proper type and/or size
- Appropriate for the intended activity

Recreational vessels may carry extra equipment that is not Coast Guard-approved, provided that minimum requirements for approved equipment are satisfied. For equipment purposes, sailboats, canoes, rowboats and inflatable rafts equipped with motors are considered to be “motorboats.” Requirements vary considerably for commercial vessels and vessels engaged in racing.

**Note:** For a list of recommended additional equipment, see the chart on page 45.

» A life jacket can save your life, but only if you wear it!



## Sailboats and Manually Propelled Vessels

**Life jackets:** Sailboats less than 16 feet in length and all canoes and kayaks, regardless of length, must carry one wearable Coast Guard-approved life jacket of a type and size appropriate for the conditions and the boating activity being engaged in for each person on board. Life jackets must be readily accessible and fit the intended wearer properly.

Sailboats 16 feet and over must have one wearable Coast Guard-approved life jacket of a type and size appropriate for the conditions and the boating activity being engaged in for each person aboard, plus at least one Type IV throwable flotation device. The throwable device must be kept where it is immediately available. Life jackets must be readily accessible and fit the intended wearer properly.

**Navigation Lights:** All vessels are required to display navigation lights between sunset and sunrise and during times of restricted visibility. In inland and international waters, sailing vessels under sail alone shall exhibit navigation lights

shown on page 40. The tricolored lantern and the all-round green and red lights should never be used together.

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

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

**Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only):** Boats less than 16 feet; manually propelled craft of any size; sailboats under 26 feet of completely open construction and not equipped with propulsion machinery; and boats competing in an organized marine parade, regatta, race, or similar event are only required between sunset and sunrise to carry aboard devices that are suitable for night use (see page 44).

## Motorboats Less Than 16 Feet in Length

**Life jackets:** One wearable Coast Guard-approved life jacket of a type and size appropriate for the conditions and the boating activity being engaged in must be carried for each person on board. Life jackets must be readily accessible and fit the intended wearer properly.

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

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

**Muffling System:** An effective muffling system is required for the exhaust of each internal combustion engine. Unmodified outboards usually meet legal requirements (see page 37).

**Ventilation System:** See page 38.

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

**Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only):** Boats less than 16 feet of completely open construction and not equipped with propulsion machinery, and boats competing in an organized marine parade, regatta, race, or similar event are only required between sunset and sunrise to carry aboard devices that are suitable for night use (see page 44).

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

## Motorboats 16 Feet to Less Than 26 Feet in Length

**Life jackets:** One wearable Coast Guard-approved life jacket of a type and size appropriate for the conditions and the boating activity being engaged in must be carried for each person aboard. Life jackets must be readily accessible and of an appropriate size for the intended wearer. In addition, the vessel must carry an approved Type IV throwable device, which should be immediately available.

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

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

**Muffling System:** An effective muffling system is required for the exhaust of each internal combustion engine. Unmodified outboards usually meet legal requirements (see page 37).

**Ventilation System:** See page 38.

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

**Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only):** All boats 16 feet or more in length must carry devices aboard at all times. Boaters must carry *either*: (a) devices that are suitable for day use and devices suitable for night use; *or* (b) devices that can be used for both day and night use (see page 44).

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



# CALIFORNIA BOATING ACCIDENT REPORT

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS DIVISION OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS

## INFORMATION: OPERATOR #1

OPERATOR NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE #	IS OWNER DIFFERENT THAN OPERATOR? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	OPERATOR EXPERIENCE	OPERATOR EDUCATION
	OWNER NAME AND ADDRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> UNDER 10 HOURS <input type="checkbox"/> 10 TO 100 HOURS <input type="checkbox"/> OVER 100 HOURS	<input type="checkbox"/> USCG AUXILIARY <input type="checkbox"/> US POWER SQUADRON <input type="checkbox"/> STATE COURSE <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMAL <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
AGE	CALIFORNIA BOATER CARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
MARINA/RAMP LAUNCHED FROM:			

## INFORMATION: VESSEL #1

(YOUR VESSEL)

THIS VESSEL ONLY	# INJURED	# DEAD	ESTIMATED DAMAGE	RENTED BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	# OF PERSONS ON BOARD	# OF PERSONS TOWED
BOAT NUMBER (CF OR DOC #)	MFR. HULL ID #	BOAT NAME	DEPTH (TRANS. TO KEEL)	BEAM WIDTH	LENGTH	
BOAT MANUFACTURER	BOAT MODEL	YEAR BUILT	SPEED AT TIME OF ACCIDENT _____ MPH	# OF ENGINES	HORSE POWER	
ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> RECREATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	FIRE EXTINGUISHER ON BOARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	TYPE OF FIRE EXTINGUISHER # ONBOARD	FIRE EXTINGUISHER USED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS ON BOARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS ACCESSIBLE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS WORN <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

TYPE OF BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> OPEN MOTORBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> CABIN MOTORBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> PERSONAL WATERCRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> HOUSEBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> PONTOON <input type="checkbox"/> INFLATABLE <input type="checkbox"/> SAILBOAT (aux. engine) <input type="checkbox"/> SAILBOAT (sail only) <input type="checkbox"/> CANOE/KAYAK <input type="checkbox"/> RAFT <input type="checkbox"/> ROWBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> AIRBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	HULL MATERIAL <input type="checkbox"/> WOOD <input type="checkbox"/> ALUMINUM <input type="checkbox"/> FIBERGLASS <input type="checkbox"/> PLASTIC <input type="checkbox"/> RUBBER/VINYLI/CANVAS <input type="checkbox"/> STEEL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	PROPULSION (select all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> PROPELLER <input type="checkbox"/> SAIL <input type="checkbox"/> MANUAL <input type="checkbox"/> WATER JET <input type="checkbox"/> AIR THRUST <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (describe) _____	OPERATION AT TIME OF ACCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/> CRUISING <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING DIRECTION <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING SPEED <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING SKIER/TUBER <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING SKIER - SKIER DOWN <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING ANOTHER VESSEL <input type="checkbox"/> BEING TOWED BY ANOTHER VESSEL <input type="checkbox"/> DRIFTING <input type="checkbox"/> AT ANCHOR <input type="checkbox"/> TIED TO DOCK <input type="checkbox"/> LAUNCHING <input type="checkbox"/> DOCKING/LEAVING DOCK <input type="checkbox"/> SAILING <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	TYPE OF FUEL <input type="checkbox"/> GAS <input type="checkbox"/> DIESEL <input type="checkbox"/> ELECTRIC <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
ENGINE TYPE (select one) <input type="checkbox"/> OUTBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> STERNDRIVE (I/O) <input type="checkbox"/> INBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> POD DRIVE <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____		TOTAL HORSEPOWER: _____ HP		

## INFORMATION: OPERATOR #2

# CALIFORNIA BOATING ACCIDENT REPORT

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS DIVISION OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS

The operator of every recreational vessel is required by Section 656 of the Harbors and Navigation Code to file a written report whenever a boating accident occurs which results in death, disappearance, injury that requires medical attention beyond first aid, total property damage in excess of \$500, or complete loss of a vessel. Reports must be submitted within 48 hours in case of death occurring within 24 hours of an accident, disappearance, or injury beyond first aid. All other reports must be submitted within 10 days of the accident. Reports are to be submitted to California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways, Accident Unit at P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, California 94296-0001, (916) 327-1826. Failure to submit this report as required is a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1000 or imprisonment not to exceed 6 months or both.

DATE OF ACCIDENT (M/D/Y)		TIME OF ACCIDENT		COUNTY	STATE	BODY OF WATER	NEAREST CITY OR TOWN
		<input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM					
LOCATION ON WATER					LATITUDE/LONGITUDE ACCIDENT OCCURRED:		
					N _____ W _____		
# INJURED	# DEAD	TOTAL \$\$	LAW ENFORCEMENT ON ACCIDENT SCENE?		AGENCY NAME		
			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO				
TEMPERATURE		WATER CONDITIONS		WIND CONDITIONS		WEATHER FORECAST	
WATER AIR		<input type="checkbox"/> CALM (Waves less than 6") <input type="checkbox"/> CHOPPY (Waves 6"-2') <input type="checkbox"/> ROUGH (Waves 2'-6") <input type="checkbox"/> VERY ROUGH (Waves >6")		<input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> LIGHT (0-6 MPH) <input type="checkbox"/> MODERATE (7-14 MPH) <input type="checkbox"/> STRONG (15-25 MPH) <input type="checkbox"/> STORM (OVER 25 MPH)		BEFORE VOYAGE DURING VOYAGE AFTER VOYAGE	
WEATHER (select all that apply)						AVAILABLE USED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
<input type="checkbox"/> CLEAR <input type="checkbox"/> CLOUDY <input type="checkbox"/> FOG <input type="checkbox"/> RAIN <input type="checkbox"/> SNOW <input type="checkbox"/> HAZY						VISIBILITY STRONG CURRENT <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR <input type="checkbox"/> POOR <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
TYPE OF ACCIDENT (select all that apply)		CAUSE OF ACCIDENT (select all that apply)		ACTIVITY AT TIME OF ACCIDENT (select all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> CAPSIZING <input type="checkbox"/> COLLISION WITH VESSEL <input type="checkbox"/> COLLISION WITH FIXED OBJECT <input type="checkbox"/> COLLISION WITH FLOATING OBJECT <input type="checkbox"/> FALL OVERBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> FALL IN BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> GROUNDING <input type="checkbox"/> FIRE/EXPLOSION (fuel) <input type="checkbox"/> FIRE/EXPLOSION (other than fuel) <input type="checkbox"/> FLOODING/SWAMPING <input type="checkbox"/> SINKING <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCK BY BOAT/PROPELLER <input type="checkbox"/> SKIER MISHAP <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____		#1 #2 (see back of sheet for vessel number) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPROPER LOOKOUT/INATTENTION <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> OPERATOR INEXPERIENCE <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> EXCESSIVE SPEED <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> MACHINERY FAILURE (DESCRIBE): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPROPER LOADING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> OVERLOADING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> EQUIPMENT FAILURE (DESCRIBE): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> HAZARDOUS WEATHER/WATER <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> RESTRICTED VISION <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNITION OF SPILLED FUEL/VAPOR <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPROPER ANCHORING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> OFF-THROTTLE STEERING INABILITY <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> FAILURE TO VENT <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____		#1 #2 (see back of sheet for vessel number) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> WATER SKIING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> WAKE BOARDING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> TUBING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> FISHING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> RACING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> WHITEWATER ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> FUELING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> HUNTING <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____			
				DID DRUGS OR ALCOHOL CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACCIDENT? ALCOHOL <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN DRUGS <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN IF YOU MARKED "YES," PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS IN NARRATIVE.			

**DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED AND WHAT YOU COULD HAVE DONE TO PREVENT THIS ACCIDENT**

(Use sketch if helpful. Explain the cause of death or injury, medical treatment, etc. If needed, continue description on additional paper.)

**OTHER PROPERTY**

(Damage to items other than vessels)

DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE

ESTIMATED DAMAGE \$\$

 NONE

OWNER'S NAME

ADDRESS

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

( )

NOTIFIED

 YES NO**VICTIM OR WITNESS INFORMATION**

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

OPERATOR NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE #	IS OWNER DIFFERENT THAN OPERATOR? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	OPERATOR EXPERIENCE	OPERATOR EDUCATION
	OWNER NAME AND ADDRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> UNDER 10 HOURS <input type="checkbox"/> 10 TO 100 HOURS <input type="checkbox"/> OVER 100 HOURS	<input type="checkbox"/> USCG AUXILIARY <input type="checkbox"/> US POWER SQUADRON <input type="checkbox"/> STATE COURSE <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMAL <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
AGE	MARINA/RAMP LAUNCHED FROM:		CALIFORNIA BOATER CARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

AGE	MARINA/RAMP LAUNCHED FROM:
-----	----------------------------

**INFORMATION: VESSEL #2** (OTHER VESSEL INVOLVED)

<b>THIS VESSEL ONLY</b>	# INJURED	# DEAD	ESTIMATED DAMAGE	RENTED BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	# OF PERSONS ON BOARD	# OF PERSONS TOWED
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BOAT NUMBER (CF OR DOC #)	MFR. HULL ID #	BOAT NAME	DEPTH (TRANS. TO KEEL)	BEAM WIDTH	LENGTH
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BOAT MANUFACTURER	BOAT MODEL	YEAR BUILT	SPEED AT TIME OF ACCIDENT _____ MPH	# OF ENGINES	HORSE POWER
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ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> RECREATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	FIRE EXTINGUISHER ON BOARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	TYPE OF FIRE EXTINGUISHER # ONBOARD	FIRE EXTINGUISHER USED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS ON BOARD <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS ACCESSIBLE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIFE JACKETS WORN <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
--	--	--	--	---	---	---

TYPE OF BOAT <input type="checkbox"/> OPEN MOTORBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> CABIN MOTORBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> PERSONAL WATERCRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> HOUSEBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> PONTOON <input type="checkbox"/> INFLATABLE <input type="checkbox"/> SAILBOAT (aux. engine) <input type="checkbox"/> SAILBOAT (sail only) <input type="checkbox"/> CANOE/KAYAK <input type="checkbox"/> RAFT <input type="checkbox"/> ROWBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> AIRBOAT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	HULL MATERIAL <input type="checkbox"/> WOOD <input type="checkbox"/> ALUMINUM <input type="checkbox"/> FIBERGLASS <input type="checkbox"/> PLASTIC <input type="checkbox"/> RUBBER/VINYL/CANVAS <input type="checkbox"/> STEEL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	PROPULSION (select all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> PROPELLER <input type="checkbox"/> SAIL <input type="checkbox"/> MANUAL <input type="checkbox"/> WATER JET <input type="checkbox"/> AIR THRUST <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (describe) _____  ENGINE TYPE (select one) <input type="checkbox"/> OUTBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> STERNDRIVE (I/O) <input type="checkbox"/> INBOARD <input type="checkbox"/> POD DRIVE <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____ TOTAL HORSEPOWER: _____ HP	OPERATION AT TIME OF ACCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/> CRUISING <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING DIRECTION <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING SPEED <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING SKIER/TUBER <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING SKIER - SKIER DOWN <input type="checkbox"/> TOWING ANOTHER VESSEL <input type="checkbox"/> BEING TOWED BY ANOTHER VESSEL <input type="checkbox"/> DRIFTING <input type="checkbox"/> AT ANCHOR <input type="checkbox"/> TIED TO DOCK <input type="checkbox"/> LAUNCHING <input type="checkbox"/> DOCKING/LEAVING DOCK <input type="checkbox"/> SAILING <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) _____	TYPE OF FUEL <input type="checkbox"/> GAS <input type="checkbox"/> DIESEL <input type="checkbox"/> ELECTRIC <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
---	--	--	--	---

**PERSON COMPLETING THE REPORT**

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

## Motorboats 26 Feet to Less Than 40 Feet in Length

**Life jackets:** One wearable Coast Guard-approved life jacket of a type and size appropriate for the conditions and the boating activity being engaged in must be carried for each person aboard. Life jackets must be readily accessible and properly fit the intended wearer. In addition, the vessel must carry an approved Type IV throwable flotation device, which should be immediately available.

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

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

**Muffling System:** An effective muffling system is required for the exhaust of each internal combustion engine. Unmodified outboards usually meet legal requirements (see page 37).

**Ventilation System:** See page 38.

**Sound Signaling Devices:** A vessel of less than 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) must be able to provide a means of making an efficient sound signal, but is not required to carry a whistle or bell. (For vessels over 12 meters, see page 32.)

**Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only):** All boats 16 feet or more in length must carry devices aboard at all times. Boaters must carry *either*:  
(a) devices that are suitable for day use and devices suitable for night use;  
*or* (b) devices that can be used for both day and night use (see page 44).

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

## Motorboats 40 Feet to 65 Feet in Length

**Life jackets:** One wearable Coast Guard-approved life jacket of a type and size appropriate for the conditions and the boating activity being engaged in must be carried for each person aboard. Life jackets must be readily accessible and properly fit the intended wearer. In addition, the vessel must carry an approved Type IV throwable flotation device, which should be immediately available.

**Fire Extinguisher:** Three B-I or one B-I and one B-11 Coast Guard-approved fire extinguisher must be carried when no fixed fire extinguishing system is installed in machinery spaces. With a fixed system in the machinery space, two Type B-I or one Type B-II extinguisher must be carried.

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

**Muffling System:** An effective muffling system is required for the exhaust of each internal combustion engine. Unmodified outboards usually meet legal requirements (see page 37).

**Ventilation System:** See page 38.

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

**Visual Distress Signals (Coastal Waters Only):** All boats 16 feet or more in length must carry devices aboard at all times. Boaters must carry *either*:  
(a) devices that are suitable for day use and devices suitable for night use;  
or (b) devices that can be used for both day and night use (see page 44).

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

## Life Jackets

All boats, powered or non-powered, must carry at least one wearable Coast Guard-approved life jacket (also called a personal flotation device or PFD) for every person aboard. Life jackets bearing Coast Guard approval are identified by Types I, II, III, IV or V. Coast Guard approval is shown by a stencil marking or tag on the life jacket. This tag or marking shows the name and address of the manufacturer, the Coast Guard approval number and the intended use. It also shows the amount of flotation in the device and the type (I, II, III, IV or V). Failure to have a sufficient number of approved devices aboard constitutes a violation of state and federal law.

» See Life Jackets  
and Flotation Devices  
page 34 35

California boating law requires that all wearable Type I, II and III life jackets must be readily accessible and all Type IV (throwable) flotation devices must be immediately available. They must be kept in serviceable condition. If they are badly torn, damaged, rotted, punctured, or otherwise unserviceable, they no longer meet legal requirements and should be replaced.

### The minimum requirements are:

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



Under state law, it is an infraction, punishable by a fine of up to \$250, to operate a vessel of any length unless *every child under 13 years of age on board is wearing a Type I, II, III or V Coast Guard-approved life jacket*. The law does not apply to: (1) the operator of a sailboat on which every child under age 13 is restrained by a harness tethered to the sailboat; or (2) the operator of a vessel on which every child under age 13 is in an enclosed cabin.

California boating law does not require wearing life jackets while aboard a vessel, other than as noted in the requirements above and those for some Type V life jackets and for children under age 13. However, **DBW highly recommends that all boaters wear life jackets**. All wearable life jackets must properly fit the intended wearer. Check the manufacturer's label on the life jacket for the intended use, size restrictions and instructions on how to wear the life jacket.

Non-approved devices such as ski belts may be carried aboard as excess equipment only. For more information, please visit: <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/Pubs/Pfd/PFDs.pdf>.

**Inflatable Life Jackets:** The Coast Guard approved inflatable life jackets in 1996. However, only certain brands are Coast Guard-approved, and some are only appropriate for adults. Proper use of inflatable life jackets, including appropriate age limits, varies by manufacturer. Please review the owner's manual and information pamphlet carefully before purchasing this type of life jacket. While activation upon impact is not a required feature, inflatables must be equipped at a minimum with both manual (pull) and oral (blow) inflation systems. Inflatable life jackets must have a full cylinder and all status indicators on the inflator must be green to satisfy requirements. Inflatables are not recommended for non-swimmers and are not intended for use while participating in tow or whitewater paddle sports, or while on a personal watercraft (PWC).

**Personal Watercraft:** Every person on board a PWC and anyone being towed behind a vessel must wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket. (For exceptions, see "Water Skiing.")

## Life Jackets and Flotation Devices



### ◀ TYPE I: Offshore Life Jacket

- Intended for offshore boating as well as open water and coastal cruising
- Offers the most flotation and is the most effective life jacket in rough waters
- May help prevent hypothermia
- Designed to turn an unconscious wearer face up
- Bulky



### ◀ TYPE II: Near-Shore Buoyant Vest

- Intended for calm, inland water
- May turn unconscious wearer face up
- Good for non-swimmers
- Provides good flotation
- Less bulky than offshore vests

### TYPE III: Children's Life Jacket ▶

- Intended for general recreational boating
- Designed for possible immersion
- May not turn unconscious wearer face up
- May have special safety features for children
- May be a hybrid that is inherently buoyant and can inflate



### TYPE III: Flotation Aids ▶

- Intended for fishing, hunting, canoeing, kayaking, water skiing, or other high-impact, high-speed activities
- Designed for possible immersion
- May not turn unconscious wearer face up
- Rugged construction



Manual Inflatable



Vest-Type Flotation Jacket



**NOTE:** Regardless of the “Type” shown on a flotation device, ALL life jackets shall be used in accordance with the Coast Guard approval statement for intended use and the manufacturer’s instructions.

## TYPE IV: Throwable Flotation Device ▶

- Intended to be thrown to someone who has fallen overboard
- Designed to be grasped and held by user until he or she is rescued



## ◀ TYPE V: Special Use Device

- Required to be worn for special uses or conditions
- Made for specific activities such as sail boarding and rafting
- Designed for use with deck suits, work vests, hybrid PFDs, and others as marked on the label
- Must follow Coast Guard label for wear and use

## TYPE III & V: Inflatable Life Jackets ▶

- Available in three types:
  - **Automatic** (inflates automatically upon immersion or when manually activated)
  - **Manual** (only inflates when manually activated)
  - **Belt Pack** (only inflates when manually activated; must be placed over head once activated)
- Easy to wear, comfortable and cool
- Not approved for children under 16
- Not intended for sports where immersion is expected



Belt Pack Inflatable

## Underwater Maneuvering Devices

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

## Fire Extinguishers

Motorboats are required to carry readily accessible fire extinguishers accepted for marine use by the Coast Guard. The size and number of extinguishers accepted for use on motorboats depend on the size of your boat and whether or not you have a fixed extinguishing system installed aboard. Fire extinguishers are not required for outboard pleasure boats less than 26 feet in length, or those that are not carrying passengers for hire, have no permanently installed fuel tanks, or do not have spaces in which explosive or flammable gases or vapors can collect. (For specific requirements, see **Table A.**) The minimum size approved for use aboard pleasure boats is the B-I size extinguisher.

All extinguishers must be readily accessible (preferably not stowed next to common fire sources) and must be kept in serviceable condition. An extinguisher is suitable for marine use when it bears a label that has either:

- Coast Guard approval numbers, “Marine Type USCG” or both markings.
- Information stating that it is listed with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and suitable for marine use. The extinguisher must be of the type and size described in **Table B.** UL-listed extinguishers must bear a UL rating of 5-B:C or higher.

**Note:** All recently manufactured, UL Marine Type 5 extinguishers will bear both the UL and Coast Guard label markings.



**CARBON DIOXIDE  
EXTINGUISHER**



**HALON  
EXTINGUISHER**



**DRY CHEMICAL  
EXTINGUISHER**

All carbon tetrachloride extinguishers and others with toxic vaporizing liquids such as chlorobromomethane are neither approved nor accepted as required fire extinguishers on any motorboats.

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

### TABLE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER REQUIREMENTS

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

### TABLE B FIRE EXTINGUISHER CHARACTERISTICS

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

Coast Guard Classes	UL-Listed Equivalent	Dry Chemical lb.	Carbon Dioxide lb.	Halon 1211/1301 lb.
B-I	5-B:C	2	4	2½
B-II	0-B:C	10	15	10

## Muffling Systems

Any motorboat operated on California inland waters or coastal waters up to one mile from shore must be muffled or otherwise prevented from exceeding the following noise levels when measured by the Stationary Sound Level Measurement.

Procedure for Pleasure Motorboats (SAE J2005):

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

All motorboat noise levels must be below 75 dB (A) when measured by the Shoreline Sound Level Measurement Procedure (SAE J1970). Authorities generally agree that unbaffled exhaust pipes (stacks) do not meet any of the above noise level requirements.

## Ventilation Systems

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

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

Boats built after July 31, 1980, that have a gasoline engine for electrical generation, mechanical power or propulsion must be equipped with an operable ventilation system.

- A compartment containing a permanently installed gasoline engine must either be open to the atmosphere or ventilated by an exhaust blower system.
- The intake duct for an exhaust blower must be in the lower one-third of the compartment and above the normal level of accumulated bilge water.
- A combination of more than one exhaust blower may be used to meet specified requirements.

Boats equipped with either outboard motors or “open” construction inboard motors (i.e., not enclosed) are exempt from ventilation requirements.

## Two-Stroke Engines

There is no statewide prohibition on the use of high emission two-stroke vessel engines, and there is no plan to prohibit them. A small number of cities, counties or districts have adopted ordinances on drinking water reservoirs that restrict or ban the use of high emission, carbureted or electronic fuel injection (EFI) two-stroke marine engines. For more information, please visit [www.dbw.ca.gov/environmental/twostroke](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/environmental/twostroke).

## Backfire Flame Control Devices

Backfire flame control devices are designed to prevent open flame from leaving the carburetion system in the event of a backfire. Vessels equipped with gasoline engines, except outboard motors, must have one of the following backfire flame control devices installed on the engine. These can be either:

- Coast Guard-approved backfire flame arrester, suitably secured to the air intake with a flame-tight connection
- Backfire flame arrester marked “SAE-1928” or “UL 1111” and suitably secured to the air intake with a flame-tight connection
- Approved engine air and fuel induction system that provides adequate protection from propagation of backfire flame to the atmosphere, equivalent to that provided by an acceptable backfire flame arrester
- Flame-tight metallic carburetor air intake attachment, located or positioned so backfire flames would be dispersed to the atmosphere outside the vessel

**Note:** *This last device listed must be acceptable to the Coast Guard and designed so that flames will not endanger the vessel, people on board, or nearby vessels and structures.*

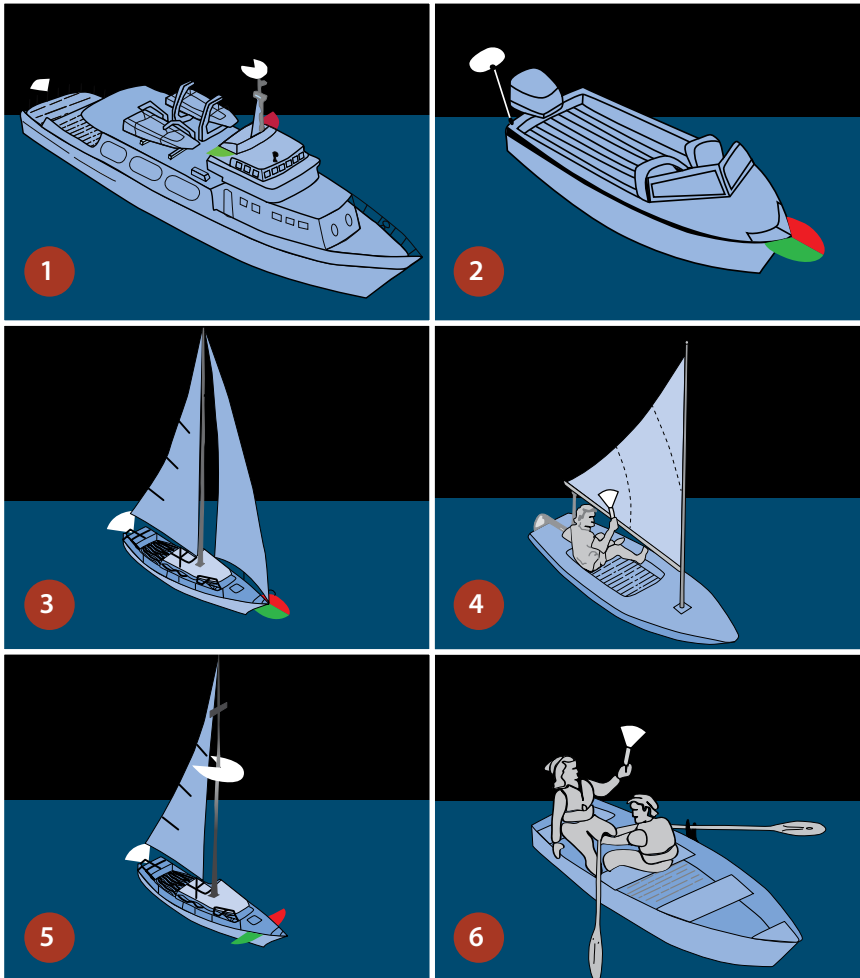


Photo courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard.

## Running Lights

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

### NIGHT BOATING NAVIGATION LIGHTS



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

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

**Sailing Vessels and Vessels Under Oar:** Running light requirements for such vessels are as follows:

- A sailing vessel operating under power of sail only must exhibit sidelights and a sternlight (see **Figure 3**).
- A sailing vessel of less than 23 feet (7 meters) in length must, if practicable, exhibit sidelights and a sternlight or lighted lantern showing a white light, which must be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision (see **Figure 4**).
- A sailing vessel operating under machinery power only, or under power and sails, is considered a power-driven vessel and must display the proper lights for a powerboat (see **Figure 5**).
- A vessel under oars may display those lights prescribed for sailing vessels or have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light, which must be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision (see **Figure 6**).

The running lights described above are the most common, but boaters operating at night should be aware that there are other possible combinations of lights.

## Anchor Lights

An anchor light is an all-round white light exhibited where it can best be seen and is visible for two miles. Power-driven vessels and sailing vessels at anchor must display anchor lights, with these exceptions:

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



## Visual Distress-Signaling Devices

Vessels operating on coastal waters must carry the required number of approved visual distress-signaling devices selected from **Table C** (page 44). Coastal waters include territorial seas and those waters directly connected to those seas where any entrance exceeds two nautical miles between opposite shorelines to the first point where the largest distance between shorelines narrows to two miles (e.g., bays, sounds, harbors, rivers, inlets, etc.). The carriage requirements for vessels operating on coastal waters are:

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

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

Some of the recognized signals for indicating distress and need of assistance are shown on page 43. On coastal waters, boaters must carry Coast Guard-approved visual distress-signaling devices.



RECOGNIZED SIGNALS



Red Meteor



Fog Horn  
Continuous Sound



White Light  
Flashing



Gun or Noise at 1  
Minute Intervals



Orange Flag  
Black Square and Ball



SOS by Visual  
or Audio Signal



May Day  
by Radio



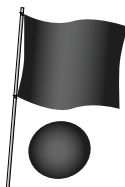
Parachute  
Red Flare



Dye Marker  
(any color)



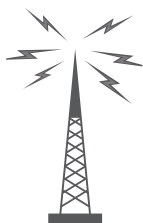
Code Flags  
"N" and "C"



Square Flag  
and Ball



Wave Arms



Radio-Telegraph  
Alarm



Radio-Telephone  
Alarm Signal



Emergency Position  
Indicating Beacon (EPIRB)



Floating Orange  
Smoke Signal

**TABLE C VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS**

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

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

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

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

## Marine Sanitation Devices

While vessels are not required to have a marine toilet on board, if your boat has one, it must be connected to a Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, or III marine sanitation device (MSD).

Federal and State laws forbids dumping sewage—treated or untreated—or any waste derived from sewage into the lakes, reservoirs or fresh water impoundments of this state. Federal regulations and equipment standards established jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Coast Guard govern the use of MSDs. Disconnecting, bypassing or operating a MSD so as to discharge sewage into water is a misdemeanor, unless expressly authorized or permitted by law.

**Note:** Additional information about MSDs and regulations about discharging sewage can be found on page 52.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

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

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

# GREEN BOATING GUIDELINES

## Boater Responsibility

Boaters play an important role in protecting the health of California's waterways. Boat sewage, graywater, cleaning products, spilled fuel and oil, trash and aquatic invasive species are all potential sources of pollution. Government alone cannot protect California's environment. Every boater must take responsibility for pollution prevention and try to minimize the environmental and public health impacts from boating activities.

For additional information on green boating guidelines beyond that contained in this booklet, visit the following web site: [www.BoatingCleanandGreen.com](http://www.BoatingCleanandGreen.com).

## Boat Maintenance

Products used to wash boat hulls and decks often contain toxic ingredients that are harmful to the marine environment. Degreasers dry the natural oils that fish need for their gills to take in oxygen. Underwater hull cleaning can leave toxic paint residues in harbor sediments.

- Limit in-water maintenance and perform cleaning where debris can be captured and disposed of properly. Marina tenants should check whether or not their marina has established guidelines for the type of boat maintenance work that can be done in the slip.
- Purchase greener alternatives that are water-based, biodegradable, phosphate-free, and/or less toxic (better if more than one green attributes are claimed). Seek safer alternatives in this book on page 47, at [www.goodguide.com](http://www.goodguide.com) or look for approved alternatives by EcoLabels such as Green Seal, Ecologo, or the US EPA Design for the Environment (DfE).
- Do not sand in heavy wind. Sand with vacuum sanders or grinders (not steel wool), which automatically collect and store paint, varnish, or wood dust before it can get into the marine environment (or eyes or lungs). Some boat yards have these tools for rent.
- Avoid products with phosphates, ammonia, lye, sodium hypochlorite (bleach), chlorinated hydrocarbons (methylene chloride, perchloroethylene, or trichloroethylene), and petroleum distillates.
- Keep absorbents or rags within reach to wipe up spills.
- Suspend a tarp or polyethylene sheet between the boat and the dock to catch any spills, dust, or debris that would otherwise end up in the water.
- Consider alternative, non-biocide hull coatings that contain no tributyltin, heavymetals such as copper and zinc or biocides. Clean the bottom with a soft, non-abrasive sponge. Use hull cleaning companies who use green management practices such as monitoring their divers and using nonabrasive scrubbing agents. For more information: [ucanr.org/sites/coast/](http://ucanr.org/sites/coast/) and [www.portofsandiego.org/environment/alternative-hull-paints.html](http://www.portofsandiego.org/environment/alternative-hull-paints.html)

## ALTERNATIVES TO TOXIC PRODUCTS

Toxic Product	Alternative
Detergent and Soap	Use fresh water and a lot of elbow grease
Bleach	Try hydrogen peroxide
Scouring Powders	Use baking soda or salt
Floor Cleaner	Mix 1 cup white vinegar in 2 gallons water
Window Cleaner	Mix 1 cup vinegar in 1 quart warm water
Varnish Cleaner	Mix ½ cup vinegar and ½ cup water
Head Cleaner	Brush with baking soda
Shower Cleaner	Wet surface and use scouring cloth with baking soda
Aluminum Cleaner	Mix 2 tablespoons cream of tartar in 1 quart of water
Chrome Cleaner/Polish	Clean with apple cider vinegar, polish with baby oil
Fiberglass Stain Remover	Make a baking soda paste
Drain Opener	Disassemble and replace; avoid toxic products
Mildew Remover	Make paste of equal parts lemon juice and salt
Wood Polish	Mix 3 parts olive oil and 1 part white vinegar, or use almond or olive oil (interior unvarnished wood only)

## Oil and Gas

Oil and gasoline contain hydrocarbons and heavy metals that pollute and are toxic to aquatic life. Oil can coat the feathers and fur of wildlife, destroying their natural insulation from cold. Once ingested, oil moves up the food chain from tiny plankton to fish, birds and even humans, and can cause reproductive problems, weakness and death.

Even a thin film of oil can kill aquatic organisms that live near the water's surface. The cumulative effect of small spills has a serious impact on coastal and inland waters.

To prevent pollution from oil and gas spills and help maintain a healthy and aesthetically pleasing recreational environment for boaters and others:

- Use caution when filling your fuel tank and don't top off. Know the capacity of your tank and leave it at least 10 percent empty.
- Catch fuel drips with an absorbent pad. Properly dispose of saturated absorbents at a hazardous waste disposal location.

- Don't hose down gas spills or apply detergents or soaps to remove fuel or oil sheen in the water. Using soap for this purpose is both bad for the environment and illegal.
- Install fuel tank vent whistles or fuel/air separators (available at any marine supply store) to avoid spills.
- Inspect fuel lines and hoses periodically. Replace as needed.
- Use funnels for pouring oil and keep a supply of oil absorbent pads onboard for cleaning up spills.
- Dispose of used oil and drained oil filters at a waste oil recycling center.
- If a spill occurs, notify marina management immediately.
- Keep oil and fuel from entering our waterways. To view instructional videos and other tips visit [www.BoatingCleanandGreen.com](http://www.BoatingCleanandGreen.com)

All oil and chemical spills must be reported to the National Response Center 800-424-8802 and the State Line 800-OILS911 (800-645-7911). Visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) or call 800-CLEANUP (800-253-2687) for your nearest oil, recycling and hazardous waste disposal center.

## Bilge Oil

Ninety percent of oil in marine waters is from small, chronic sources such as bilges, outboard motors, poor fueling procedures, urban run-off and improper disposal of used oil products. You can help protect California's waterways by preventing oily bilge water from being pumped overboard.

- Keep engines well tuned; regularly check seals, gaskets, hoses, and connections for leaks and drips. Change oil filters often.
- Use drip pans with oil absorbent pads while draining oil from the bilges.
- Use an oil absorbent in the bilge to capture unexpected leaks. The absorbents will capture oil before the bilge pump discharges it into the water. Discard used oil absorbents at a household hazardous waste collection center. Also consider installing an oil/water separator.
- Clean and maintain bilges. Do not use detergents while cleaning.
- Don't mix used oil with other substances.
- Precautions: When using oil absorbents in the bilge, secure them to prevent clogging or fouling the bilge pump float or sensor. Oil and fuel are flammable. Keep oil and fuel-saturated absorbents away from heat or sources of ignition and in well-ventilated areas.
- Remove oily bilge water at a bilge pumpout station.

Remember: Under the Harbors and Navigation Code, it is unlawful to discharge oil into or upon the navigable waters of California.

## Oily Waste Discharge Placard

Federal law requires all boats 26 feet or longer to display an Oily Waste Discharge Placard in the engine compartment or near the fuel tank. Placards are available from marine supply businesses or online at [www.uscgboating.org/images/420.PDF](http://www.uscgboating.org/images/420.PDF).

## Aquatic Invasive Species

Non-native aquatic species—plants, fish and animals—are invading our state’s coastal and inland waters. These pests can increase dramatically under the right conditions, displacing native species, clogging waterways, and impacting navigation and recreation. Once introduced, they are nearly impossible to eliminate. Hydrilla, *Egeria densa*, Water Hyacinth, and quagga and zebra mussels are some of the nuisance species that can be accidentally transported by recreational boaters when caught in propellers or intakes or attached to hulls. Controlling these aquatic invasive species is a multi-million dollar problem in California.

You can help prevent the introduction and spread of non-native species from one body of water to another by cleaning, draining and drying your boat and by taking these steps:

- Avoid chopping vegetation with your boat’s propeller.
- Inspect your boat and remove aquatic plants or animals before you leave any body of water.
- Inspect all exposed surfaces. Small mussels feel like sandpaper to the touch.
- Wash the hull of each watercraft thoroughly.
- Drain all water and dry all areas.
- Drain and dry the lower outboard unit.
- Clean and dry all live-wells.
- Empty and dry any buckets.
- Dispose of all bait in the trash.
- There are specific drying times that need to be calculated by each boater. Please refer to [www.100thmeridian.org/Emersion.asp](http://www.100thmeridian.org/Emersion.asp) to calculate.

To help prevent further spread of aquatic weeds, it is important for boaters to clean all plant fragments from their watercraft and equipment. To learn more about DBW’s control programs for submerged aquatic vegetation and floating aquatic vegetation in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, sign up for the weekly announcement at [www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/Environmental/Aquatic.aspx](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/Environmental/Aquatic.aspx)

Be sure to report new infestations of non-native aquatic species to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at (209) 946-6400. Visit [www.dbw.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.ca.gov) for more information on quagga and zebra mussels or call (866) 440-9530.

## Restrictions on California's Waterways

**Quagga and Zebra Mussels:** Inspections are determined by county or local municipalities, and in some cases, by the Department of Parks and Recreation. Boaters should check ahead to see whether boat inspections will be required.

## Solid Waste and Marine Debris

Trash in the water or washed up on a beach is unsightly and can injure or kill birds, fish and marine mammals. Ingestion of plastic waste or entanglement in fishing lines and nets can result in mortalities. Floating debris and solid objects may cause structural boat damage or mechanical failures.

As a boater, you can help keep our waters clean and prevent fish and wildlife injuries by managing and disposing of all solid waste properly.

- Stash your trash on-board in a designated trash bin and save cans, bottles, plastics and paper for recycling.
- Avoid plastic bags and carry a reusable canvas bag. Bring plastic bags to a supermarket for recycling.
- Remove product packaging at home. Pack your food in reusable containers.
- Cigarette butts are the most common type of litter found washed up on beaches and are not biodegradable. Place extinguished cigarette butts in the trash.
- It is illegal to dump any garbage overboard into the navigable waters of the state (including inland waters and up to 3 miles from shore).
- While on your boat, pick up any litter or marine debris that can be safely reached with a net and dispose of it properly. Participate in a local beach or marina cleanup event. Call 800-CLEANUP or visit [coastforu.org](http://coastforu.org) for organized events in your area.

**Note:** Under the Maritime Pollution Act (MARPOL) International Convention to Prevent Pollution From Ships and U.S. federal regulations, it is illegal for any vessel to discharge plastics or garbage containing plastics into any waters.

Take used fishing line back to a recycling bin at a participating boating facility. Visit [www.BoatingCleanandGreen.com](http://www.BoatingCleanandGreen.com) (click on 'Monofilament Fishing Line Program' Under Quick Links) to identify a location near you. Or, send your monofilament fishing line directly to: Pure Fishing, 1900 18th St., Spirit Lake, IA 51360-1999, tel. (800) 237-5539.

## Marine Pollution Placard

Federal law now requires all boats 26 feet or more in length, when operating in waters under U.S. jurisdiction, to display an informational placard on federal marine pollution prevention laws. You must display the required placard detailing these prohibitions in a prominent location where passengers and crew can read it. The placard must be at least 40 square inches (5" x 9") in size. They can be purchased at marine supply dealers.



**MARINE POLLUTION (MARPOL) REGULATIONS**

**Lakes, Rivers, Bays, Sounds and all Waters up to 3 Nautical Miles from Shore**



**NOT LEGAL**

Plastic and any garbage other than graywater or dishwater

**LEGAL**

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



**3 to 12 Nautical Miles from Shore**



**NOT LEGAL**

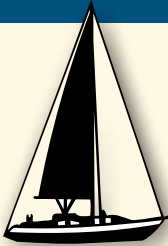
Plastic and any garbage other than graywater or dishwater

**LEGAL**

Graywater, dishwater, and if ground to pieces smaller than 1 square inch: food waste



**3 to 12 Nautical Miles from Shore**



**NOT LEGAL**

Plastic and any garbage other than graywater or dishwater

**LEGAL**

Graywater, dishwater, and ground food waste

## Household Hazardous Waste

Topside and anti-fouling paints, wood preservatives, lacquers, solvents, batteries, used oil, zinc anodes and out-of-date flares are typical hazardous wastes generated by boaters. Some are suspected carcinogens, and all are toxic to humans and aquatic life. Do your part to control household hazardous waste.

- Use non-toxic, biodegradable products when possible.
- Never dispose of hazardous wastes in the trash, water or gutter.
- Use the smallest amount of a toxic product necessary to do the job.
- Place ignitable paint waste and old gasoline in closed containers to prevent pollution or fire.
- Check with your marina before disposing of used oil or other hazardous wastes. Some marinas provide recycling/disposal service.

All boaters must dispose of hazardous waste properly. Call 800-CLEANUP (800-253-2687), visit [earth911.org](http://earth911.org), or contact your local solid waste authority for instructions on how and where to properly dispose of household hazardous waste and to find a disposal location near you.

## Sewage

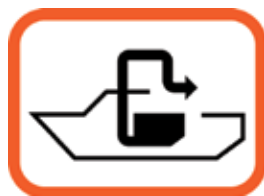
Untreated sewage discharged from boats can spread diseases, contaminate shellfish beds and lower oxygen levels in water. Exposure to sewage-polluted water can result in gastroenteritis, hepatitis, dysentery and cholera. Discharging raw sewage into any of California's lakes, rivers, reservoirs or coastal waters within three miles of shore is prohibited within U.S. navigable waters. State law also prohibits dumping any human waste (treated or untreated) in a marina, yacht harbor, fresh water lake, or fresh water impoundment, No Discharge Zones and into rivers that does not support interstate traffic.

A state or local peace officer who reasonably suspects that a vessel is discharging sewage in a prohibited area may board that vessel, if the owner or operator is aboard, to inspect the MSD for proper operation and to place a dye tablet in the holding tank.

One of DBW's goals is to eliminate overboard discharge of sewage through increased use of pumpout facilities and porta-potty dump stations. You can help by:

- Never dumping raw sewage into California waters.
- Using public toilets onshore before departing.
- Using a pumpout facility to dispose of holding tank wastes.
- On small boats, using a porta-potty and disposing of wastes in an onshore dump station or toilet.
- Keeping the "Y" valve properly secured in the closed position (to prevent accidental discharge) when navigating inland waters or less than three miles offshore.

- Avoid holding tank disinfectants and deodorizers used in Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs) that contain chemicals of concern including: Chlorine compounds (including sodium hypochlorite), formaldehyde, paraformaldehyde, ammonium compounds, glutaraldehyde, paradichlorobenzene, or anti-microbials (such as Dowlcil or Bronopol). Use enzyme and bio-active treatments when possible as these are biodegradable and less toxic treatments. Read labels carefully and use only the amount recommended to ensure adequate treatment.



PUMPOUT STATION

For California pumpout locations, visit [www.dbw.ca.gov/Pumpouts](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/Pumpouts). Visit <http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/PDF/CleanGreen/marinaoilsewage.pdf> for mobile boat-to-boat services.

## No Discharge Areas

It is illegal to release wastes, treated or not, into a federally designated *No Discharge Area*. Your marine sanitation device (MSD) must be connected to a holding tank or secured to prevent all sewage discharges.

California's No Discharge Areas are:

- El Dorado County: Lake Tahoe
- Los Angeles County: Avalon Bay Harbor
- Marin County: Richardson Bay
- Orange County: Dana Point Harbor; Huntington Harbor; Newport Bay (Upper and Lower); Sunset Bay
- Placer County: Lake Tahoe
- San Diego County: Mission Bay; Oceanside Harbor; San Diego Bay
- Ventura County: Channel Islands Harbor

## Graywater

Water from onboard sinks, washers and showers is called graywater, which is discharged directly into the water without treatment. Graywater is often full of phosphates that pollute the water and encourage the growth of unwanted algae. The discharge of graywater is prohibited in some harbors and marinas. Check with marina personnel for local restrictions.

To help reduce the amount of graywater discharged:

- Use shore-side laundry facilities and showers whenever possible.
- Limit the amount of water you use in your boat's sinks and showers.
- Use non-phosphate and biodegradable soaps.
- Use the smallest amount of a cleaning product to get the job done.

## Fish Waste Management

The amount of fish waste disposed into a small, enclosed basin can exceed amounts found naturally in the water. In small quantities, this fish waste is eaten by scavenging fish and is not a problem. In large amounts where water circulation is restricted, decomposition of fish waste can deplete the water of dissolved oxygen, leading to water quality degradation and fish kills. "Fish feeding" with bait or cleaned fish loads basins with nutrients and can disrupt the feeding behavior of wild animals or spread disease among them.

- Always practice proper fish-cleaning methods and proper disposal of fish wastes.
- Dispose of unwanted bait at sea.
- Gut fish and dispose of the contents at sea.
- Use fish cleaning stations with trash receptacles and wastewater hookups.

## Waste Management Plan

All U.S. vessels 40 feet or more in length and equipped with a galley and berthing must carry a written Waste Management Plan if the vessel operates beyond three miles from shore. The Waste Management Plan must designate the person in charge of carrying out the plan and describe procedures for collecting, processing, storing and properly disposing of garbage in keeping with the prohibitions listed on page 51.

## Marine Protected Areas

Marine protected areas are special underwater places, similar to wilderness areas on land, designed to protect key ocean habitats and species by managing activities that threaten their integrity. In 2012, California became a leader in ocean conservation by completing the first statewide network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the United States. Today 124 MPAs stretch along the entire coast between the borders of Oregon and Mexico.



Photo Ralph Wessel

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) include a variety of allowed activities and protections. Special Closures are MPAs that safeguard sensitive seabird nesting and marine mammal haul-out sites. These areas are closed to all watercraft in an effort to minimize wildlife disturbance.

For information on special closures, visit [www.SeabirdProtectionNetwork.org](http://www.SeabirdProtectionNetwork.org). For more detailed information on MPAs, maps, coordinates, and allowed uses, visit: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs).

## Proper Vessel Disposal

Proper vessel disposal is a vital part of clean and responsible boating. Because there are several environmental hazards associated with old vessels, including used oil, solvents and used batteries, it is important that you properly dispose of your vessel at the appropriate time.

**Never** abandon or sink your vessel to dispose of it; not only does it pose an environmental and navigational hazard on our state's waterways but also it is illegal. Failure to comply with the law is punishable by a fine of up to \$3,000.

There are several options for proper vessel disposal: donation, recycling, dismantling, and DBW's Vessel Turn-In Program.

**Landfill Disposal Sites:** It is possible to take an unwanted vessel to a landfill site for disposal. Contact your local transfer station or landfill agency for further information regarding acceptance, costs and hazardous waste restrictions. If you are required to remove hazardous materials first before disposing at a landfill location, check DBW's website under "Boating Clean and Green" for helpful information for proper disposal of these wastes.

**Recycling:** Used boat part dealers, or salvagers, may accept your old vessel for its parts, which they resell. Some dealers will compensate the boat owner for the value of the useable parts minus the total cost of dismantling the vessel and recycling or disposing of hazardous wastes; however each dealer has its own specific requirements for the length and type of vessel they will accept.

**Dismantling:** Some used boat dealers will dismantle and dispose of a vessel that has no redeemable value. Each dealer has its own requirements for vessel length and type, and each dealer will charge for this service. The costs usually run between \$15 to \$200 per foot and may include transportation, labor, disposal, and recycling or disposing of used oil and other hazardous materials.

**Vessel Turn-In Program:** Known as VTIP, this program is a no-cost alternative for recreational boat owners to surrender an unwanted boat. Surrendering a boat is as simple as contacting a participating local agency and making arrangements to drop-off a boat. You must be the registered owner and sign a release of interest in the boat. Check DBW's website to find an agency near you. Visit [www.dbw.ca.gov/VTIP](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/VTIP)

# REGISTRATION

## General Guidelines

California law requires all vessels to be registered and numbered except:

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

These guidelines include vessels that are moored, whether or not they are used.

## How to Register

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

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

**Mussel Fee:** California registered recreational vessels using fresh water bodies within the state are required to display a "Mussel Fee Paid" sticker on the hull next to the current registration sticker. Paying the Mussel Fee does not entitle vessels to bypass inspections or fees for inspections conducted by individual reservoir owners or managers.

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

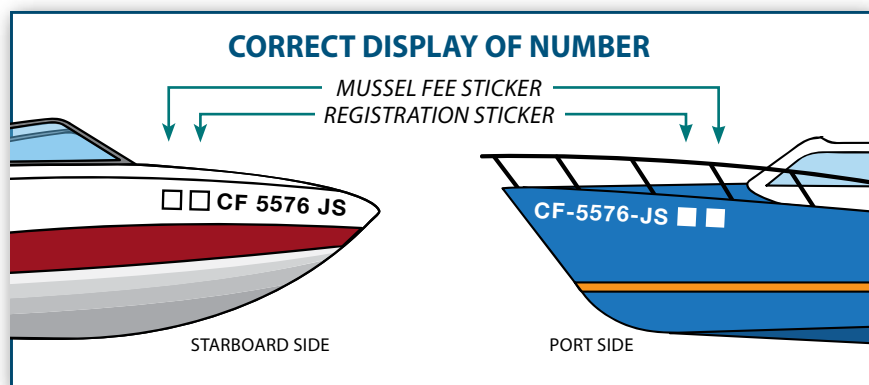
**Taxes:** After you register, your vessel may be subject to a use tax based on the purchase price if it was acquired out of state or from a private party. For additional information regarding use taxes, contact your local Board of Equalization or DMV office.

Although DMV is responsible for the collection of biennial vessel registration fees, boat owners may still be subject to annual local or county taxes. Boats are subject to personal property taxes assessed by the assessor in the county where your boat is principally located. Failure to pay personal property taxes assessed on a boat may result in the nonrenewal of your boat's registration. Questions concerning taxes on boats should be directed to your county assessor. Registration fee information can be found at [dmv.ca.gov/vr/fees/vessels.htm](http://dmv.ca.gov/vr/fees/vessels.htm).

## Display of Numbers and Stickers

Along with your boat registration number, DMV will also issue you a set of registration stickers. Numbers and stickers issued at the time of registration must be placed on each side of the forward half of the vessel, usually on the bow (see the figures below). Registration stickers must be securely affixed three inches aft of, and in line with, the registration numbers. The number must be visible from each side of the vessel. No other numbers, letters or devices may be placed in the vicinity of the state-assigned number.

- To separate the numerals from the letters, spaces the width of the letter "C" or hyphens may be used between the prefix and the number, and between the number and the suffix.
- Letters and numerals must be block characters at least three inches high. Choose a color for the letters and numbers that will contrast well with the hull or backing plate color of your vessel. In determining height and contrast, any border, trim, outlining or shading around the number shall not be considered.
- If placement on a flared bow would make the number difficult to read, it should be affixed on some other part of the forward half of the vessel where it can be easily read.
- For PWCs, the numbers and stickers must also be affixed on each side of the forward half of the vessel on a non-removable portion of the hull.
- On inflatable boats or vessels so configured that a number will not properly adhere or cannot be clearly seen, it should be painted on or attached to a backing plate, along with the registration sticker.



**PERSONAL WATERCRAFT**

## NUMBERS AND STICKERS



The law also requires that a set of carbon monoxide warning stickers be placed on the transom and helm of all new and used motorized boats sold in California. For more information, see the section on carbon monoxide on page 16 of this booklet.

**Emission Standards**

New vessels purchased in California with sterndrive or inboard spark-ignition marine engines below 500 horsepower manufactured on or after Jan 1, 2008, *and* vessels with engines of any rated power output manufactured on or after Jan 1, 2009, must have a permanently affixed label indicating that the engine meets or exceeds specified 2008 California emissions standards. These engines are also required to be accompanied by a hang tag that must be submitted with the initial application for a number by either the retail seller or the purchaser in order to receive a number from DMV.

**Notification Requirements**

You are required to notify DMV in writing whenever any of the following takes place:

1. Your vessel has been destroyed or abandoned. This notice must be given within 15 days and be accompanied by the Certificate of Number and Certificate of Ownership.
2. Your address has changed. This notice must be given within 15 days.
3. You sell your vessel. This notice must be provided within five calendar days and must include the date of sale, a description of the vessel, and the name and address of the new owner. Registration forms may be obtained from any local DMV office or authorized registration agent or by writing:

**California Department of Motor Vehicles**

**Attn: Registration Processing Units**

**P.O. Box 942869**

**Sacramento, CA 94269-0001**



# RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency Telephone System: 911

24-hour Vessel Assistance (from BoatUS, fees involved): 800-888-4869

Californians Turn in Poachers and Polluters: 888-344-CALTIP  
(888-334-2258) or text to 847411 "CALTIP [your message]

## AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES SIGHTINGS AND INQUIRIES

California Department of Fish and Wildlife: 866-440-9530

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/Report](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/Report)

California State Parks, Division of Boating and Waterways: 888-326-2822  
[www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/BoaterInfo/AqualnvSpec](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/BoaterInfo/AqualnvSpec)

## BOATING FACILITY LOCATOR

[www.BoatCalifornia.com](http://www.BoatCalifornia.com)

## BOATING SAFETY

Boating Safety Courses, Classes and Laws: 888-326-2822

[www.CaliforniaBoaterCard.com](http://www.CaliforniaBoaterCard.com)

## CLEAN BOATING INFORMATION

Boating Clean and Green Program: 415-904-6905 or [www.Coastal.ca.gov](http://www.Coastal.ca.gov)

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

## HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

California Department of Toxic Substances Control

[www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/)

## MARINE WILDLIFE RESCUE

The Marine Mammal Center: [www.marinemammalcenter.org/](http://www.marinemammalcenter.org/)

Anchor Bay and Fort Bragg: 415-289-SEAL

Monterey Bay Operations: 831-633-6298

San Luis Obispo and Mendocino Counties: 805-771-8300

Santa Barbara: 805-687-3255

Fort MacArthur Marine Mammal Care Center: [www.marinemammalcare.org/](http://www.marinemammalcare.org/)

Los Angeles County: 1-800-39-WHALE

Orange County: 949-494-3050

San Diego County (SeaWorld): 800-541-SEAL

Statewide Whale Rescue Team (distressed whales and dolphins)

<http://www.cawhalerescue.org/>

877-SOS-WHALE

Channel Islands Marine and Wildlife Institute: [www.cimwi.org/](http://www.cimwi.org/)

Ventura County: 805-567-1505

**OIL AND CHEMICAL SPILLS**

National Response Center: 800-424-8802

[www.epa.gov/emergency-response/national-response-center](http://www.epa.gov/emergency-response/national-response-center)

California Office of Emergency Service State Warning Center: 800-424-8802

[www.caloes.ca.gov/for-governments-tribal/plan-prepare/spill-release-reporting](http://www.caloes.ca.gov/for-governments-tribal/plan-prepare/spill-release-reporting)

**REPORTING DEAD MARINE ANIMALS**

Del Norte and Mendocino Counties: 707-826-4872

Humboldt State University Vertebrate Museum (Whales, dolphins, sea lions, and sea turtles)

Los Angeles and Orange Counties: 213-763-3466

Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History (Whales and dolphins)

Monterey County: 831-771-4400

Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (Whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, and sea turtles)

National Marine Fisheries Service (California): 562-980-4000 (Seals, sea lions and sea turtles)

San Diego County: (831) 420-3900

Southwest Fisheries Science Center (Whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, and sea turtles)

San Luis Obispo through Santa Barbara Counties: 805-682-4711

Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (Whales, dolphins, and sea turtles)

Sonoma County through San Mateo County: 415-379-8000

California Academy of Sciences (Whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, and sea turtles)

Ventura County: 805-567-1505

Channel Islands Marine and Wildlife Institute (Whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, and sea turtles)

**SEWAGE PUMPOUT**

California Boating Facility Pumpout Locations:

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



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**California Natural Resources Agency**

**California State Parks**

**DIVISION OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS**

[www.dbw.parks.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov) | (888) 326-2822 | [pubinfo@dbw.parks.ca.gov](mailto:pubinfo@dbw.parks.ca.gov)

Use the hashtags #LoveCAboatCA and #WearItCA to interact with DBW on social media.



Instagram  
[Boat\\_California](#)



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[BoatCA](#)



Twitter  
[Boat\\_California](#)



YouTube  
[Boat\\_California](#)

# Don't Move a Mussel!

Mussels will ruin your boat, fisheries and California waters.

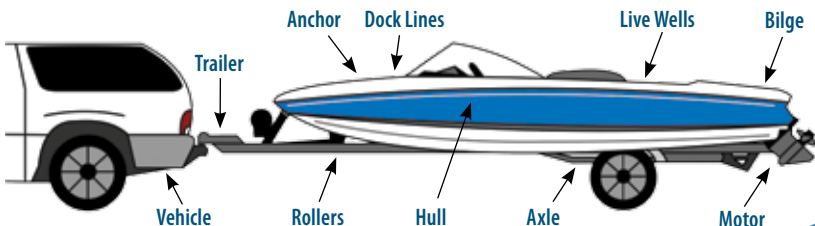
Invasive aquatic mussels are primarily transported by recreational boats. When leaving the water, boaters should **follow these steps** to prevent the spread of quagga and zebra mussels:

- **Inspect** all exposed surfaces—small mussels feel like sandpaper to the touch.
- **Wash** the hull of each watercraft thoroughly, preferably with high-pressure hot water.
- **Remove** all plants and animal material.
- **Drain** all water and dry all areas.
- **Drain** and dry the lower outboard unit.
- **Clean** and dry all live-wells.
- **Empty** and dry any buckets.
- **Properly** dispose of all bait.
- **Wait** five days and keep watercraft dry between launches into different fresh waters.



Report Mussel Finds to 866-440-9530  
Visit [www.dbw.ca.gov/quagga](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/quagga)

Check Your Boat, Trailer and Vehicle. Look for Mussels Here:



# Carry the Card

The California mandatory boating safety education law is now in effect. If you operate a motorized vessel on California waterways, you will be required to pass an approved boating safety exam and carry a lifetime California Boater Card when on state waterways.

Boaters 20 years of age and younger are the first group that must carry a Boater Card in 2018. Are you over the age of 20? See when you will be required to complete your exam on page one of this book or by visiting [CaliforniaBoaterCard.com](http://CaliforniaBoaterCard.com)



California  
**BOATER**  
**CARD**

*Don't leave shore without it.*