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# THE HANDBOOK OF NEVADA BOATING LAWS



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The Department of Wildlife is responsible for the safety education of Nevada boaters. The **BOAT NEVADA** safe boating program is recognized nationally and approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. Completing a boating safety course will make your time on the water safer and more enjoyable. Many insurance companies offer a discount for successful completion.

Nevada boaters have **three** ways to become certified in boating safety with

## **BOAT NEVADA** Safe Boating Program

### **1. Over the Internet...**

Learn what you need to be a safe boat operator online! The complete course with exciting visuals awaits you on the Internet. Interactive graphics help you learn and retain information on boating safely in Nevada.

Successfully complete the online test, and you will receive a State of Nevada boating safety certificate by mail. There is a nominal fee for online certification.

**Start today at** [www.ndow.org/boat/](http://www.ndow.org/boat/) or  
[www.boat-ed.com/nevada](http://www.boat-ed.com/nevada)

### **2. In a classroom...**

Share the learning experience with other boaters and a qualified instructor. Call the Nevada Department of Wildlife to locate the next classroom course in your area.

**Northern Nevada, call 775-688-1500**

**Southern Nevada, call 702-486-5127**

### **3. By correspondence...**

Study at home with the *Boat Nevada* manual. Then take the certification exam at home and mail it to the Nevada Department of Wildlife for grading and certification.

**Northern Nevada, call 775-688-1500**

**Southern Nevada, call 702-486-5127**



# THE HANDBOOK OF NEVADA BOATING LAWS

*NOTE: The information in this handbook is intended to be used only as a summary of the boating laws and regulations in Nevada. The language in this handbook does not replace the language of the actual boating laws and regulations as they are presented in Chapter 488 of the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC).*

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## Where to Find Additional Information

This handbook is a guide to Nevada's boating laws for recreational boaters. The publication ***BOAT NEVADA: A Course on Responsible Boating*** gives additional information on safe boating practices for recreational boaters.

- To stay abreast of new boating laws:
  - Call the Nevada Department of Wildlife at **775-688-1500 or...**
  - Visit our website at **[www.ndow.org/boat](http://www.ndow.org/boat)**.
- For federal boating laws, visit the U.S. Coast Guard's boating safety website at **[www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)**.

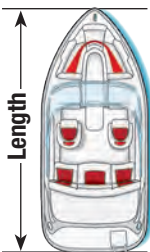
# Before Going Out

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

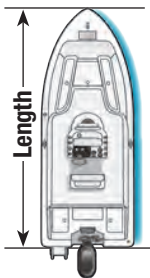
## Vessel Length Classes

- 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 maximum number of people that the vessel can carry safely.
- Personal watercraft (PWC) and some other vessels are not required to have a capacity plate. Always follow the recommended capacity in the owner's manual and on the manufacturer's warning decal.

## Fueling a Vessel

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

### ■ Before beginning to fuel:

- Dock the boat securely and ask all passengers to exit.
- Do not allow anyone to smoke or strike a match.
- Check all fuel lines, connections, and fuel vents.
- Turn off anything that might cause a spark—engines, fans, or electrical equipment.
- Shut off all fuel valves and extinguish all open flames, such as galley stoves and pilot lights.
- Close all windows, ports, doors, and other openings to prevent fumes from entering the boat.
- Remove portable fuel tanks and fill them on the dock.

### ■ While filling the fuel tank:

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

### **The most important safe fueling practice...**

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

### ■ After fueling:

- Open all windows, ports, doors, and other openings.
- 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.

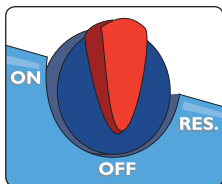
- After fueling, open the door of the engine compartment and sniff to check for any evidence of gas fumes. Do this before starting the engine. If you do smell gas fumes, determine the source and make repairs immediately.



## 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.



## Trailer Your Vessel Safely

### ■ Before leaving home:

- Secure all gear in the vessel, and arrange it so that the weight is evenly distributed in the vessel.
- Properly secure the vessel with several tie-down straps and/or safety lines to prevent it from shifting.
- Tilt and secure the engine to increase clearance.
- Crisscross the safety chains when attaching them to the towing vehicle.
- Make sure the trailer brakes and lights are working.



### ■ On the road:

- Think farther ahead on the road than usual: anticipate changes in traffic flow in advance, make wider turns at corners and curves, allow extra time and distance for stopping and for passing other vehicles, and remember the length added by your trailer.
- Be aware that there may be lower speed limits for vehicles with trailers.

### ■ Launching your vessel from a trailer:

- Prepare your vessel well away from the boat ramp.
- Back the vessel into the water until the lower unit of the engine can be submerged while on the trailer.
- Once the engine is warmed up, back the trailer further until the vessel floats. Then back slowly off the trailer.


### ■ Retrieving your vessel:

- Back the trailer into the water so that approximately two-thirds of the rollers or bunks are submerged.
- Move the vessel onto the trailer far enough to attach the winch line to the bow eye of the vessel. Finish pulling it onto the trailer by cranking the winch.
- Tow the vessel off the ramp out of the way of others.
- While at the ramp area, remove all weeds from the vessel, remove the drain plug, and drain live wells.

## 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.


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 Get Safe. Get Certified.

### FLOAT PLAN

Complete this form before going out on your boat, and leave it with a reliable person who will notify the Coast Guard and local authorities if you do not return as scheduled. If you are delayed and it is not an emergency, inform the person with your float plan to avoid an unnecessary search.

- Name of person filing this plan: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
- Description of boat: Registration number: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Make: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Trim: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Names of persons on board: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
- Description of engine: Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Horsepower: \_\_\_\_\_ # of engines: \_\_\_\_\_ Fuel capacity: \_\_\_\_\_
- Survival equipment on board. Check as appropriate:  
☐ Life Jackets (PFDs) ☐ Flares ☐ Flashlight ☐ Signal mirror ☐ Anchor(s) ☐ Raft or dinghy  
☐ Smoke Signals ☐ Horn ☐ Water ☐ Paddles ☐ Food
- Radio ☐ Yes ☐ No Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequencies: \_\_\_\_\_ Call sign: \_\_\_\_\_
- Trip expectations  
 Leaving from: \_\_\_\_\_ Going to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Departing on: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_ am \_\_\_\_\_ pm  
 Returning: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_ am \_\_\_\_\_ pm
- Other pertinent information: \_\_\_\_\_ Trailer license #: \_\_\_\_\_ License Plate #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Where parked: \_\_\_\_\_
- Description of automobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Trailer license #: \_\_\_\_\_ License Plate #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Where parked: \_\_\_\_\_
- If not returned by: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_ am \_\_\_\_\_ pm  
 Call: \_\_\_\_\_  
 U.S. Coast Guard telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Local authority: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 and wrist lanyard are in good order.
- ✓ Make sure you have the required number of life jackets, and check that they are in good condition.
- ✓ Leave a float plan with a reliable friend or relative.

# On the Water

Safe navigation on Nevada's waterways is everyone's responsibility. All operators are equally responsible for taking action necessary to avoid collisions.

## Encountering Other Vessels

There are some rules that every operator should follow when encountering other vessels. It is the responsibility of both operators to take the action needed to avoid a collision.

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

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

## Encountering Vessels With Limited Maneuverability

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

## Navigation Rules

There are two terms that help explain these rules.

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

### Power vs. Power

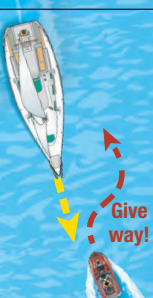


### Meeting Head-On

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

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

### Power vs. Sail



### Crossing Situations

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

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



### Overtaking

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

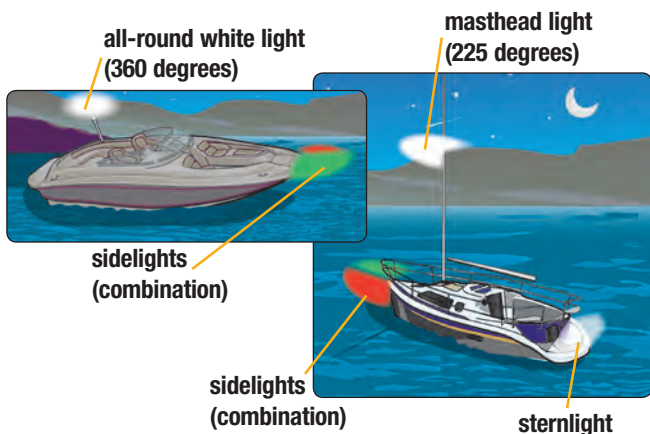
**Power vs. Sail:** The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.



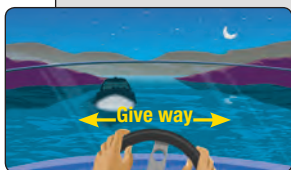
## Nighttime Navigation

Be on the lookout for the lights of other vessels when boating at night. Several types of lights serve as navigational aids at night. There are four common navigation lights.

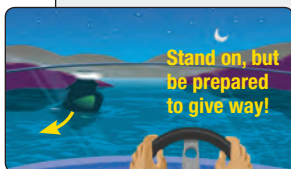
- **Sidelights:** These red and green lights are called sidelights (also called combination lights) because they are visible to another vessel approaching from the side or head-on. The red light indicates a vessel's port (left) side; the green indicates a vessel's starboard (right) side.
- **Sternlight:**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



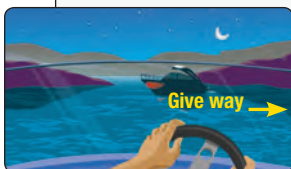
## Encountering Vessels at Night



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



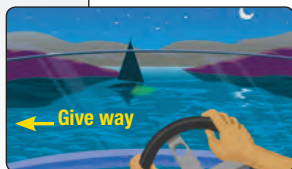
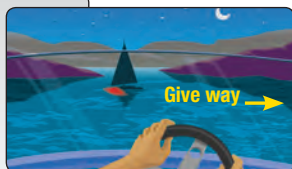
When you see a green and a white light, you are the stand-on vessel. However, remain alert in case the other vessel operator does not see you or does not know the navigation rules.



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

## Encountering a Sailboat at Night

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



## U.S. Aids to Navigation System (ATON)

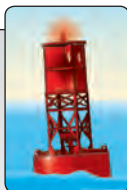
Buoys and markers are the “traffic signals” that guide vessel operators safely along some waterways. They also identify dangerous or controlled areas and give directions and information. As a recreational boat or PWC operator, you will need to know the lateral navigation markers and non-lateral markers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

### Lateral Markers

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

#### Red colors, red lights, and even numbers

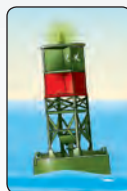
indicate the right side of the channel as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream.



#### Green colors, green lights,

**and odd numbers** indicate the left side of the channel as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream.

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





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



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



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

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



## Red Right Returning

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

## Non-Lateral Markers

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



### Information

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



### Controlled

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



### Exclusion

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



### Danger

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

## Other Non-Lateral Markers

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



### Inland Waters

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

## 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.



## 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 here.

### 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 life jacket. If passengers are already wearing their life jackets, 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, anchor using 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.”

## Other Boating Emergencies

A safe boater knows how to prevent and respond to other boating emergencies.

### Falling Overboard

#### ■ To prevent persons from falling overboard:

- Don't sit on the gunwale, bow, seat backs, motor cover, or any other area not designed for seating.
- Don't sit on pedestal seats when underway at greater than idle speed.
- Don't stand up in or lean out from the boat.
- Don't move about the boat when underway.

#### ■ If someone on your boat falls overboard:

- Reduce speed and toss the victim a throwable personal flotation device (PFD).
- Turn your boat around and slowly pull alongside the victim, approaching the victim from downwind or into the current, whichever is stronger.
- Stop the engine. Pull the victim on board over the stern, keeping the weight in the boat balanced.

### Capsizing or Swamping

#### ■ To reduce the risk of capsizing or swamping:

- Don't overload your boat. Balance the load.
- Slow your boat appropriately when turning.
- Secure the anchor line to the bow, never to the stern.
- Don't boat in rough water or in bad weather.

#### ■ If you capsize or swamp your boat, or if you have fallen overboard and can't get back in:

- Stay with the boat.
- Try to reboard or climb onto it in order to get as much of your body out of the cold water as possible.

#### ■ If the boat sinks or floats away, don't panic.

- If wearing a life jacket, remain calm and await help.
- If you aren't wearing a life jacket, look around for one or for other buoyant items to use as a flotation device.
- In cold water, float rather than tread.

## Hypothermia

### ■ If you are boating in cold water:

- Dress in several layers of clothing under your life jacket or wear a wetsuit or drysuit.
- Learn to recognize the symptoms of hypothermia. Symptoms begin with shivering and bluish lips and nails, and progress to a coma and, ultimately, death.

### ■ To reduce the effects of hypothermia:

- Put on a life jacket if not wearing one. It helps you float without excessive movement and insulates your body.
- Get as much of your body out of the water as possible.
- Don't take your clothes off unless necessary—clothes can help you float and provide insulation.
- Don't thrash or move about. Excess motion consumes energy and increases loss of body heat.
- Draw your knees to your chest and your arms to your sides, protecting the major areas of heat loss.
- If others are in the water with you, huddle together with your arms around their shoulders.

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that can be deadly. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, keep air flowing through the boat and take extreme caution when running a generator at a dock or at anchor.

- Whenever people are using a swim platform or are in the water close to the stern, turn off all gasoline-powered generators with transom exhaust ports.
- Swimmers should never enter the cavity between the swim platform and the stern of the boat.
- When boating, be careful running downwind as exhaust gases may blow back on board. On cabin cruisers, be aware that exhaust gases can blow back into the stern when traveling into the wind.



# Specifically for PWC

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

## steering control



## steering nozzle

## Steering and Stopping a PWC

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

### **Remember—no power means no steering control...**

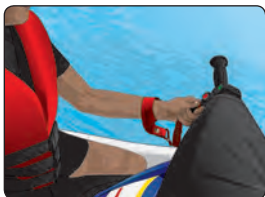
Most PWC and other jet-drive vessels must have power in order to maintain control. If you allow the engine on a PWC or other jet-propelled vessel to return to idle or shut off during operation, you may lose all steering control. Many PWC will continue in the direction they were headed before the engine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

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



## Engine Cut-Off Switches

- Most PWC and powerboats come equipped by the manufacturer with an important device called an emergency engine cut-off switch. This is a safety device that is designed to shut off the engine if the operator is thrown from the proper operating position.
- A lanyard is attached to the safety switch and the operator's wrist or life jacket. The safety 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 engine cut-off switch, 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.



## 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 would 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 life jacket.
- 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 your vessel's registration, titling, and operation.

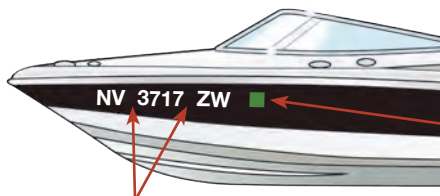
## Registering Your Vessel

- You must have a Nevada Certificate of Number (registration) and validation decals to operate a vessel legally on Nevada's public waters. The only exceptions are:
  - Non-motorized vessels (sailboats without engines, canoes, kayaks, etc.)
  - Vessels properly registered in another state and using Nevada waters for 90 or fewer consecutive days
  - Ship's lifeboats
- The Certificate of Number and validation decals are obtained by submitting the proper application form and fee to the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW).
- *The Certificate of Number (registration card) must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is operated.*

[illegible]

- The registration number and validation decals must be displayed as follows.
  - Number must be painted, applied as a decal, or otherwise affixed to the forward half of each side of the vessel, placed to be clearly legible.
  - Number must read from left to right on both sides of the vessel.

### Validation Decal



**Spaces or hyphens  
should appear here.**

- Number must be in at least three-inch-high **BLOCK** letters.
  - Number's color must contrast with its background.
  - Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen: **NV 3717 ZW** or **NV-3717-ZW**.
  - Decals must be affixed on each side of the vessel toward the stern of the registration number and within six inches of and in line with the number.
- If your vessel requires registration, it is illegal to operate it or allow others to operate your vessel unless it is registered and numbered as described above.

## Other Facts About Titling and Registration

- All vessels that require registration must be titled also. Application for a title (Certificate of Ownership) must be accompanied by proof of payment of Nevada sales tax or use tax and proof of ownership.
- A Certificate of Number is valid until December 31 of the year it was issued. Owners of vessels that have been registered previously will be sent a renewal notice to their residence.
- If you change your address or transfer your interest in a numbered vessel, or if the vessel is abandoned, destroyed, or stolen, you must notify NDOW in writing within 10 days of the event.

- If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Number, decal, or title, you must apply for a duplicate and submit a processing fee.
- Larger recreational vessels owned by U.S. citizens may (at the option of the owner) be documented by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Call the USCG at **1-800-799-8362** for more information. Documented vessels also must obtain Nevada registration.

### Registration and Titling Fees

Transaction	Vessel Length*	Fee
Title		\$20.00
Annual registration	less than 13 ft.	\$20.00
	13 ft. to less than 18 ft.	\$25.00
	18 ft. to less than 22 ft.	\$40.00
	22 ft. to less than 26 ft.	\$55.00
	26 ft. to less than 31 ft.	\$75.00
	over 31 ft.	\$100.00
Duplicate decals	all lengths	\$20.00
Duplicate title	all lengths	\$20.00
Transfer title of a used vessel (residents)	all lengths	\$20.00
Transfer title of a used vessel (non-residents)	all lengths	\$20.00
Transfer title of a new vessel	all lengths	\$20.00

**\*Measured from the tip of the bow to the back of the transom.**

#### If you suspect the sale of a stolen vessel...

Immediately contact NDOW at:  
**775-688-1331** (Dispatch Center).



## Where to Title and Register Your Vessel

Your Certificate of Number, validation decals, and title can be obtained by submitting the proper application form and fee to:

Nevada Dept. of Wildlife  
1100 Valley Road  
Reno, NV 89512  
Phone: **775-688-1500**  
Fax: **775-688-1595**

Application forms are obtained by writing to the address above; calling **775-688-1500**; or visiting one of NDOW offices in Elko, Ely, Fallon, Henderson, Las Vegas, or Reno. See the back cover for the addresses and telephone numbers of these offices.

## Hull Identification Number

- The Hull Identification Number (HIN) is a unique 12-digit number assigned by the manufacturer to vessels built after 1972.
- Hull Identification Numbers:
  - Distinguish one vessel from another.
  - Are engraved in the fiberglass or on a metal plate permanently attached to the transom.
- You should write down your HIN and put it in a place separate from your vessel in case warranty problems arise or your vessel is stolen.
- If your vessel is homemade, NDOW may issue you an HIN.
- It is illegal to destroy, remove, cover, or mutilate the HIN.



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## Buying or Selling a Vessel

- A vessel that requires a Certificate of Number but does not have a Nevada Certificate of Ownership title must be inspected by an agent of NDOW when the vessel is sold or transferred to another owner.
- Be certain that the vessel's description on the title matches the vessel that you are buying. Check the year, make, length, and HIN.
  - Do not buy a vessel if the HIN has been altered or removed.
  - Do not buy a vessel that is registered as “homemade” but is obviously a manufactured vessel.
  - Do not buy an outboard motor if the model and serial number plates have been removed.
  - Do not buy a “new” vessel without obtaining a Manufacturer's Statement of Origin (MSO).
- Before buying any vessel, be certain the seller can provide you with the current registration, a notarized bill of sale, and proof of ownership.
- Verify the trailer information also.

### Proof of Ownership

When applying for a title or selling your vessel, you must supply one of the following as proof of ownership.

- Original bill of sale from the dealer and subsequent bills of sale from all owners up to the present owner
- Previous owner's title for the vessel
- If homemade, a sworn statement attesting to the identity of the builder, location of construction, source of the material used for construction, and a description of the vessel
- If rebuilt, the same statement as for homemade and also receipts for rebuilding materials and documentation showing the source of the hull and proof of ownership from the previous owner



## Who May Operate a Vessel

Persons of any age may operate a vessel in Nevada, as long as they meet the following requirements.

- A person renting a vessel in Nevada must meet their state of residence boating education requirements. Every operator of a rental vessel is required to receive a safety briefing before operating the vessel.
- All persons who operate vessels powered by a motor over 15 horsepower on interstate waters and who were born on or after January 1, 1983, must take and pass a boater education course or proficiency exam. (Interstate waters means waters forming the boundary between the State of Nevada and an adjoining state.) The course or exam must be one that is approved by NDOW.
- A person operating a personal watercraft (PWC) must be at least 14 years of age.
- A person operating a vessel that is towing a person on water skis, a surfboard, or any other device must be:
  - At least 16 years of age *or...*
  - At least 14 years of age *and* have on board a person at least 18 years of age in a position to supervise the operator.

### Become a Certified Boater

Take the *BOAT NEVADA* boater education course to:

- ✓ Improve your family's safety on the water.
- ✓ Increase your boating knowledge and enjoyment.
- ✓ Be qualified for vessel insurance discounts.

Call **775-688-1500** or to find the course for you, visit [http://www.ndow.org/Education/Boating\\_Ed/](http://www.ndow.org/Education/Boating_Ed/).

# Required Equipment

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

## Life Jackets and Personal Flotation Devices

- All vessels, except sailboards, must have at least one USCG–approved life jacket, sometimes called wearable PFD (personal flotation device), for each person on board or being towed. This includes paddleboards.
- In addition to the above requirement, vessels 16 feet to 40 feet long must have on board one USCG–approved throwable PFD. Vessels 40 feet or longer must carry two throwable PFDs, with one in the front of the vessel and the other in the rear. Also, vessels 26 feet or longer must have 30 feet of throwing line (or rope) attached to each required throwable PFD.
- Stand-up paddleboards (SUPs) are considered vessels by the state of Nevada. Persons on board an SUP must carry a life jacket that fits.
- Children under 13 years old must *wear* a life jacket whenever underway in a vessel unless they are in a fully enclosed area.
- Each person on board a PWC or anyone being towed behind a vessel must *wear* a life jacket. Inflatable life jackets are *not* approved for these activities.
- Some life jackets are intended for specific activities. One of these life jackets may be substituted for another if specifically approved by the USCG for the activity at hand. Hybrid life jackets (inflatables) must be *worn* while underway, except when the wearer is in an enclosed space.
- Inflatable life jackets are *not* approved for persons under age 16.
- Besides being USCG–approved, all life jackets must be:
  - *In good and serviceable condition* and legibly marked with the USCG approval number.
  - *Readily accessible*, which means it is being worn or it is stowed where it is quickly reachable, ready to wear, and not under lock and key.
  - *Of the proper size for the intended wearer*. Sizing for life jackets is based on body weight and chest size.

## Life Jackets

In Nevada, a jacket or a vest that a person wears



### Wearable Offshore Life Jackets

These vests are geared for rough or remote waters where rescue may take a while. They provide the most buoyancy, are excellent for flotation, and will turn most unconscious persons face up in the water.



### Wearable Near-Shore Vests

These vests are good for calm waters when quick rescue is likely. A near-shore vest may not turn some unconscious wearers face up in the water.



### Wearable Flotation Aids

These vests or full-sleeved jackets are good for calm waters when quick rescue is likely. They are not recommended for rough waters, as they will not turn most unconscious persons face up.

## Throwable PFDs

In Nevada, a device that is designed to be thrown to a person



These cushions and ring buoys are designed to be thrown to someone in trouble. Because a throwable PFD is not designed to be worn, it is neither for rough waters nor for persons who are unable to hold onto it.

## 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 (if less than 39.4 feet long) 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 in illustration 3.

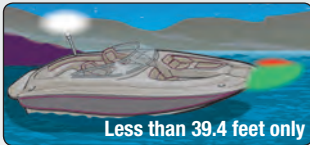
### All Vessels When Not Underway

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

## 1. Power-Driven Vessels Less Than 65.6 Feet



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

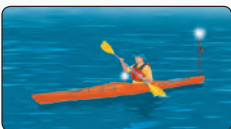


## 2. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 65.6 Feet



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

## 3. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 23.0 Feet



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

## Fire Extinguishers

- All vessels must have a Type B fire extinguisher on board if the vessel has any of the following:
  - Inboard engine
  - Closed compartments where portable fuel tanks may be stored
  - Double-bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not completely filled with flotation material
  - Closed living spaces
  - Closed storage compartments in which flammable or combustible materials may be stored
  - Permanently installed fuel tanks (any tank where the removal of the tank is hampered by the installation of tie-down straps or clamps)
- 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.
- Extinguishers should be placed in an accessible area away from the engine. Be sure you know how to operate them, and inspect all extinguishers regularly.

Use this chart to determine the type and quantity required.

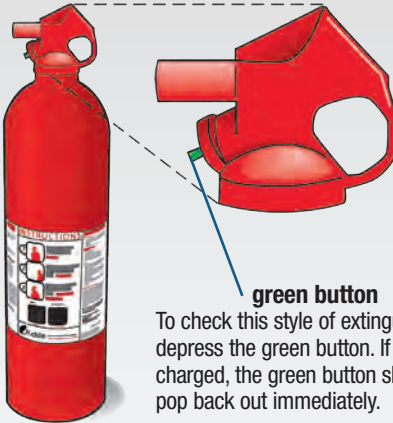
### Fire Extinguisher Requirements

Classification type & size	Foam minimum gallons	Carbon Dioxide minimum pounds	Dry Chemical minimum pounds
B-I	1¼	4	2
B-II	2½	15	10
Length of Vessel	Without Fixed System		With Fixed System*
Less than 26 ft.	one B-I		none
26 ft. to less than 40 ft.	two B-I <b>or</b> one B-II		one B-I
40 ft. to less than 65 ft.	three B-I <b>or</b> one B-II and one B-I		two B-I <b>or</b> one B-II

\* refers to a permanently installed fire extinguisher system

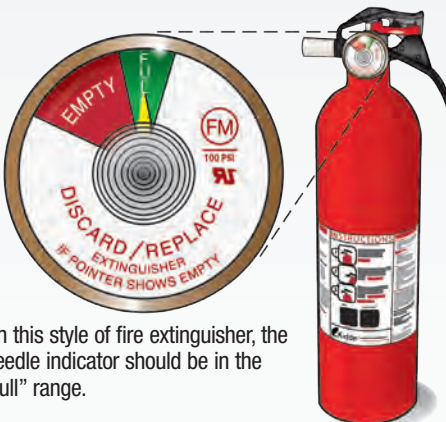
## Fire Extinguisher Charge Indicators

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



### green button

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

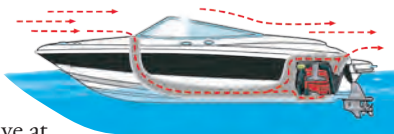


On this style of fire extinguisher, the needle indicator should be in the “full” range.

## Ventilation Systems

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

- All gasoline-powered vessels constructed in a way that would entrap fumes must have at least two ventilation ducts fitted with cowls to remove the fumes. At least one exhaust duct must extend from the open atmosphere to the lower portion of the bilge. At least one intake duct must extend from a point at least midway to the bilge or below the level of the carburetor air intake.
- Each permanently installed fuel tank must have an external screened vent that is away from all hull openings.
- 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.



## Backfire Flame Arrestors

- All powerboats (except outboards) that are fueled with gasoline must be protected against backfire flames. The backfire flame protection system may be:
  - An approved backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor **or...**
  - An engine and fuel intake system with backfire flame protection equivalent to a backfire flame arrestor **or...**
  - An attachment to each carburetor or to the engine air intake that disperses flames caused by engine backfire to the atmosphere outside the vessel and does not endanger the vessel's occupants.
- Backfire flame arrestors or equivalent backfire flame protection systems must be:
  - In good and serviceable condition **and...**
  - USCG-approved (must comply with SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 standards).
- Periodically clean the flame arrestor(s) or the backfire flame protection system and check for any damage.



## Mufflers

All vessels equipped with an engine must be effectively muffled by equipment that is constructed and used to muffle the noise of the exhaust in a reasonable manner. Vessel operators may not hear sound signals or voices if the engine is not adequately muffled.

- The use of cutouts is prohibited.
- It is illegal to exceed a noise level of:
  - 86 dbA measured at a distance of 50 feet or more from the vessel as defined by SAE J-34 *or...*
  - 90 dbA measured using a stationary sound level test as defined by SAE J-2005 if the engine was manufactured before January 1, 1993, or 88 dbA if the engine was manufactured *on or after* January 1, 1993, *or...*
  - 75 dbA measured from the shoreline using a stationary sound level test as defined by SAE J-1970.
- Exceptions to the above restrictions are made for vessels participating in permitted regattas, boat races, or speed trials.
- A peace officer can require an operator to submit a vessel to an on-site noise level test. If the vessel's engine exceeds the noise levels stated above, the officer will instruct the operator to take immediate corrective action and may direct the operator to terminate the voyage until the engine is in compliance.

## Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

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

- VDSs are not required on any Nevada waters, but it is *highly recommended* that you carry VDSs on your vessel.
- Vessels on waters under USCG jurisdiction must be equipped with USCG-approved VDSs. 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
- VDSs must be USCG-approved, in serviceable condition, and readily accessible.
- 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.
- The following combinations of signals are examples of VDSs that could be carried on board to satisfy USCG requirements:
  - Three handheld red flares (day and night)
  - One handheld red flare and two red meteors (day and night)
  - One handheld orange smoke signal (day), two floating orange smoke signals (day), and one electric light (night only)
- It is prohibited to display VDSs while on the water unless assistance is required to prevent immediate or potential danger to persons on board.

- 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)

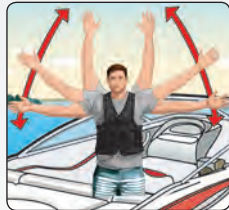
### Day and Night

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.

## Sound-Producing Devices

In periods of reduced visibility or whenever a vessel operator needs to signal his or her intentions or position, pursuant to the USCG's *Navigation Rules*, a sound-producing device is required.



### If on Nevada State Waters

**Less than  
26 feet long  
(includes PWC)**

Whistle, horn, or other mechanical sound device required

**26 feet long or  
longer**

Whistle, horn, or other mechanical sound device and a bell required

### If on Federally Controlled Waters

**Less than  
39.4 feet long  
(includes PWC)**

Some way of making an efficient sound signal, such as, handheld air horn, athletic whistle, an installed horn, etc.

**39.4 feet long  
or longer**

Device that can make an efficient sound signal that is audible for one-half mile and lasts for 4 to 6 seconds

## Sound Signals

Some common sound signals that you should be familiar with as a recreational boater are as follows.

### Changing Direction

- ***One short blast*** tells other boaters, "I intend to pass you on my port (left) side."
- ***Two short blasts*** tell other boaters, "I intend to pass you on my starboard (right) side."
- ***Three short blasts*** tell other boaters, "I am operating astern propulsion." For some vessels, this tells other boaters, "I am backing up."

### Restricted Visibility

- ***One prolonged blast*** at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by power-driven vessels 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, used when coming around a blind bend or exiting a slip).
- ***Five (or more) short, rapid blasts*** signal danger or signal that you do not understand or that you disagree with the other boater's intentions.

## Other Equipment

### Diver-Down Flags

- Nevada law requires that persons scuba diving, skin diving, or snorkeling display a diver-down flag to mark their diving area and that they stay within 100 feet of the flag. The flag must be in place only while diving operations are in progress.
- Vessels not engaged in diving operations must remain at least 100 feet from the diver-down flag, except in the case of an emergency. Vessels not engaged in diving operations must reduce speed to “no wake speed” if within a distance of 100 to 200 feet of the diver-down flag, except in the case of an emergency.
- Two types of flags are used to indicate diving activity.



A rectangular red flag, at least 12 x 12 inches in size, with a white diagonal stripe (at least 1/5 the width of the flag) attached to a vessel, float, or buoy

A blue-and-white International Code Flag A (or Alfa flag) usually flown from a vessel

## Skier-Down Flag

Nevada law states that vessels towing person(s) on water skis or other similar devices must carry and use an international orange skier-down flag, at least 12 x 12 inches in size, whenever the towed person(s) is in the water preparing to be towed or waiting to be picked up by the towing vessel.



### Skier-Down Flag

An international orange flag, at least 12 x 12 inches in size



## Engine Cut-Off Lanyard

According to the Nevada lanyard law, when operating a boat equipped with an engine cut-off lanyard, boaters are required to wear the device anytime the boat is moving at a speed greater than no wake speed (5 mph).

# On the Water

Here are some additional Nevada regulations that apply when vessel operators are on the water.

## Reckless and Unlawful Operation

These dangerous operating practices are illegal in Nevada.

- **Negligent or Reckless Operation** of a vessel or the reckless manipulation of water skis, a surfboard, or similar device is operating in a manner that causes danger to the life, limb, or property of any person. Examples of negligent or reckless operation are:
  - Riding on the bow, gunwale, transom, engine cover, or swim platform of a vessel while it is underway at a speed greater than “no wake speed”
  - Maneuvering a towed skier or towed device such that the tow rope passes over another vessel or its skier
  - Operating a vessel or manipulating water skis, a surfboard, or similar device so as to pass between a vessel and its tow
  - Teak surfing or platform dragging—where a person is hanging onto the swim platform while a vessel is underway
  - Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife with a vessel

**“No Wake Speed”** means a speed at which your vessel does not produce a wake or, in other words, leaves a flat wave disturbance; not to exceed 5 miles per hour.

- **Operating in an Exclusion Area** is operating a vessel within any marked exclusion area such as a swimming area or any other area marked by signs or buoys.
- **Overloading** is loading the vessel beyond the recommended capacity shown on the capacity plate installed by the vessel’s manufacturer.



- **Failure to Use Engine Cut-Off Switch** is an operator not attaching the lanyard of an engine cut-off switch to his or her person, clothing, or life jacket if the vessel is equipped with a switch and is moving at greater than “no wake speed.” In addition, the owner of a vessel that is equipped with an engine cut-off switch may not operate, or let another person operate, the vessel if the lanyard is missing, not connected, or not working correctly.
- **Improper Speed or Distance** is not maintaining a proper speed or distance while operating a vessel. Specifically, the following operations are illegal:
  - Operating or allowing others to operate a vessel at greater than “no wake speed” within:
    - 100 feet of a person swimming
    - 100 feet of a person being towed by another vessel
    - 200 feet of a beach used by swimmers; a swimming float, diving platform, or lifeline; or a landing float that has a vessel(s) secured to it or that is being used to load or unload a vessel's passengers
  - Operating a vessel at greater than “no wake speed” on certain waters designated by NDOW, within all harbors, and within any other marked speed zones
- **Unsafe Condition** is operating a vessel in a condition that causes danger to the occupants or others on the waterways. Peace officers may instruct the operator to take immediate corrective action or terminate the voyage if the vessel is:
  - Overloaded
  - Equipped with insufficient life jackets, fire extinguishers, backfire flame arrestors, ventilation system, or navigation lights
  - Leaking fuel or has fuel in the bilges
  - Being operated in extremely adverse conditions
- **Failure to Follow Navigational Rules** is operating a vessel on Nevada waters in violation of the navigational rules. Operators of all vessels must follow the inland navigational rules.

## Obstructing Navigation

It is illegal to:

- Operate any vessel in such a way that it will interfere unnecessarily with the safe navigation of other vessels.
- Anchor a vessel in the traveled portion of a river or channel in a way that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.
- Moor or attach a vessel to a buoy (other than a mooring buoy), beacon, light, or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities.
- Move, displace, tamper with, damage, or destroy any navigational aid.
- Obstruct a pier, wharf, boat ramp, or access to any facility.

## Alcohol and Drugs

- Nevada law prohibits anyone from operating under the influence (OUI). This includes the operation of any powerboat, sailboat, PWC, water skis, sailboard, or similar device while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- By operating a vessel on Nevada's waters, you have given "implied" consent to evidentiary alcohol testing if an officer has reasonable suspicion. **There is no right to refuse the test.**
- Nevada law states that a person is considered to be operating under the influence if he or she:
  - Has a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08% or more *or...*
  - Is under the influence of alcohol and/or a controlled substance to a degree that renders the person incapable of operating the vessel safely.

- Nevada law establishes the following penalties for OUI.
  - Offenders convicted of OUI may be jailed for up to six months and fined up to \$1,000 plus court costs and testing fees.
  - Offenders convicted of OUI *and* causing the death of or substantial injury to another person will be guilty of a felony. Punishment may include jail time of 2–20 years and a fine of \$2,000–\$5,000.

### Why drinking and boating can be lethal...

- The effect of alcohol is increased by the natural stressors (wind, sun, vibration) placed on your body while boating. Also, the dehydration of your body caused by the natural stressors causes alcohol to be absorbed into your system more quickly. Research has proven that one-third of the amount of alcohol that it takes to make a person legally intoxicated on the road can make a boater equally intoxicated on the water.
- Alcohol depresses the central nervous system, affects judgment, and slows reaction time. Most people become slightly intoxicated after only one drink. Alcohol makes it difficult for you to pay attention, especially to multiple tasks. For example, it will be more difficult for you to keep track of two or more vessels operating in your area. This could become critical if you are placed in an emergency situation and you must make a sudden decision.



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

## Marine Events

- You must file an application with NDOW at least 30 days in advance in order to hold a race, regatta, parade, tournament, or exhibition involving vessels on Nevada waters.
- Permits for events held on waters under USCG jurisdiction are granted through the USCG by applying at least 135 days in advance.



## Mooring Permits

Nevada waters require a mooring permit before you place a mooring buoy planned to be in the water for 72 or more consecutive hours.

- An annual fee of \$30 is required for a mooring permit. A permit is valid until December 31 of the year it was issued.
- For more information, or to request a permit application, call the Division of State Lands at 775-684-2720.

## Boating Accidents

- An operator involved 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.
- The operator or owner of a vessel involved in an accident must report the accident to NDOW.

- If a person dies or disappears, the operator must notify NDOW *immediately*, and then report the accident in writing to NDOW within 48 hours.
  - If a person loses consciousness, requires medical treatment, or is disabled for more than 24 hours, the operator must notify NDOW *immediately*, and then report the accident in writing to NDOW within 48 hours.
  - If damage to the vessel or other property exceeds \$2,000 or if there is a total loss of a vessel, the operator must report the accident in writing to NDOW within 10 days.
- Written reports must be made on accident report forms supplied by NDOW. An accident report form can be obtained by calling **775-688-1500** or downloaded at [www.ndow.org/Boat/Boating\\_Safety/Accident\\_Reporting/](http://www.ndow.org/Boat/Boating_Safety/Accident_Reporting/)

## Enforcement

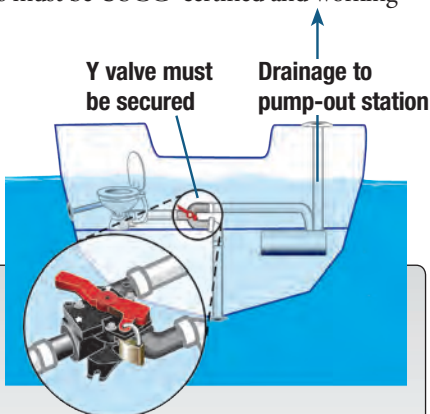
- NDOW game wardens, sheriffs, and other peace officers have the authority to enforce the boating laws of Nevada.
- The USCG also has enforcement authority on Lake Tahoe and the Colorado River System (includes Lake Mead, Lake Mohave, and the Colorado River below Davis Dam). In addition, the U.S. National Park Service also has enforcement authority on Lake Mead and Lake Mohave.
- It is illegal to refuse to stop or move when commanded to do so by a person with law enforcement authority.
- Officers have the authority to stop and board your vessel in order to check that you are complying with state and federal laws.



## Discharge of Waste

- It is illegal to discharge any treated or untreated sewage into the waters of Nevada. **All** sewage must be emptied at a sewage pump-out station.
- If you have a vessel with installed toilet facilities, it must have an operable marine sanitation device (MSD) on board and be designed to prevent discharge into the water. If your vessel does not have installed toilet facilities, you should consider carrying a portable toilet.
- All installed MSDs must be USCG-certified and working properly.

Typical MSD



### 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 Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

- You are not allowed 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 dispose of oil waste at an approved reception facility. On recreational vessels, a bucket or bailer is adequate for temporary storage.
- If boating on federally controlled waters and your vessel is 26 feet or longer, you must display a 5 x 8-inch placard made of durable material, fixed in a conspicuous place in the machinery spaces or at the bilge pump control station, stating the Federal Water Pollution Control Act's law.

If your vessel discharges oil or hazardous substances into the water:

- Immediately call the National Response Center at **1-800-424-8802**.
- Also call the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection at **775-687-4670** (daytime) or **775-687-5300** (after hours).



## Discharge of Trash

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

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

### No discharge on Lake Tahoe...

Lake Tahoe is a federally designated no-discharge area.

# Specifically for Skiing

Vessel operators towing a person(s) on water skis, a surfboard, or any other device have additional laws.

## Requirements for Towing Skiers

- A person operating a vessel that is towing a person on water skis, a surfboard, or any other device must be:
  - At least 16 years of age *or...*
  - At least 14 years of age *and* have on board a person at least 18 years of age in a position to supervise the operator.
- All persons being towed behind a vessel on water skis, a surfboard, or other device must *wear* a USCG-approved life jacket.
- Every vessel towing a person(s) on water skis, a surfboard, or other device must have on board, in addition to the vessel operator, an observer who is:
  - At least 14 years of age *or...*
  - At least 12 years of age *and* another passenger who is at least 18 years of age.
- The observer must display an orange skier-down flag whenever the towed person(s) is in the water preparing to be towed or waiting to be picked up by the towing vessel.
- It is illegal for vessels to tow persons on water skis, a surfboard, or any other device between sunset and sunrise.
- If towing a person on water skis or other device, the vessel must be rated to carry everyone in the boat plus everyone being towed.
- Some waters have local regulations that limit or prohibit water-skiing.





**Remember—teak surfing is against the law in Nevada.**

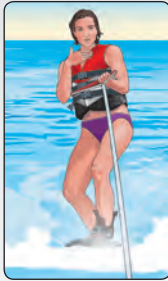
Aside from the obvious danger of propeller injury, the surfer is also in danger of carbon monoxide poisoning.

## Hand Signals for Skiers

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



**Skier OK**



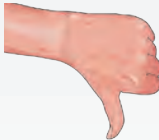
**Stop**



**Skier down—watch!**



**Speed up**



**Slow down**



**Speed OK**



**Turn left**



**Turn right**

# 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

- Every person riding on or being towed behind a PWC must *wear* a USCG–approved life jacket.
- The operator of a PWC equipped with a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch must attach the lanyard to his or her person, clothing, or life jacket when operating at more than 5 miles per hour.
- The operator of a PWC must be at least 14 years of age.
- PWC must be operated in a careful and responsible manner. It is considered reckless operation if a PWC operator commits *two or more* of the following acts simultaneously:
  - Operating the PWC within a zone closer than five lengths of the longest vessel unless both vessels are traveling at “no wake speed”
  - Operating within the vicinity of a vessel in a manner that obstructs the visibility of either operator
  - Heading into the wake of a vessel that is within a zone closer than five lengths of the longest vessel and causing half or more of the length of the PWC to leave the water
  - Maneuvering quickly, turning sharply, or swerving within a zone closer than five lengths of the longest vessel unless the maneuver is necessary to avoid a collision
- It is illegal to operate a PWC between sunset and sunrise unless the PWC is equipped with the required navigation lights.

## Avoiding Propeller Strike Injuries

Most propeller strike accidents result from operator error. Victims include swimmers, scuba divers, fallen water-skiers, and boat operators or passengers. Most propeller accidents can be prevented by following basic safe boating practices.



- Maintain a proper lookout. The primary cause of propeller strike accidents is operator inattention.
- Make sure the engine is off so that the propeller is not rotating when passengers are boarding or leaving a boat.
- Never start a boat with the engine in gear.
- Slow down when approaching congested areas and anchorages. In congested areas, always be alert for swimmers and divers.
- Learn to recognize warning buoys that mark swimming and other hazardous areas.
- Keep the boat away from marked swimming and diving areas. Become familiar with the red and white or blue and white diver-down flags signaling that divers are below the surface.
- Make sure that passengers are seated properly before getting underway. Some operators of larger boats with several passengers have caused injuries by putting the engine in gear while people were still swimming or diving from the boat.
- Never ride on a seat back, gunwale, transom, or bow.

### Devices That Reduce Propeller Strikes

There are several new technologies designed to reduce propeller strikes. The effectiveness of the devices varies, depending on the boat and the operating environment. For more information, visit the USCG's boating safety website: [www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/](http://www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/).

# Waters Under Federal Regulations

**Informational Note:** The following are federally owned waters and are subject to federal regulations in addition to the general provisions of the Nevada Boat Act, including rules for registration, equipment, and operation. See refuge managers for descriptions of restricted zones and/or motor and speed regulations.

*Regulations Are Subject to Change Without Notice*

- **Big Springs Reservoir**  
Use of motors on boats is not permitted.
- **Catnip Reservoir**  
Closed to boating.
- **Charles Sheldon Antelope Range**  
Dufferrena Ponds: Boats are prohibited except for inflatable rafts without motors, float tubes, and similar devices.
- **Pahranagat National Wildlife Refuge**  
Phone: **775-725-3417**  
Boats without motors (except electric motors) are permitted on the Upper Lake, Middle Ponds, and Lower Lake. North Marsh is closed to boating, including float tubes.
- **Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge**  
Phone: **775-779-2237**  
Unit 21 Main Boat Landing and Narciss Boat Landing.  
January 1 through June 14: Boats and float tubes are prohibited. June 15 through July 31: ONLY motorless boats, float tubes, and boats with electric motors are permitted. August 1 through December 31: Motorless boats, float tubes, and boats propelled by motors with a total of 10 hp or less are permitted.
- **Stillwater Wildlife Management Area**  
Phone: **775-423-5128**  
Refuge area only: Closed to fishing during the waterfowl season. Remainder of the year, boats with motors over 10 hp are prohibited.

# Restrictions on Nevada's Waters

## Vessels must be operated at “no-wake speed”\* on:

### **Churchill County**

Likes Lake

### **Clark County**

Backwater south of Big Bend  
of the Colorado River State  
Recreation Area

Colorado River—Lagoon south  
of Laughlin (as marked with  
signs or buoys, or both)

### **Elko County**

Jakes Creek Reservoir

### **Humboldt County**

Knott Creek Reservoir  
Onion Valley Reservoir

### **Lincoln County**

Echo Canyon Reservoir  
Key Pittman Wildlife  
Management Area

### **Lyon County**

Mason Valley Wildlife  
Management Area

### **Nye County**

Wayne E. Kirch Wildlife  
Management Area

### **Pershing County**

The Pitt-Taylor Arm of Rye  
Patch Reservoir

### **Washoe County**

Upper Wall Canyon Reservoir

### **White Pine County**

Bassett Lake  
Cave Lake  
Illipah Reservoir  
Silver Creek Reservoir

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## Vessels must be operated at “no-wake speed”\* in all boat harbors and other areas designated by buoys on:

### **Churchill County**

Lahontan Reservoir (Churchill  
Beach, North Shore Marina)

### **Clark County**

Big Bend of the Colorado State  
Recreation Area (the lagoon  
used for launching boats)  
Colorado River (adjacent to  
Harrahs Casino in Laughlin)  
Lake Mead National Recreation  
Area

### **Douglas County**

Lake Tahoe (Zephyr Cove, Cave  
Rock, Round Hill Pines Beach,  
Glenbrook Bay)  
Topaz Lake (boat ramps)

### **Elko County**

South Fork Reservoir  
Wildhorse Reservoir

### **Lyon County**

Lahontan Reservoir (Silver  
Springs Beach)

\* See the section Reckless and Unlawful Operation for a description of  
“no-wake speed.”

**Mineral County**

Walker Lake (State Recreation Area, Sportsmen's Beach)

**Pershing County**

Rye Patch Reservoir (Rye Patch Dam Access)

**Washoe County**

Lake Tahoe (Sand Harbor, Incline Village General Improvement District boat ramp, Crystal Shores West)  
Washoe Lake (State Park, county boat ramp)

## Vessels are prohibited in areas that are designated by signs or buoys on the following waters:

- Chimney Reservoir
- Colorado River below Davis Dam
- Eagle Valley Reservoir
- Lahontan Reservoir
- Lake Mead
- Lake Mohave
- Lake Tahoe
- Rye Patch Reservoir
- South Fork Reservoir
- Sparks Marina Park
- Topaz Lake
- Walker Lake\*
- Wildhorse Reservoir
- Clark County  
(Lagoon south of Laughlin)



**\* Note:** The south end of Walker Lake as posted by buoys is closed to boating due to unexploded ordinance hazard by the Hawthorne Army Ammunition Depot.

## Only vessels without motors are permitted on the following:

### **Douglas County**

Spooner Lake\*

### **Elko County**

Angel Lake

### **Humboldt County**

Blue Lakes

### **Lander County**

Groves Lake\*

### **Washoe County**

Marlette Lake

Sparks Marina Park\*

\*Vessels with electric motors are permitted.

## Water-skiing restrictions

### ■ Water-skiing is authorized on the following waters.

- The Eagle Valley Reservoir between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Comins Lake between 11 a.m. and sunset. A vessel may not be operated at a speed in excess of 5 nautical miles per hour during other hours. The speed of a vessel underway is considered to be 5 nautical miles per hour or less if the vessel is not leaving a wake.

### ■ Water-skiing is prohibited on the following waters.

#### • **Clark County:**

- Colorado River—Lagoon, south of Laughlin (as marked with signs or buoys, or both)
- Lake Mead and Lake Mohave—Black Canyon (any area marked with signs or buoys, or both, on Lake Mead and downstream from Hoover Dam to Mile Marker 43 on Lake Mohave)
- Lake Mead—Boulder Canyon (any area marked with signs or buoys, or both)

- **Elko County:** Crittenden Reservoir and Jiggs Reservoir

## Restrictions in Wildlife Management Areas

- In the Overton Wildlife Management Area, located in Clark County, vessels are prohibited on all ponds. Vessels are allowed on the portion of the area covered by Lake Mead, except that on Overton Hunt Days vessels may be used only by persons authorized to hunt waterfowl.
- In the Humboldt-Toulon Wildlife Management Area, located in Churchill and Pershing counties:
  - All vessels are prohibited on the ponds in the Humboldt and Toulon Sink areas five days before the opening day of the waterfowl season.
  - Airboats are prohibited on the Humboldt Sink portion of the area until one hour after the legal shooting time on the opening day of the waterfowl season.
  - Airboats are prohibited on the Toulon portion of the area during the waterfowl season.
- In the Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area, located in Lyon County, all vessels are prohibited from February 15 through August 15 of each year except on the following waters:
  - Bass Pond
  - Beaver Slough
  - Crappie Pond
  - Hinkson Slough
  - North Pond
  - Walker River
- In the Wayne E. Krich Wildlife Management Area, all vessels with motors are prohibited on Dacey Reservoir from February 15 through August 15 of each year.
- In the Fort Churchill Cooling Pond Cooperative Wildlife Management Area, all vessels and floating devices are prohibited on the pond.



## **Prohibited Activities Within Laughlin Boating and Fishermen's Access Area in Clark County**

- Camping in any type of motor vehicle or recreational vehicle
- Erecting a tent or structure for the purpose of sleeping or living in it
- Parking any type of motor vehicle or recreational vehicle or otherwise blocking or restricting the access of a person or vessel to the boat ramp
- Being under the influence of a controlled substance or an intoxicating liquor or consuming an intoxicating liquor
- Parking a bus hired to carry passengers or a semitrailer anywhere within the access area
- Parking a motor vehicle in the access area in a location other than a designated parking space

# Protecting Nevada's Waterways

## Boaters Urged to Stop Spread of Invasive Mussels

On January 6, 2007, live quagga mussels were discovered in Lake Mead at the Las Vegas Boat Harbor. Since their initial discovery, infestations have spread across the Colorado River (including Lake Mead, Lake Mohave, and Lake Havasu) and into other bodies of water in California.



Though this species is spread easily when boats are moved from one body of water to another, there are steps boaters can follow to help contain these unwelcome mussels. Be part of the solution:

- Remove visible mud, plants, fish, or animals before transporting equipment.
- Eliminate all water before transporting.
- Clean, drain, and dry your boat and equipment.
- Never release plants, fish, or animals into a body of water.

Quagga mussels are biofoulers that obstruct pipes in municipal and industrial raw-water systems, requiring untold millions of dollars annually to treat. Each and every body of water that becomes infected with these creatures raises financial costs and has serious impacts on native wildlife and the local ecosystem.



## Aquatic Invasive Species Decal

- Boaters are required to purchase an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) decal from the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) before operating a vessel on Nevada waters. Funds generated by the decals support an AIS prevention and mitigation program. Decals can be purchased at any NDOW office, online at [ndowlicensing.com](http://ndowlicensing.com), or by calling **866-703-4605**.

- motorized vessels: \$10 (residents), \$20 (non-residents)
- non-motorized vessels: \$5 (residents), \$10 (non-residents)

- Must display decal:

- in- and out-of-state motorized vessels
- non-motorized vessels including rowboats, canoes, sit-in kayaks, and sit-on-top kayaks

- Exempt:

- stand-up paddleboards
- self-bailing sit-on-top kayaks without internal storage
- float tubes and similar craft that will not retain water

- For more information about requirements and exemptions, as well as where to place the decal on your vessel, go to [www.ndow.org/Boat/Aquatic\\_Invasive\\_Species/](http://www.ndow.org/Boat/Aquatic_Invasive_Species/).



# Nevada Required Equipment Checklist



	PWC	Boat Less Than 16 Ft.	Boat 16 Ft. to Less Than 26 Ft.
Certificate of Number on Board	✓	✓	✓
Validation Decals Displayed	✓	✓	✓
Life Jackets	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓ <sup>2, 3</sup>
Throwable PFDs			✓ <sup>3</sup>
Type B-I Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓
Backfire Flame Arrestor	✓	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>
Ventilation System	✓	✓	✓
Muffler	✓	✓	✓
Horn, Whistle, or Bell	✓	✓	✓
Daytime VDSs			✓ <sup>5</sup>
Nighttime VDSs	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>
Navigation Lights	✓	✓	✓

1. Every person on board a PWC must *wear* a life jacket at all times.
2. Children under 13 years old must *wear* a USCG–approved life jacket whenever underway in a vessel unless they are in a fully enclosed area.
3. Vessels 16 feet up to 40 feet long must have on board one throwable PFD. Vessels 40 feet or longer must carry two throwable PFDs, with one in the front of the vessel and the other in the rear. Vessels 26 feet or longer must have 30 feet of throwing line (or rope) attached to the throwable PFD.
4. Required on inboard and stern drives only.
5. Required only if operating on waters under USCG jurisdiction.

**Note:** When operating a boat equipped with a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch, boaters are required to wear the device anytime the boat is moving at a speed greater than a no wake speed (5 mph).

# THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE OFFICES



## Reno Headquarters

6980 Sierra Center  
Parkway Ste. 120  
Reno, NV 89511  
Phone: 775-688-1500  
Fax: 775-688-1551

## Western Region Office

380 West "B" Street  
Fallon, NV 89406  
Phone: 775-423-3171  
Fax: 775-423-8171

## Eastern Region Office

60 Youth Center Road  
Elko, NV 89801  
Phone: 775-777-2300  
Fax: 775-738-2485

## Southern Region Offices

4747 Vegas Drive  
Las Vegas, NV 89108  
Phone: 702-486-5127  
Fax: 702-486-5008

744 S. Racetrack Road  
Henderson, NV 89015  
Phone: 702-486-6742  
Fax: 702-486-6784

Visit our website:  
[www.ndow.org/boat](http://www.ndow.org/boat)

*Everything you need  
to know about boating*

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a click away!*



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