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THE HANDBOOK

of South Carolina Boating
Laws and Responsibilities



DNR



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THE HANDBOOK

of South Carolina Boating Laws and Responsibilities

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Where to Find Additional Information

This handbook is designed to be a guide to South Carolina’s boating laws for recreational boaters who operate personal watercraft (PWC) and powerboats. The publication *BOAT SOUTH CAROLINA: A Course on Responsible Boating* gives additional information on safe boat handling and practices.

- For more advanced information, see:
 - U.S. Coast Guard’s *Navigation Rules*
 - *Chapman Piloting: Seamanship and Boat Handling* by Elbert S. Maloney
 - *The Annapolis Book of Seamanship* by Mark Smith and John Rousmaniere
- To stay up to date on new boating laws, call the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources at **1-800-277-4301**.

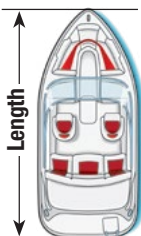
Before Going Out

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

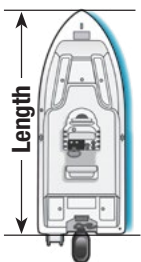
Vessel Length Classes

- A vessel's length class determines the equipment necessary to comply with federal and state laws.
- Vessels are divided into length classes:
 - Less than 16 feet (Class A)
 - 16 feet to less than 26 feet (Class 1)
 - 26 feet to less than 40 feet (Class 2)
 - 40 feet to less than 65 feet (Class 3)
- Length is measured from the tip of the bow in a straight line to the stern. This does not include outboard motors, brackets, rudders, bow attachments, or swim platforms and ladders that are not a molded part of the hull.

Inboards



Outboards



Vessel Capacity

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

Fueling a Vessel

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

- **Before beginning to fuel:**
 - Dock the boat securely, and ask all passengers to exit.
 - Do not allow anyone to smoke or strike a match.
 - Check all fuel lines, connections, and fuel vents.

- Turn off anything that might cause a spark—engines, fans, or electrical equipment.
- Shut off all fuel valves and extinguish all open flames, such as galley stoves and pilot lights.
- Close all windows, ports, doors, and other openings to prevent fumes from entering the boat.
- Remove portable fuel tanks, and fill them on the dock.

■ **While filling the fuel tank:**

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

The most important safe fueling practice...

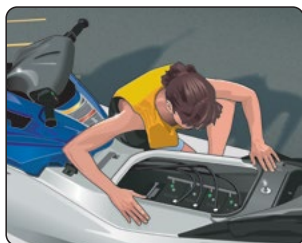
If your vessel is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes both after fueling and before starting your engine to remove gas vapors in the bilge.

■ **After fueling:**

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

Additional Safety Procedures for PWC

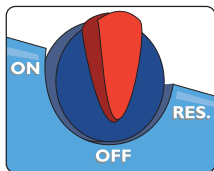
- Do not tip the PWC in order to fill it all the way up. If the tank is overfilled, the fuel may expand and spill into the water.
- After fueling, open the door of the engine compartment and sniff to check for any evidence of gas fumes. Do this before starting the engine. If you do smell gas fumes, determine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



Fuel Selector Switch on a PWC

This switch can help you avoid becoming stranded without fuel.

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



Preventing Theft

Defend against theft of your vessel and equipment.

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

Filing a Float Plan

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

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

Pre-Departure Checklist

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

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

On the Water

Safe navigation on South Carolina waterways is the responsibility of everyone. All operators are equally responsible for taking action to avoid collisions.

Encountering Other Vessels

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

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

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

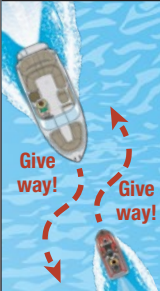





Encountering Vessels With Limited Maneuverability

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

Navigation Rules

There are two terms that help explain these rules.

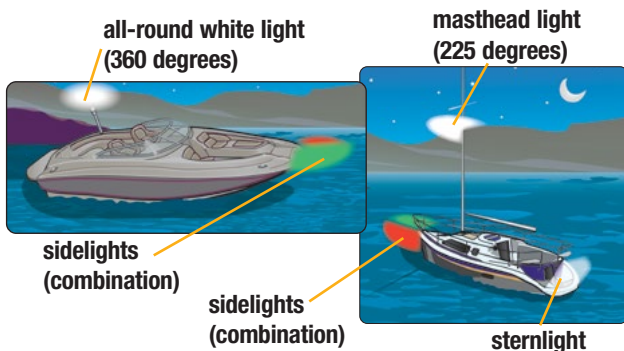
- **Stand-on vessel:** The vessel that should maintain its course and speed.
- **Give-way vessel:** The vessel that must take early and substantial action to avoid collision by stopping, slowing down, or changing course.

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

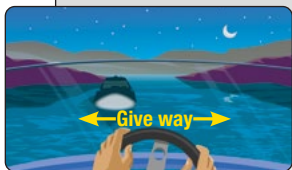
Nighttime Navigation

The required navigation lights must be displayed between sunset and sunrise and also during periods of restricted visibility. Be on the lookout for the lights of other vessels when boating at night. Several types of lights serve as navigational aids at night. There are four common navigation lights.

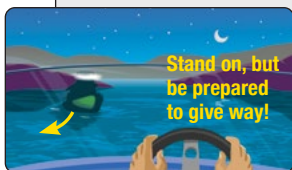
- **Sidelights:** These red and green lights are called sidelights (also called combination lights) because they are visible to another vessel approaching from the side or head-on. The red light indicates a vessel's port (left) side; the green indicates a vessel's starboard (right) side.
- **Sternlight:**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



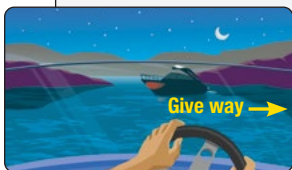
Encountering Vessels at Night



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



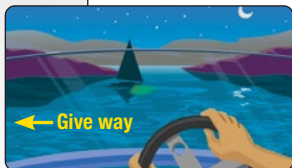
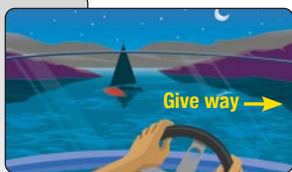
When you see a green and a white light, you are the stand-on vessel. However, remain alert in case the other vessel operator does not see you or does not know the navigation rules.



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

Encountering a Sailboat at Night

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



U.S. Aids to Navigation System (ATON)

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

Lateral Markers

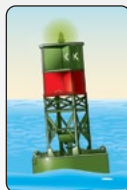
These navigation aids mark the edges of safe water areas; for example, directing travel within a channel. The markers use a combination of colors and numbers, which may appear on either buoys or permanently placed markers.

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



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

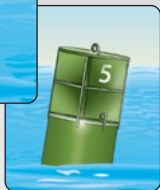
Red and green colors and/or lights indicate the preferred (primary) channel. If green is on top, the preferred channel is to the right as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream; if red is on top, the preferred channel is to the left.



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



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



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



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



Red Right Returning

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

Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) System

- The Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) is a chain of channels that provide an inland passage along the U.S. coast. Buoys and markers used in this system are identified by yellow symbols and serve a dual purpose—they are navigational aids for the lateral system and are markers for the ICW.
- If you are following the ICW from New Jersey to Brownsville, Texas, in a clockwise direction:
 - Any marker displaying a yellow triangle should be passed by keeping it on the starboard (right) side of your vessel.
 - Any marker displaying a yellow square should be passed by keeping it on the port (left) side of your vessel.



Non-Lateral Markers

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

Mooring Buoy

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





Information

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

Controlled

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



Exclusion

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

Danger

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



Other Non-Lateral Markers

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



Inland Waters Obstruction

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

Weather Emergencies

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

What to Do if Caught in Severe Weather

■ Prepare the boat to handle severe weather.

- Slow down, but keep enough power to maintain headway and steering.
- Close all hatches, windows, and doors to reduce the chance of swamping.
- Stow any unnecessary gear.
- Turn on your boat's navigation lights. If there is fog, sound your fog horn.
- Keep bilges free of water. Be prepared to remove water by bailing.
- If there is lightning, disconnect all electrical equipment. Stay as clear of metal objects as possible.

■ Prepare your passengers for severe weather.

- Have everyone put on a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)–approved PFD. If passengers are already wearing their PFDs, make sure they are secured properly.
- Have your passengers sit on the vessel floor close to the centerline for their safety and to make the boat more stable.

■ Decide whether to go to shore or ride out the storm.

- If possible, head for the nearest shore that is safe to approach. If already caught in a storm, it may be best to ride it out in open water rather than try to approach the shore in heavy wind and waves.
- Head the bow into the waves at a 45-degree angle. PWC should head directly into the waves.

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

VHF Frequencies Broadcasting NOAA Weather Reports

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

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

Channel 6 Intership safety communications.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Channel 70 Digital selective calling “alert channel.”

Specifically for PWC

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

Steering and Stopping a PWC

steering control



steering nozzle

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

Remember—no power means no steering control...

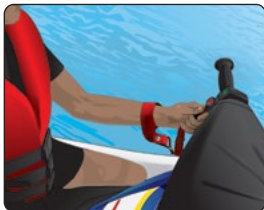
Most PWC and other jet-drive vessels must have power in order to maintain control. If you allow the engine on a PWC or other jet-propelled vessel to return to idle or shut off during operation, you may lose all steering control. Many PWC will continue in the direction they were headed before the engine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

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

Engine Cut-Off Switch (ECOS)

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

- A lanyard is attached to the ECOS and the operator's wrist or PFD. The switch shuts off the engine if the operator falls off the PWC or out of the powerboat. If your vessel does not come equipped with an ECOS, you should have one installed.



- In many states, it is illegal to ride your PWC without attaching the lanyard properly between the switch and yourself.

Remember...

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

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

Reboarding a Capsized PWC

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

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



Courtesy When Encountering Other Vessels

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

Environmental Considerations

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

- Make sure that the water you operate in is at least 30 inches deep. Riding in shallow water can cause bottom sediments or aquatic vegetation to be sucked into the pump, damaging your PWC and the environment.
- Avoid causing erosion by operating at slow speed and by not creating a wake when operating near shore or in narrow streams or rivers.
- Do not dock or beach your PWC in reeds and grasses. This could damage fragile environments.



- Take extra care when fueling your PWC in or near the water. Oil and gasoline spills are very detrimental to the aquatic environment. Fuel on land if possible.
- Never use your PWC to disturb, chase, or harass wildlife.

Other PWC Considerations

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



Before Going Out

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

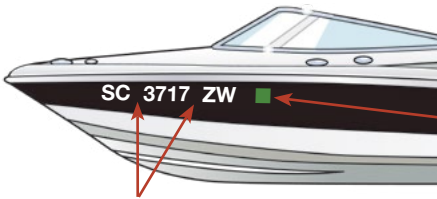
Registering Your Vessel

- You must have a South Carolina Certificate of Number (registration) and validation decals to operate your vessel legally on public waters in South Carolina. The only exceptions are:
 - Non-motorized vessels
 - Vessels documented with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
 - Vessels with valid registration in another state or country, temporarily used in South Carolina
- The Certificate of Number and validation decals are obtained by submitting the proper application and fee to the Department of Natural Resources, Boat Titling and Registration Office, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

- *This certificate (registration card) must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is operated.*

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES			
TITLE NUMBER	HULL I.D.		COUNTY
3717ZW	ABC 67689	B6 06	RICHLAND
MAKE	EXPIRATION DATE	LENGTH	YEAR
RANGER	10/23	17' 08"	2006
REGISTRATION NUMBER		CONST. PWRL FUEL USE TYPE	
SC 3717 ZW		4 1 1 2 1	
JOHN DOE 100 NORTH ST. HOPKINS, SC 29061			

- The registration number and validation decals must be displayed as follows.
 - Number must be painted, applied as a decal, or otherwise affixed to both sides of the bow.
 - Number must read from left to right on both sides of the bow.
 - Number must be in at least 3-inch-high **BLOCK** letters.
 - Number's color must contrast with its background.
 - Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen: **SC 3717 ZW** or **SC-3717-ZW**.
 - No other numbers may be displayed on either side of the bow.
 - Decals must be affixed on both sides of the vessel within six inches following the registration number.



**Spaces or hyphens
should appear here.**

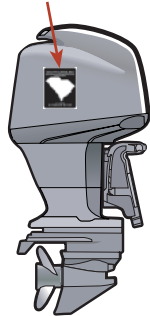
Validation Decal



Other Facts About Titling and Registration

- All vessels must be titled. The only exceptions are vessels documented by the USCG, rowboats, paddleboats, and sailboards.
- All outboard motors of five horsepower or greater must also be titled.
 - You will be issued a motor title decal, which must be displayed on the starboard side of the motor cover.
- A Certificate of Number is valid for one year.
 - You can renew your registration on the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) website, by mail, or in person.
 - Failure to renew within 30 days of the expiration date will result in a penalty.
- If you change your address, you must call or write the SCDNR within 30 days.
- If you destroy your vessel or motor, you must report it to the SCDNR within 10 days and surrender your Certificate of Number and title.

Motor Title Decal



- If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Number, title, or decal, you must apply to the SCDNR for a duplicate and submit a processing fee.
- To purchase a duplicate Certificate of Number or decal or to obtain a duplicate title, you must submit the application and fee by mail or in person.
- Vessels that are currently registered in another state may operate on South Carolina waters for 60 days before South Carolina registration and numbering are required.

Hull Identification Number (HIN)

- The Hull Identification Number (HIN) is a unique, 12-digit number assigned by the manufacturer to vessels built after 1972.
- These numbers:
 - Distinguish one vessel from another.
 - Are engraved in the fiberglass or on a metal plate permanently attached on or near the upper starboard (right) side of the transom.
- Owners of homemade vessels or vessels without a 12-digit HIN must apply for an HIN.
 - Submit an application for an HIN for watercraft, including pictures of the vessel and the fee, to the SCDNR.
 - If requested by the SCDNR, schedule an appointment for a DNR officer to inspect the vessel prior to assigning the HIN.
- You should write down your HIN and put it in a place separate from your vessel in case warranty problems arise or your vessel is stolen.



Schedule of Fees to Register Your Boat or Motor

Note: These fees are subject to change.

Transaction:	Fee:
Annual Registration and Title	\$20.00
Annual Registration Renewal	\$10.00
Watercraft Title (sailboat)	\$10.00
Motor Title	\$10.00
Duplicate Titles	\$5.00
Duplicate Card or Decals	\$5.00 each
Late Fee (31st day–60th day)	\$15.00
Late Fee (61st day and thereafter)	\$30.00

All watercraft and/or motors MUST be registered and titled within 30 days of purchase.

Buying or Selling a Vessel or Motor

The procedure for buying or selling a vessel or outboard motor is outlined on the SCDNR website at www.dnr.sc.gov/boating. The watercraft/outboard motor application and other forms may be obtained by visiting our website, by calling **803-734-3857**, or by visiting a SCDNR Titling and Registration Office. The process is essentially the same whether the “seller” is a marine dealer or an individual selling a pre-owned boat.

- The sale of a vessel or outboard motor without a title in the seller’s name is prohibited.
- If a registered vessel or outboard motor changes ownership:
 - The “buyer” must apply for a Certificate of Number and title within 30 days from the date of purchase.
 - The “seller” must notify SCDNR, in writing, within 30 days of sale a description of the vessel and/or motor along with buyer’s name, address, and date of sale.

- A new or used vessel with expiration decals may be operated for up to 60 days from the date of purchase when the temporary watercraft certificate (which comes attached to the application) and a bill of sale are carried on board.
- The SCDNR has a service, SC Boat Facts, that gives information on property taxes and liens for vessels and motors. This information has been provided to the SCDNR by the owner, law enforcement agencies, and county tax collectors.
 - To access SC Boat Facts, visit the website at www.dnr.sc.gov/boating. For vessel information, you need the South Carolina registration number. For motors, you need the serial number.
 - For additional tax information, contact the reporting county or the county where the vessel is registered.
- To make sure you are not buying a stolen vessel:
 - Make sure the HIN on the title matches the HIN on the vessel.
 - Inspect the HIN on the vessel to ensure that it has not been altered in any way.

Where to Title and Register

You can carry out your registration and titling transactions by mail or in person.

By Mail:

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Boat Titling and Registration
P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202

In Person:

326 Little Brooke Lane 217 Fort Johnson Road
West Columbia, SC 29172 Charleston, SC 29422

Some requests and renewals also can be handled on the SCDNR website. For more information or for forms, visit the website at www.dnr.sc.gov/boating, call the SCDNR Boat Titling and Registration Office at **803-734-3857**, or send a fax at **803-734-4138**.

Abandoned Vessels

South Carolina law prohibits anyone from abandoning a vessel or motor on any public lands or waters of the state.

- Penalties include a fine of up to \$5,000 and up to 30 days imprisonment.
- Vessel owners also must pay to have the vessel or motor removed from the public land or water.

Legal Requirements for Trailers

South Carolina requires the following for boat trailers.

- Trailers weighing less than 2,500 pounds are not required to be licensed or registered.
- Trailers weighing more than 2,500 pounds must be licensed and registered.
- If the gross weight of the boat *and* trailer exceeds 3,000 pounds, the trailer must be equipped with brakes.
- Trailers must have proper lighting, including turn signals, taillights, and brake lights. All trailer lights must be maintained in an operable condition, same as when the trailer was manufactured.
- All trailers must be connected to the towing vehicle by safety chains or cable of sufficient strength to maintain connection under all conditions.
- Trailer hitches must not obscure more than two inches of the license plate of the towing vehicle.

For further information, contact the Motor Vehicle Division of the South Carolina Department of Public Safety. Customer service representatives are available Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. by:

- Calling **803-896-5000**
- Sending an e-mail to **help@scdmvonline.com**

Marine Events

- A state permit must be obtained at least 30 days in advance in order to hold a race, regatta, or tournament on South Carolina waters. For permits or information on these or other marine events, contact:
 SCDNR Investigations
 P.O. Box 12559
 Charleston, SC 29422
843-953-9378
 To obtain the application form, visit www2.dnr.sc.gov/MarineEvent.
- Permits for events held on federally controlled waters are granted through the USCG by applying at least 30 days in advance.

Who May Operate a Vessel

In South Carolina, it is unlawful to operate a vessel powered by an engine of 10 hp or greater, a personal watercraft (PWC), or a specialty propcraft unless you:

- Were born on or before July 1, 2007.
- Possess or have been issued a South Carolina boating safety certificate.
- Possess a license to operate a vessel issued by the USCG in your name, regardless of the expiration date on the license.
- Possess a merchant mariner credential issued by the USCG in your name, regardless of the expiration date on the credential.
- Are a nonresident and possess a boating safety certificate or equivalent issued by another state in your name.
- Are accompanied by a person at least 18 years of age who meets one of the above criteria.

Boat Rental Certificate

You may also operate a vessel, PWC, or specialty propcraft if you have taken and completed a boat rental safety education course approved by the SCDNR. You will be issued a boat rental safety certificate in your name in either electronic or physical form. The boat rental safety certificate is valid for 30 days from the date of issuance. The certificate is only valid while operating a vessel, PWC, or specialty propcraft from a business engaged in the renting of such vessels.

Required Equipment

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

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

- All recreational vessels must carry one USCG–approved wearable PFD for each person on board. For wearable Type V PFDs to be counted, they must be used according to their label requirements.
- In addition to the above requirements, vessels 16 feet in length or longer must have one USCG–approved throwable Type IV device on board.
- *South Carolina law requires all children under 12 years of age to wear a USCG–approved PFD while on board a Class A (less than 16 feet long) vessel. The PFD must be fastened and of the proper size for the child.*
- If a person chooses to wear a PFD that is not approved by the USCG (when not specifically required), a properly fitting USCG–approved PFD must be carried on board the vessel to meet the state and federal carriage requirements.
- One Type V PFD may be substituted for any other type if it is specifically approved by the USCG for the activity at hand. Type V PFDs may not be substituted on children weighing less than 90 pounds.
- Each person riding on a PWC or being towed behind a vessel must *wear* a USCG–approved Type I, II, III, or V PFD.
- In certain situations, paddleboards must carry a USCG–approved PFD for each person on board.
- All PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition and must be readily accessible. Wearable PFDs must be of the proper size for the intended wearer. Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.

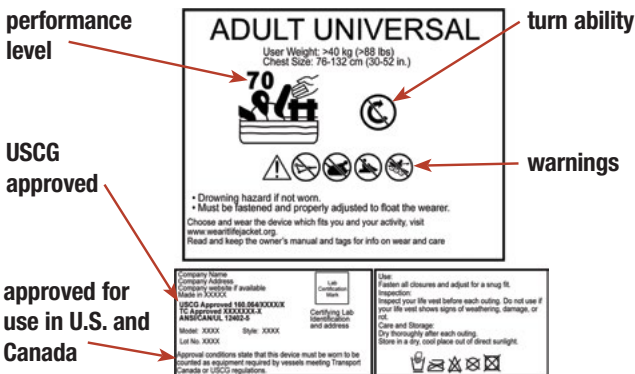


PFD Label

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

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

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



Warnings

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



Water-skiing



PWC or wakeboarding



Tubing



Whitewater paddling

Navigation Lights

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

Power-Driven Vessels When Underway

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

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

Unpowered Vessels When Underway

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

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

All Vessels When Not Underway

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

Turn Ability



The PFD will turn an unconscious person face up. Test before use.

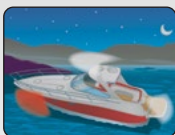


The PFD will not turn an unconscious person face up.

1. Power-Driven Vessels Less Than 65.6 Feet



Less than 39.4 feet only



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

2. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 65.6 Feet



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

3. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 23.0 Feet



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

Fire Extinguishers

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

- Federal law requires all vessels, including PWC, to have a Type B fire extinguisher on board if one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - Any inboard engine
 - Closed compartments where portable fuel tanks may be stored

- Double bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not filled completely with flotation material
- Closed living spaces
- Closed storage compartments in which flammable or combustible materials may be stored
- Permanently installed fuel tanks
- Approved types of fire extinguishers are identified by the following marking on the label—"Marine Type USCG Approved"—followed by the type and size symbols and the approval number.
- When required by the USCG, fire extinguishers must be on board the vessel and readily accessible—where they can be easily reached. When deciding on a place to store a fire extinguisher, make sure to consider how easy it is to reach in the event of a fire. It is recommended that the fire extinguisher be conspicuously and securely mounted on its intended hanger or bracket.

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

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

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

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

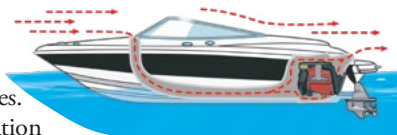
Length of Vessel	Without Fixed System	With Fixed System*
Less than 26 ft.	one 5-B	none
26 ft. to less than 40 ft.	two 5-B (or one 20-B)	one 5-B
40 ft. to less than 65 ft.	three 5-B (or one 20-B and one 5-B)	two 5-B (or one 20-B)
*refers to a permanently installed fire extinguisher system		

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

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

Ventilation Systems

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



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

Backfire Flame Arrestors

- Because boat engines may backfire, all powerboats (except outboards) that are fueled with gasoline must have a USCG–approved backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor.
- Periodically clean the flame arrestor(s) and check for damage.

Mufflers

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

- Many South Carolina lakes have specific laws prohibiting boats or PWC from making excessive or disturbing levels of noise.

Sound-Producing Devices

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

Some sound signals that you should be familiar with are:

Restricted Visibility

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

Warning

- **One prolonged blast** is a warning signal (for example, when coming around a blind bend or exiting a slip).
- **Five (or more) short, rapid blasts** signal danger or that you disagree with the other boater's intentions.

Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

Visual distress signals (VDSs) allow vessel operators to signal for help in the event of an emergency.

- Vessels on federally controlled waters must be equipped with VDSs that are USCG approved, in serviceable condition, and readily accessible.
- All vessels, regardless of length or type, are required to carry night signals when operating between sunset and sunrise. Most vessels must carry day signals also; exceptions to the requirement for day signals are:
 - Recreational vessels that are less than 16 feet in length

- Non-motorized open sailboats that are less than 26 feet in length
 - Manually propelled vessels
- If pyrotechnic VDSs are used, they must be dated. Expired VDSs may be carried on board, but a minimum of three unexpired VDSs must be carried in the vessel.

VDSs are classified as day signals (visible in bright sunlight), night signals (visible at night), or both day and night signals. VDSs are either pyrotechnic (smoke and flames) or non-pyrotechnic (non-combustible).



Day

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

Night

Electric Light (Non-Pyrotechnic)

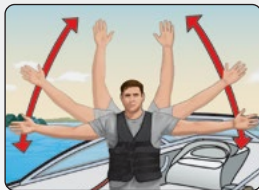
Day and Night

Red Meteor (Pyrotechnic)
 Red Flare (Pyrotechnic)

Federally Controlled Waters

Vessels must observe federal requirements on these waters:

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



Arm Signal

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

On the Water

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

Negligent, Reckless, and Other Illegal Operation

The failure to exercise the care necessary to protect the safety of persons or property is illegal. Examples of negligent, reckless, and other illegal operation are:

- Weaving your boat or PWC through congested traffic
- Crossing the path or wake of another boat unnecessarily close to the other boat or when visibility around the other boat is restricted
- Causing your boat or PWC to leave the water completely while crossing the wake of another boat within 200 feet of the other boat
- Swerving at the last moment to avoid a collision
- Boating in restricted areas without regard for other boaters or persons, posted speed and wake restrictions, diver-down flags, etc.
- Failing to maintain a proper lookout for other boats or persons
- Towing a person on water skis, a surfboard, or similar device behind your boat or PWC in such a way that it causes the towed person to collide with another person or object or to pass through a swimming area
- Allowing passengers to ride on the bow, gunwale, transom, seat backs, seats on raised decks, or any other place where there may be a chance of falling overboard
- Allowing passengers to swim within 50 feet of a public boat landing or ramp
- Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife

Speed Regulations

- Failure to regulate speed is defined as operating a boat or PWC at speeds that may cause danger, injury, damage, or unnecessary inconvenience.
- When on the waters of Lake Greenwood, Lake Hartwell, Lake Jocassee, Lake Keowee, Lake Marion, Lake Monticello, Lake Murray, Lake Robinson, Lake Russell, Lake Secession, Lake Thurmond, Lake Wateree, Fishing Creek Reservoir, Parr Reservoir, or the portion of the Savannah River from the Interstate 20 Savannah River Bridge to the New Savannah River Bluff Lock and Dam, you may not operate a boat or PWC in excess of **“idle speed”** within:
 - 50 feet of a moored or anchored vessel or person in the water
 - 100 feet of a wharf, dock, bulkhead, or pier
- On all other state waters, you may not operate a boat or PWC in excess of “idle speed” within:
 - 50 feet of a moored or anchored vessel, wharf, dock, bulkhead, pier, or person in the water
 - 100 yards of the Atlantic Ocean coastline
- You may not **wake surf** in excess of “idle speed” within 200 feet of a moored vessel, wharf, dock, bulkhead, pier, or person in the water.
- You must maintain “idle speed” when in the vicinity of a boat flashing a blue light.
- Vessel operators are responsible for any damage caused by their wake.

“Idle Speed” or “No Wake, Idle Speed”

When you see buoys or signs with these words, they indicate a restricted boating area established to protect the safety of the public and property. In these areas, a vessel cannot proceed at a speed greater than that speed necessary to maintain steering.

Wake Surf

To operate a vessel that is ballasted in the stern so as to create a wake that is, or is intended to be, surfed by another person

Obstructing Navigation

It is illegal to:

- Anchor a vessel in the traveled portion of a river or channel in a way that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.

- Moor or attach a vessel to a buoy (other than a mooring buoy), beacon, light, or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities.
- Move, displace, tamper with, damage, or destroy any navigational aid.
- Obstruct a pier, wharf, boat ramp, or access to any facility.

Homeland Security Restrictions

Help keep our waterways safe and secure.

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

Alcohol and Drugs

- South Carolina law prohibits anyone from operating a moving motorized vessel or vessel under sail on the waters of the state while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or a combination thereof.
- Penalties include a fine of up to \$6,000 and up to three years of imprisonment. In addition, a person's privilege to operate any vessel may be suspended for up to two years. Enrollment in, and successful completion of, an Alcohol and Drug Safety Action course and a South Carolina boating safety course also are required at the person's expense.
- Felony BUI (boating under the influence) carries penalties of up to a \$25,000 fine and 25 years imprisonment.
- A person who operates a vessel is considered to have given consent ("implied consent") to a chemical test or analysis of his or her breath, blood, or urine.



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

Boating Accidents

- An operator in a boating accident must:
 - Stop his or her vessel *immediately* at the scene of the accident *and...*
 - Assist anyone injured or in danger from the accident, unless doing so would *seriously* endanger his or her own vessel or passengers *and...*
 - Give, in writing, his or her name, address, and vessel identification to anyone injured and to the owner of any property damaged by the accident.
- **In addition, the operator of a vessel involved in a boating accident must call the SCDNR *immediately* at 1-800-922-5431.**

Enforcement

- The boating laws of South Carolina are enforced by officers of the Law Enforcement Division of the SCDNR, USCG officers, and any other authorized law enforcement officers. They have the right to stop and board vessels to check for compliance with federal and state laws.
- The USCG also has enforcement authority on federally controlled waters, such as coastal waters, the Great Lakes, territorial seas, and waters that are two miles wide or wider and are directly connected to one of the above.



Courtesy of South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Diver-Down Flags

- Scuba divers or snorkelers should display a diver-down flag to mark their diving area.
- Vessels must remain at least 50 feet away from the flag. If they have to approach the diving area, operators must have permission from the person who placed the flag or the boat displaying the flag.



**Divers
Flag**



**Alfa
Flag**

A rectangular red flag, at least 15 x 15 inches, with a white diagonal stripe is used on state waters of South Carolina.

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

Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

- It is illegal to discharge oil or hazardous substances into the water.
- You are not allowed to dump oil into the bilge of the vessel without means for proper disposal.
- You must discharge oil waste to a reception facility. On recreational vessels, a bucket or bailer is adequate for temporary storage.
- If your vessel is 26 feet or longer, you must display a 5 x 8-inch placard near the bilge pump switch stating the Federal Water Pollution Control Act's law.

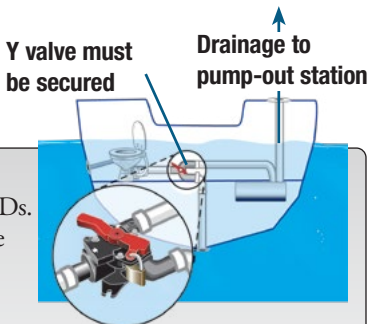
If your vessel discharges oil or hazardous substances into the water, immediately call the National Response Center at **1-800-424-8802**.



Discharge of Waste

- Houseboats must have a wastewater holding system to prevent the discharge of waste into the water. South Carolina law prohibits discharge of any sewage, treated or untreated, into the state's freshwaters.
- If you have a recreational vessel with installed toilet facilities, it must have an operable marine sanitation device (MSD) on board. All installed devices must be USCG certified.

Typical Marine Sanitation Device



Types of MSDs

There are three types of MSDs.

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

Discharge of Trash

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

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

Specifically for PWC

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

Requirements Specific to PWC

- Each person riding on a PWC must *wear* a USCG–approved PFD.
- PWC must be equipped with a fully operational self-circling device or a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch (ECOS). If the ECOS is used, the lanyard must be attached to the person or PFD of the operator.
- When on the waters of Lake Greenwood, Lake Hartwell, Lake Jocassee, Lake Keowee, Lake Marion, Lake Monticello, Lake Murray, Lake Robinson, Lake Russell, Lake Secession, Lake Thurmond, Lake Wateree, Fishing Creek Reservoir, Parr Reservoir, or the portion of the Savannah River from the Interstate 20 Savannah River Bridge to the New Savannah River Bluff Lock and Dam, you may not operate a PWC in excess of “idle speed” within:
 - 50 feet of a moored or anchored vessel or person in the water
 - 100 feet of a wharf, dock, bulkhead, or pier
- On all other state waters, you may not operate a PWC in excess of “idle speed” within:
 - 50 feet of a moored or anchored vessel, wharf, dock, bulkhead, pier, or person in the water
 - 100 yards of the Atlantic Ocean coastline
- It is also illegal to:
 - Operate a PWC between sunset and sunrise.
 - Jump the wake of another boat unnecessarily close to the other boat or when visibility around the other boat is restricted.
 - Operate a PWC so that it leaves the water (jumps) within 200 feet of a boat whose wake it is crossing.
 - Wake surf in excess of “idle speed” within 200 feet of a moored vessel, wharf, dock, bulkhead, pier, or person in the water.
 - Chase, harass, or disturb wildlife.
- Remember that as an owner of a PWC, it is illegal for you to allow anyone else to operate your PWC in such a way that it violates the laws of South Carolina.

Specifically for Skiing

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

Requirements for Towing Skiers

- It is illegal for vessels to tow persons on water skis, a surfboard, or any other device between sunset and sunrise.
- Vessels towing water-skiers or participating in a similar activity must operate in a careful and prudent manner. A reasonable distance from other boats, people, and property must be maintained so as not to endanger life or property. Buzzing or spraying another boat or a swimmer is illegal.
- Those being towed must *wear* a USCG–approved PFD.
- Every vessel towing a person(s) on water skis, a surfboard, or a similar device must have on board:
 - A person, in addition to the boat operator, observing the towed person(s) *or...*
 - A wide-angle rearview mirror mounted such that the operator can observe the towed person(s) at all times.
- If an observer is used when towing a person behind a PWC, the PWC must be rated for three people—the operator, the observer, and the retrieved skier.



Specifically for Paddlesports

In recent years, paddlesports have become very popular on the coast and on inland lakes. This includes paddleboarding.

Paddleboard Requirements

- The USCG classifies paddleboards as vessels.
- Unless used in the surf at the beach like a surfboard, paddleboard users must comply with the USCG's navigation rules and safety requirements. This includes the following safety equipment.
 - **Personal flotation device (PFD):** Paddleboards must have a readily accessible USCG-approved PFD for each person on board. Children under 12 years of age must *wear* an approved PFD.
 - **Sound-producing device:** Paddleboards must have on board a sound-producing device, such as a police-type whistle.
 - **Visual distress signals (VDSs):** Paddleboards must carry night signals when operating on federally controlled waters between sunset and sunrise.
 - **Navigation lights:** Paddleboards must have at least a flashlight to use as a navigation light when operating between sunset and sunrise or during periods of restricted visibility.



Courtesy of Charleston Outdoor Adventures

Paddleboards are classified as vessels by the USCG and have specific requirements for PFDs and other equipment.

Contact Information for South Carolina Boaters

Call 1-800-678-7227 to:

Subscribe to *South Carolina Wildlife*. Hailed by many as THE state magazine, *South Carolina Wildlife* chronicles the people, places, and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Palmetto State through award-winning outdoor features and spectacular color photos!

Call 803-734-1700 to:

Contact the SC Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. Find out information about and location of state parks. Or check out the website at www.discoversouthcarolina.com.

Call 803-734-4009 to:

Locate public boat ramps. Find out where you can launch your vessel.

Reach the Fishing Information Hotline. Hear current fishing reports for major inland reservoirs and coastal marine waters. Or locate the nearest public landings.

Call 843-953-9062 to:

Find pump-out station locations. Locate the closest pump-out and dump stations.

Call 843-953-9300 to:

Contact the Marine Resources Division to locate coastal fishing piers, public landings, marinas, and bridge areas. Find out where you can fish or launch your boat on the South Carolina coast.

Obtain saltwater fish records, regulations, and applications to report potential records. All tackle records are kept for most marine sportfish.

Obtain SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series information. Help encourage the conservation of billfish through tag and release.

Find out about opportunities for saltwater anglers to tag fish. Awards are given annually for achievement in several categories of the Master Anglers Program.

Call 803-734-3891 to:

Obtain freshwater fish records, regulations, and applications to report potential records. All tackle records are kept for game fish.

Call 843-953-9302 to:

Obtain permits to hold tournaments, races, or regattas. Arrange for permits needed to hold marine events.

Get your free float plan form. Use this form to let others know where you are boating and when you plan to return.

Call 803-734-3857 (West Columbia) or 843-953-9301 (Charleston) to:

Obtain boat titling and registration information and forms from SCDNR Titling and Registration. Vessel registration and boat and motor titling services are available through SCDNR Full Service offices in West Columbia and Charleston. Renewals also can be accomplished at SCDNR offices in Clemson, Florence, and York.

Report stolen vessels or outboard motors. Or call your local sheriff's department or police agency.

Call 1-800-277-4301 to:

Contact the SCDNR to stay up to date on new boating laws. Keep current on new boating laws.

Call 1-800-922-5431 to:

Contact Operation Game Thief to report violations of wildlife, boating, or litter laws. You can help the department protect South Carolina's natural resources!

Call 1-800-922-5431 to:

Report distressed or stranded animals along the SC coast. Report whales or other marine mammals that are in distress or dead.

Call 803-734-3833 to:

Obtain information on hunting and fishing licenses, permits, and tags.

SCDNR Law Enforcement Offices



Region 1

311 Natural Resources Dr., Clemson, SC 29631 . . . 864-654-1671

Region 2

295 S. Evander Dr., Florence, SC 29506 843-661-4766

Region 3

2762 Wildlife Ln., West Columbia, SC 29172 803-755-1822

Region 4

217 Ft. Johnson Rd., Charleston, SC 29422 843-953-9307

The addresses shown above are the physical locations of the offices; mailing addresses may be different.

Protecting South Carolina's Waterways

Aquatic Nuisance Species

Introducing non-native species into South Carolina waters can upset the balance of the ecosystem, thereby harming the environment. Aquatic nuisance species, such as zebra mussels, quagga mussels, milfoil, and hydrilla, are most often spread between waterways by hitching a ride on vessels and trailers. When transplanted into new waters, these organisms proliferate, displacing native species and damaging the water resource.



To prevent spreading aquatic nuisance species:

- Inspect your vessel and trailer, and remove any plants and animals you see before leaving the landing area.
- Drain your motor, live well, and bilge on land before leaving the area.
- Empty your bait bucket on land. Never release live bait into a body of water or release aquatic animals from one body of water into another.
- Rinse your vessel, propeller, trailer, and equipment.
- Air-dry your vessel and equipment for as long as possible.

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, disability, or age. Direct all inquiries to the Office of Human Resources, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

Required Equipment Checklist

Boat Less Than 16 Ft.
(includes PWC)

Boat 16 Ft. to Less Than 26 Ft.

Boat 26 Ft. to Less Than 40 Ft.

Boater Safety Certification Card	Anyone born after July 1, 2007.
Certificate of Number on Board	Certificate of Number must be on board when vessel is in use.
Validation Decals Displayed	Number and decal must be displayed as described in "Registering Your Vessel."
Wearable PFDs	One wearable PFD for each person on board. Those under 12 years must always wear a PFD.
Throwable Device	One throwable device required on boats 16 ft. or longer.
Type 5-B Fire Extinguisher	One 5-B (when enclosed compartment) Two 5-B or one 20-B
Horn, Whistle, or Bell	Must carry a whistle, horn, or some other means to make an efficient sound signal.
Daytime VDSS	Required if boating on coastal waters of South Carolina.
Nighttime VDSS	Required if boating on coastal waters of South Carolina between sunset and sunrise.
Navigation Lights	Required if boating between sunset and sunrise and in periods of restricted visibility.

Learn just about everything you want to know about
what is going on outdoors in South Carolina!

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Visit us on our website at:
www.dnr.sc.gov



stay current on all boating safety laws

read about the latest freshwater and saltwater fishing trends

get answers to questions about:

- boat registration
- fishing license and regulations

stay current with DNR's latest news releases

learn about outdoor education opportunities