

BOATING SAFETY LAWS



Law

- All vessels must be equipped with a PFD for each person on board/towed.
- **Children under 6** years of age must wear a USCG approved Type I or II PFD when riding on the open deck of any vessel while underway.
- One throwable device must be on board and be readily accessible.
- Each person on a PWC or being towed must wear a USCG- approved Type I, II, or III PFD. **Inflatable PFDs are not allowed on PWCs or while in tow.**

Recommended – All persons should wear a PFD in good condition.



Law

- Every person in tow must wear a PFD.
- Every vessel towing a person must have a person on board, in addition to the vessel operator, observing the towed person(s) at all times.
- It is legal to tow persons only **between one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset**, or between 8 a.m. and sunset if towed behind a PWC.
- Boat and person being towed must be kept at least **100 ft. away from shore**, a vessel, dock or marked swimming area or person in the water.



Law

- If underway between sunset and sunrise, or during reduced visibility, vessels must be equipped with and exhibit **navigation lights**.
- PWC's shall not be operated from sunset to 8 a.m.
- Most vessels, including PWCs, are required to have a Type B **fire extinguisher on board** in an accessible area
- **Sound-producing devices and Visual Distress Signals are required** in case of emergency.

BE PREPARED! THE TOP 5 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO ACCIDENTS ARE:

Improper lookout



Operator inexperience



Machinery failure



Alcohol use



Operator inattention



BOATING SAFETY CERTIFICATE

It is recommended that all boaters who operate a watercraft obtain a Boating Safety Certificate. Those born after June 30, 1996; and people over 16 and born after Dec. 31, 1978 who operate a personal watercraft are required to have a Boating Safety



ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING

Never swim at a marina as there is risk of electro-shock drowning. If a swimmer feels an electric current in the water, it is important to swim away from the source even if it is the boat or the dock.

BEFORE HEADING OUT ON THE WATER

- Ensure boat is equipped with equipment in good working condition.
- Always carry a first-aid kit, nautical charts and an anchor.
- Ensure the cabin of your vessel has appropriate ventilation to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

For a complete set of laws, see the Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities on the Michigan.gov/dnr.