

# Tennessee BOATING



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tennessee is one of the nation's leading states offering recreational waterways, and most Volunteer State residents will at some time take advantage of this tremendous opportunity.

To help keep your outing safe, enjoyable and "a day to remember" here are some things to consider before you go Tennessee boating.

### Aids to Navigation

Establishing Private Aids, Markers or Platforms ..... 16

### Boat Rentals

Personal Watercraft Rentals, Responsibility of the Person Renting a Vessel ..... 15

### Boater Education

New Boater Education Requirements, Resources ..... 1

**Discharge & No Discharge Reservoirs** ..... 9

### Equipment

Fire Extinguishers, Flame Arrestors ..... 8

Personal Flotation Devices ..... 6

Ventilation, Sound Signaling Devices, Marine Sanitation Devices ..... 9

### Federal Laws

Visual Distress Signals, Marine Pollution Placards ..... 10

### Lighting

Power Driven Vessels ..... 11

Range and Degree of Visibility ..... 10

Sailing Vessels and Vessels Under Oars, Lights Required While Anchored ..... 12

### Out-of-state Boating

Boating Education Requirements for Neighboring States ..... 1

### Registration

Hull Identification Numbers, Numbering, Display of Number and Decal,

Documented Vessels ..... 14

Registration Fees, How to Register ..... 13

### Regulations

Carrying Passengers for Hire, Special Marine Events--Permit,

Life Jackets Required Below Dams, Noise Levels, Water Skiing ..... 4

Enforcement, Boating Under the Influence, Young Operators ..... 2

No Wake Areas, TWRA Access Areas, Diving Safety ..... 5

Reckless Operation, Owner's Responsibility, Accidents Must Be Reported,

Personal Watercraft ..... 3

### Rules of the Road

Overtaking Situations, Crossing Situations ..... 16

Right of Way, Meeting Situations ..... 15

### Safety Tips

Water Skiing, Person Overboard, Passengers, Before Leaving ..... 19

While Underway, Fueling, Power Line Dangers, Weather, Marine Theft

Sportsmen, Hunters & Anglers ..... 20

**Uniform State Waterway Marker System** ..... 17

### What You Need

A Quick Reference Chart of Requirements for Your Boat ..... 21

# BOATER EDUCATION

## New Boater Education Requirements

- Beginning January 1, 2005, boat operators born after January 1, 1989 must show a TWRA-issued card as proof of successful completion of a nationally approved boater education course approved by the TWRA.
- Any non-resident operating a boat in Tennessee who falls within this age requirement must show proof of successful passage of a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) approved boater education course.
- Check the TWRA website for testing locations and times ([www.tnwildlife.org](http://www.tnwildlife.org)).

## Boater Education Resources

To make your time on the water more enjoyable and safe, really get to know your sport. Boating education can be as simple as a self-study course at home, on the internet, or organized formal classes which range from basic boating to advanced seamanship. Most classes are free, or charge only a small fee for books and materials. Shown below are some contacts and links to help you become a more knowledgeable boater.

TWRA Home Study Course .....	615-781-6682
Boating Education .....	<a href="http://www.boat-ed.com">www.boat-ed.com</a>
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary .....	270-442-1621
United States Power Squadrons .....	888-367-8777
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency .....	<a href="http://www.tnwildlife.org">www.tnwildlife.org</a>
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators .....	<a href="http://www.nasbla.org">www.nasbla.org</a>
National Safe Boating Council .....	<a href="http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org">www.safeboatingcouncil.org</a>
U. S. Coast Guard .....	<a href="http://www.uscgboating.org">www.uscgboating.org</a>
U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary .....	<a href="http://www.uscgaux.org">www.uscgaux.org</a>
U. S. Power Squadron .....	<a href="http://www.usps.org">www.usps.org</a>
National Water Safety Congress .....	<a href="http://www.watersafetycongress.org">www.watersafetycongress.org</a>

# OUT-OF-STATE BOATING

The states which border Tennessee have the following boating education requirements for non-resident boaters:

- Alabama ([www.dcnr.state.al.us](http://www.dcnr.state.al.us))** - Proof of boating education course approved by the NASBLA for all non-resident boat operators boating 45 days or more each year.
- Arkansas ([www.agfc.state.ar.us](http://www.agfc.state.ar.us))** - All boaters born after January 1, 1986 must complete an approved boater safety education course.
- Kentucky ([www.kdfwr.state.ky.us](http://www.kdfwr.state.ky.us))** - Proof of boating education course approved by the NASBLA for all boaters between the ages of 12-17.
- Mississippi ([www.mdwfp.com](http://www.mdwfp.com))** - Proof of boating education course approved by the NASBLA for all boaters born after June 30, 1980.
- North Carolina ([www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org))** - Proof of boating education course approved by the NASBLA for personal watercraft operators between 12 and 16 years old.
- Georgia ([www.gadnr.org](http://www.gadnr.org))** - Proof of boating education course approved by the NASBLA for all boaters under 16 years old. 16 years and older must show a valid driver's license.

For more details contact the appropriate state agency boating enforcement division.

# REGULATIONS

## Enforcement

It is the responsibility of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to enforce and administer the provisions of the "Tennessee Boating Safety Act." Enforcement officers of the Agency are on the water to assist boaters as well as to enforce laws and to provide control when necessary. Every officer of the Agency has the authority to stop and board any vessel subject to the State Boating Act. They may issue citations or, when necessary, they may arrest on sight, without warrant, any person they see violating any provisions of the Act.

Most Agency vessels may be recognized by the orange and green stripes near the bow and the word WILDLIFE RESOURCES on the sides; however, unmarked vessels are also used. Boaters who are signaled to stop by people identifying themselves as wildlife officers must do so immediately and maneuver in such a way that the officer may come along side or come aboard.

TWRA officers monitor marine radio channel 17 and can also be contacted through the regional TWRA dispatcher at the toll-free number located on the back of this booklet.

## Boating Under the Influence

It is unlawful to operate any sail or powered vessel while under the influence of intoxicants or drugs. Here are some important facts to consider:

**Implied consent:** All persons operating a sail or powered vessel have given their implied consent to a sobriety test. Failure to consent to testing is a separate offense and may result in suspension of vessel operating privileges.

**Presumption of Guilt:** A vessel operator whose tests show a blood-alcohol level of .10% is presumed under the influence and his or her ability to operate a vessel is impaired.

**Blood-alcohol test required:** State law requires that blood-alcohol levels be determined for all operators involved in an accident where death or serious injury occurs.

**Penalties:** Conviction for operating under the influence will result in fines of up to \$2,500 on the first offense, \$2,500 on the second offense and \$5,000 for the third offense. A jail sentence of 11 months and 29 days may also be imposed for any conviction, probation is mandatory for any offense, and operating privileges may be suspended from one to ten years. Additional federal penalties may also be charged.



## Young Operators

- Beginning January 1, 2005, boat operators born after January 1, 1989 must have in their possession a TWRA-issued card showing proof of successful completion of a nationally approved boater education course.
- Persons under 12 years of age may not operate a powered boat unless they are accompanied by an adult who can take immediate control of the vessel.
- An exception is made if the boat is powered by an outboard motor of 8.5 horsepower or less.
- A further exception is made for unaccompanied operators between the ages of 10 and 12 if the boat is over 14 feet long, powered by an outboard motor of less than 15 horsepower and the person has successfully completed a boating education course approved by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.
- Personal watercraft may not be rented by anyone younger than 16 years of age.

## Reckless Operation

Reckless operation of a vessel, water skis or similar device is one of the most serious offenses in Tennessee boating law. Violations are punishable by a fine of \$2,500 and six months in jail. Reckless operation is defined as any act which endangers life, limb or property.

### Examples of reckless operation are:

- Operating a vessel in swimming areas.
- Riding on seatbacks, gunwales, transoms or pedestal seats while above an idle speed.
- Excessive speed in crowded areas, dangerous areas or during restricted visibility.
- Operating an overloaded vessel.
- Towing a skier in a crowded area where a fallen skier is likely to be hit by other vessels or towing in areas where the skier is likely to strike an obstacle.
- Using a personal watercraft to jump the immediate wake of another vessel.

## Owner's Responsibility

The owner of a vessel may be responsible for any injury or damage done by their vessel including damage caused by the vessel's wake. This shall not hold true if the vessel is used without the owner's consent. There may be civil liability charges attached to any damage caused by a vessel's wake.

## Accidents Must be Reported

- Any boating accident involving death, or injury requiring medical treatment beyond first aid, or the disappearance of a person should be reported as soon as possible, and must be reported within 48 hours.
- All accidents involving property damage in excess of \$500 (to one vessel or a combination of both vessels) must be reported within 10 days.
- The operator of every vessel involved in a reportable boating accident is required to file an accident form with the TWRA. Accident report forms are available from any TWRA office or on the TWRA website at [tnwildlife.org](http://tnwildlife.org). Failure to report a boating accident is a criminal offense and may result in prosecution by the TWRA.
- Giving assistance is required. Whenever a boat is involved in an accident, it is the duty of the operator to give necessary assistance, as long as it will not personally endanger the operator, the passengers, or vessel.

## Personal Watercraft (Jet Ski)

Personal watercraft are those vessels (boats) which are designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the craft rather than sitting or standing inside the vessel. It includes but is not limited to jet skis, wet bikes, wave runners, sea doos and similar craft.

Personal watercraft are powered vessels and must adhere to the same rules as any other boat. They must be registered, life jackets must be worn, and a fire extinguisher must be aboard. PWCs must be operated at a speed safe enough for the operator to avoid a collision.



### Additionally, personal watercraft operators should be aware of the following:

- Jumping the immediate wake (within 100 feet) of another vessel, weaving through congested vessel traffic and riding close to ramps, docks, or the shore is considered reckless operation.
- All persons operating or using personal watercraft must wear a personal flotation device (life jacket), Type I, II, III. (Inflatable cannot be used).
- The watercraft's lanyard must be attached to the operator while in use.
- No person shall operate a personal watercraft between sunset and sunrise.
- Persons under 12 years of age may not operate a personal watercraft unless an adult is on board who can take immediate control of the boat.
- Persons who allow an underage operator to use a personal watercraft may be prosecuted in addition to, or in lieu of, the operator.
- Personal watercraft being used to tow skiers, knee boards or other devices must be equipped with two mirrors (2-1/2 x 4 inches) or have an observer over 12 years of age.

## Carrying Passengers for Hire

Before a person may carry passengers for hire on the navigable waters of the United States, an appropriate license must be obtained from the U. S. Coast Guard. This includes ferry service, fishing guide service or any operation where consideration (monetary or otherwise) is required from the passengers.

Only Type I PFDs are acceptable when carrying passengers for hire. Some equipment requirements vary with the classification of the vessel and the number of passengers carried. For questions about licensing and equipment requirements, contact the nearest U. S. Coast Guard Marine Safety office.

## Special Marine Events—Permit

Boat races, marine parades and any other special aquatic events which may restrict local navigation or require additional patrol by wildlife officers, may not be held without first obtaining a permit from the Executive Director of the TWRA. The free permit may be requested by applying to the TWRA at least 30 days prior to the date of the event.

## Life Jackets Required Below Dams

A U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device must be worn by each person on board vessels being operated within specifically marked areas below dams.

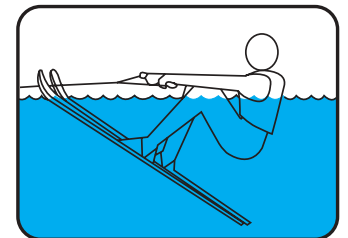
## Noise Levels

- Engines of all motorized vessels must have an effective muffling system.
- The noise level of any motorized vessel may not exceed 86 decibels at 50 feet or more.
- Manufacturers may not sell vessels that do not meet the noise level requirements.
- Exhaust cutouts are illegal.
- Illegal to alter the muffler system on a boat.
- Boat operators are required to submit to noise level testing if stopped by a TWRA officer.

## Water Skiing

Any vessel used to tow a person on water skis, surfboard or similar device must follow these regulations:

1. Skiing is prohibited from sunset to sunrise and during inclement weather.



2. Vessels towing skiers must be equipped with a 170 degree, wide-angle rearview mirror or have on board a person 12 years or older, other than the operator to observe the progress of the skier.
3. Skiers must wear an adequate and effective life preserver, buoyant vest or life belt. If the device worn is not Coast Guard approved, then an approved device for the skier must be on board the towing vessel.
4. Citations to court may be issued to the vessel operator and/or the skier if the vessel or the ski are manipulated in a manner which endangers life, limb or property.
5. Do not ski near, or in front of, tow boats or other large craft since their visibility is restricted and their ability to stop quickly or maneuver is extremely limited.
6. Driver and passengers must not sit on deck, gunwales or transom while boat is in motion.
7. Personal watercraft regulations vary. See page 2 (Personal Watercraft) for details.

### No Wake (idle speed) Areas

- All vessels operating within 300 feet of a commercial boat dock must do so at a slow, no-wake speed regardless of whether or not the area is marked by buoys.
- All vessels operating within any other marked no-wake areas must do so at a slow, no-wake speed.
- “No wake” is defined as a vessel traveling at or below idle speed.

### TWRA Access Areas

- Picnicking is permitted.
- Commercial use of a TWRA access area is prohibited.
- Disorderly conduct or use of intoxicants or other behavior-modifying substances are prohibited.
- The use of firearms is prohibited except during regular hunting season. Target shooting is prohibited at all times.
- Swimming from or near ramps or in such a manner as to interfere with the launching or removal of boats is prohibited.

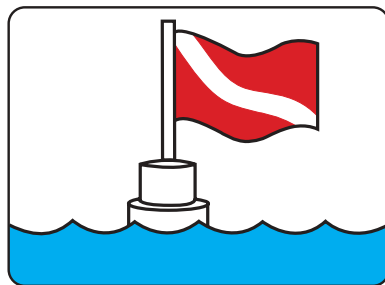
### Diving Safety

Boats must not operate within 50 feet of a diver’s- down flag and a slow, no-wake idle speed restriction is automatically imposed within 200 feet of the flag.

A diver is any person who is in the water and equipped with a face mask, snorkel or underwater breathing apparatus.

All divers shall prominently display a diver’s-down flag in the area in which they are diving and must surface within 50 feet of the flag. After dusk the flag must be illuminated so it can be seen from a minimum of 300 feet.

Any boat used as a necessary part of the diving operation must display, from its mast a diver’s-down flag at least 18 inches x 24 inches in size and an international code flag Alpha so that they are visible from 360°. After dark such boats shall illuminate their flags so they are visible for a minimum of 300 feet.



# EQUIPMENT

“Coast Guard approved equipment” is equipment which has been approved by the Commandant of the U. S. Coast Guard and has been determined to be in compliance with U. S. Coast Guard specifications and regulations relating to the material, construction and performance of such equipment.

### Personal Flotation Devices

All children 12 years of age and younger are required to wear a Coast Guard approved life jacket while on the open deck of a recreational boat except when anchored, moored, or aground. There are four basic things you should keep in mind about your personal flotation devices.

**First**, you must have one wearable device of the appropriate size on board for each person in the boat or each person being towed. (This applies to rowboats, sailboats, canoes and rafts as well as motorboats.)

**Second**, each device must be kept readily accessible. They should not be hidden below deck or stored in plastic bags. They should be worn or at least be close at hand where they can be reached quickly in an emergency.

**Third**, each device must be Coast Guard approved and bear the approval stamp and number.

**Fourth**, each device must be in good condition and be of the appropriate size for the person intended to wear it. The straps must be firmly affixed, there should be no rips, tears or holes which will affect the operating efficiency of the device, and there should be no leaks in the plastic bags containing the flotation material (this can be checked by squeezing each bag and listening for escaping air.)

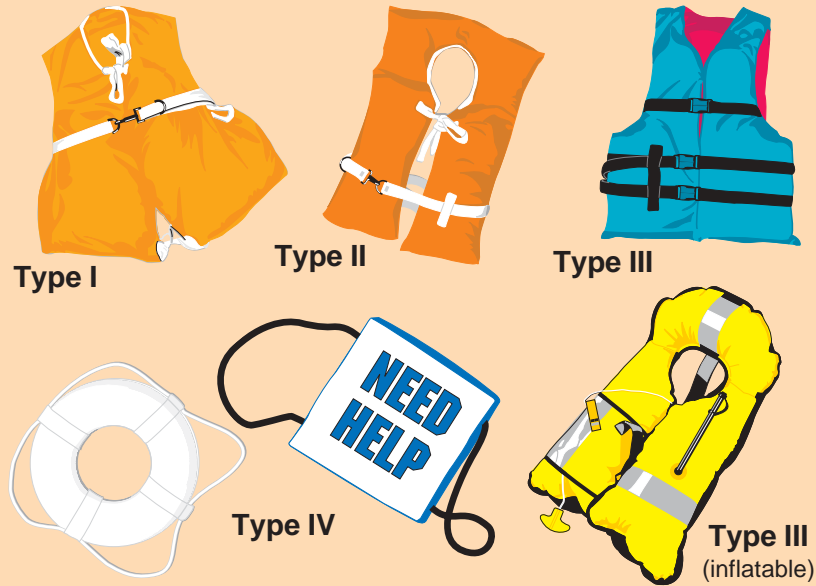
### State and Federal Flotation Device Regulations:

- All boats, including canoes and kayaks, must be equipped with one wearable personal flotation device for each person on board or for each person being towed on water skis, etc.
- Boats 16 feet in length or over (except canoes and kayaks) must also be equipped with one Type IV (throwable device) per boat in case someone falls overboard.

**Inflatable flotation devices:** There are a wide variety of inflatable life jackets available. To be accepted as one of the required life jackets on board, the device must have a Coast Guard approval label. If it is approved as a Type V, it must be worn to be legal. Inflatable devices of any kind are not acceptable for use on personal watercraft or by persons under 16 years of age unless specifically stated on the manufacturer’s label. Inflatable devices generally provide the most flotation of any approved device and most will turn an unconscious person face up in the water. Read the label carefully for the characteristics and specific restrictions of your device. Routine maintenance is required.

**Ski Belts:** These are **NOT** on the approved list of flotation devices and are not recommended for your safety. A ski belt may not be counted as one of the required pieces of equipment on board any boat. A ski belt may be worn while skiing but an approved flotation device for the skier must be on the towing boat.

## PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES



**Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are classified by “Types” indicated below:**

**Type I:** Has the greatest required buoyancy and is designed to turn most unconscious persons in the water from a face down position to a vertical or slightly backward position. The Type I PFD provides the greatest protection to its wearer and is most effective for all waters.

**Type II:** A wearable device designed to turn its wearer in a vertical or slightly backward position in the water. The turning action is not as pronounced as with a Type I, and the device will not turn as many persons under the same conditions as the Type I.

**Type III:** A wearable device designed for calm, inland water, or where there is a good chance of fast rescue. While the Type III has about the same buoyancy as a Type II, it has little or no turning ability and the wearer may have to tilt the head back to avoid a face-down position in the water. These devices are often worn by persons participating in skiing, fishing, hunting, and other water sports. Several Type III designs offer increased hypothermia protection. For information about Type III inflatables see page 5.

**Type IV:** A device designed to be thrown to a person in the water and grasped and held by user until rescued. It is not designed to be worn. The most common Type IV devices are a buoyant cushion and a ring buoy.

**Type V:** Any PFD approved for restricted or special uses. These devices must be worn to be accepted as a legal device.

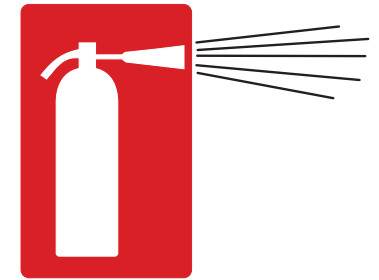
**Acceptable flotation devices must meet the following conditions:**

- They must bear the Coast Guard approved label.
- They must be in good and serviceable condition.
- They must be an appropriate size for the person who intends to wear it.
- Wearable PFDs must be readily accessible.
- Throwable devices must be immediately available for use.

## Fire Extinguishers

Fire Extinguishers must be carried on all motorboats which have any of the following conditions:

- Are 26 feet or longer
- Transport passengers for hire
- Have one or more of the following:
  - Inboard engines
  - Closed compartments under seats 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 where combustible or flammable material is placed
  - Permanently installed fuel tanks. These are defined as: (1) Tanks which require the removal of screws or bolts to remove them from the boat. (2) Tanks that when filled cannot be easily or readily handled by one person on board.



Each fire extinguisher is classified by letter and Roman numeral according to the type of fire it will extinguish, and the size of the extinguisher. The “letter” indicates the Type of fire:

- A - Fires of ordinary combustible materials
- B - Gasoline, oil and grease fires
- C - Electrical fires

Extinguishers approved for motorboats are hand portable, of either B-I or B-II classification for gasoline, oil and grease fires.

Dry chemical fire extinguishers without gauges or indicating devices must be weighed and tagged every six months.

Check extinguishers regularly to be sure that gauges are free and showing fully charged and nozzle is clear.

### Number of Fire Extinguishers Needed:

- Vessels under 26 feet in length: If the boat meets any of the conditions which require an extinguisher, then a minimum of one B-I extinguisher must be on board.
- Vessels 26 feet to under 40 feet in length: one B-II or two B-I extinguishers are required.
- Vessels 40 feet to under 65 feet in length: Three B-I or one B-II and one B-I extinguisher are required.

**Note:** A permanently installed fire extinguisher in an engine compartment may be substituted for one B-I extinguisher on any class of vessel.

**Note:** Read labels on fire extinguishers; the extinguisher must say U. S. Coast Guard approved or U. L. listed for marine use.

## Flame Arresters

Inboard mounted gasoline engines installed in a motorboat or motor vessel after April 25, 1940, must have a flame arrester fitted to the carburetor for backfire flame control.

### Exceptions:

- A vessel which has an attachment to the carburetor, or has the engine located so that flames caused by engine backfires, will be dispersed outside the vessel so neither the vessel nor the persons on board are endangered.
- A vessel whose air and fuel intake system bears a Coast Guard approved label stating that such a system is safe without a flame arrester.

## Ventilation

Vessels with closed gasoline engine compartments must be ventilated. Boats built after July 31, 1980, must be ventilated by a powered exhaust blower system. Boats built before that date must have at least one intake and one exhaust duct fitted with cowls for the removal of explosive fumes. The intake duct should be vented from outside the boat to midway of the engine compartment or to a level below the carburetor air intake. The exhaust duct should be vented from the lower portion of the engine compartment to the outside of the boat

Vessels with enclosed fuel tank compartments must be ventilated like the description above. An exception is made if the boat meets the following requirements:

- Built after July 31, 1978
- Electrical components within the compartment are ignition proofed
- The tank is vented to the outside of the boat

## Sound Signaling Devices

- Vessels less than 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) are not specifically required to carry a whistle, horn or bell but they must have some means of making an “efficient sound signal.”
- Vessels over 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) are required to carry a bell and a powered whistle or horn.

## Marine Sanitation Devices

Marine sanitation device laws apply to boats with installed heads (marine toilets). Sanitation devices are classified by types. Types I & II treat sewage and then discharge it into the water. A Type III is a holding tank which retains the waste until it is pumped out at a marina or other facility. The following is a summary of the M.S.D. laws:

1. Discharging untreated sewage into public water is prohibited in Tennessee.
2. Public waters are classified as either **discharge** (capable of accepting treated sewage) or **no discharge** (waste must be retained in a holding tank until properly removed).
3. Discharge into public waters is restricted to a Type I or II U.S. Coast Guard approved marine sanitation device on those waters classified as **discharge**.
4. Marinas and docks operating on public water must provide a sewage removal service.
5. For more information visit our MSD website. [www.tncva.addr.com](http://www.tncva.addr.com)

# DISCHARGE & NO DISCHARGE RESERVOIRS

DISCHARGE RESERVOIRS		NO DISCHARGE RESERVOIRS	
Barkley	Melton Hill	Beech River Lakes	Nolichucky
Caulderwood	Mississippi River	Boone	Normandy
Cheatham	Nickajack	Center Hill	Norris
Chickamauga	Old Hickory	Cherokee	Ocoee 1,2,3
Cordell Hull	Pickwick	Chilhowee	Tims Ford
Cumberland River	Reelfoot	Douglas	Watauga
Dale Hollow	South Holston	Ft. Patrick Henry	Wilbur
Ft. Loudon	Tellico	Great Falls	Woods
Kentucky	Tennessee River	J. Percy Priest	
McKellar	Watts Barr	Lake Graham	

# FEDERAL LAWS

## Visual Distress Signals

Visual distress signals are not required for boaters using Tennessee waters. They are desirable to have on any boat but are only required for boats using coastal waters and the Great Lakes. Boaters using those waters should obtain the exact requirements based on the length of their boat and whether they will be operating at night.

## Marine Pollution Placards

Federal law requires that all vessels 26 feet and over must display one or more pollution placards (signs) in a prominent location so that it can be read by the crew and passengers.





### The placard must:

1. Be at least 9" wide x 4" high.
2. State that discharge of plastic or garbage mixed with plastic into any waters is prohibited.
3. State that discharge of all garbage is prohibited in the navigable waters of the United States and, in all other waters, within three nautical miles of the nearest land.

# LIGHTING

All boats operating between sunset and sunrise and during periods of restricted visibility are required to display the appropriate lights. Boats are considered underway and must show all the appropriate lights unless they are anchored, moored or aground. Anchored vessels must show the appropriate anchor lights.

## Range and Degree of Visibility of Lights for Inland Waters

	Location	Visible Range (Miles)	Degrees
	Masthead light	2	225
	All-round light	2	360
	Side lights	1	112.5
	Stern light	2	135

## Power Driven Vessels

- Boats built before December 25, 1981, and less than 20 meters (65 ft. 6 in.) shall exhibit navigation lights as displayed in either figure 1, 2 or 3.
- Boats built after December 25, 1981, and less than 12 meters (39 ft. 4 in.) in length may use figure 1, 2 or 3.
- Boats built after December 25, 1981, 12 meters (39 ft. 4 in.) or more in length but less than 20 meters (65 ft. 6 in.) must use figure 1 or 2.

**Note:** If the lighting display in figure 1 is used, the aft masthead light must be higher than the forward one; if figure 2 is selected, a vessel less than 12 meters (39 ft. 4 in.) MUST HAVE the masthead light 1 meter (3 ft. 3 in.) higher than the colored lights. If the vessel is using figure 2 and is 12 meters (39 ft. 4 in.) or more in length but less than 20 meters (65 ft. 6 in.) then the masthead light must be 2.5 meters (8 ft. 2 in.) higher than the gunwale.

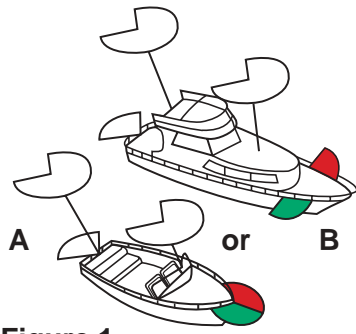


Figure 1

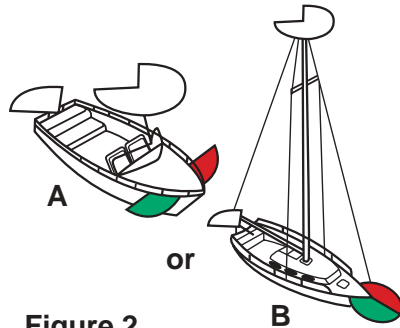


Figure 2

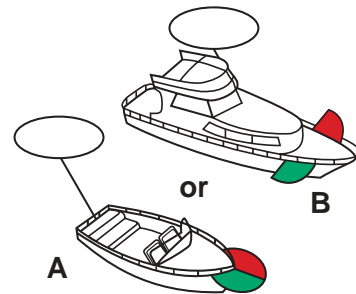


Figure 3

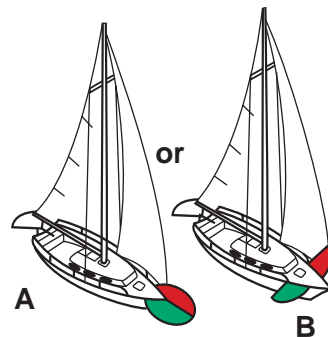


Figure 4

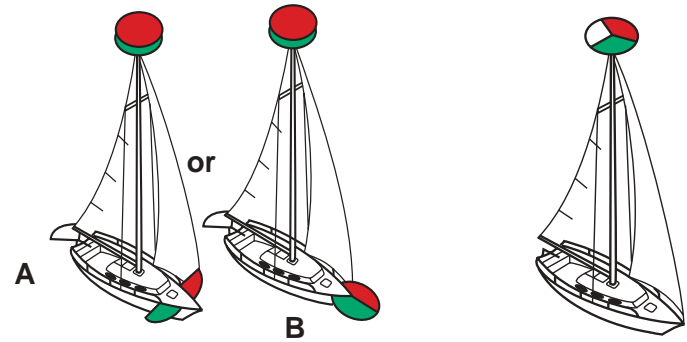


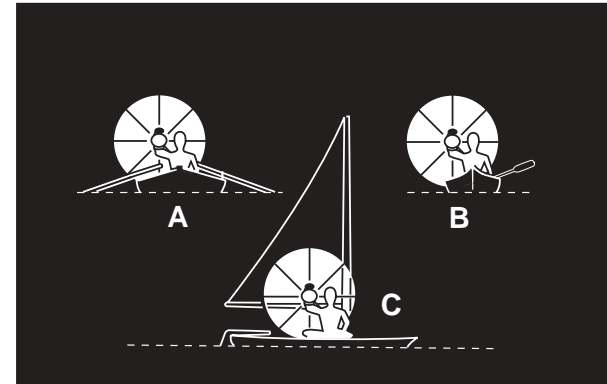
Figure 5

Figure 6

## Sailing Vessels and Vessels Under Oars

A sailing vessel, under sail alone, shall exhibit the lights shown on figure 4, 5 or 6. A vessel under oars or a sailing vessel of less than 7 meters (22 ft. 10 in.) shall, if practicable, exhibit the lights prescribed in figure 4, 5 or 6. However, if she does not, she must have ready at hand an electric light or lighted lantern showing a white light as seen in figure 7 which must be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collisions.

During daylight operation, vessels 12 meters (39 ft. 4 in.) and over using sail and machinery must display the shape of a black cone pointing down.



## Lights Required While Anchored

An anchor light is an all-round white light, visible for 2 miles, which is exhibited in the front part of the vessel or where it can best be seen.

- Power driven and sailing vessels less than 7 meters (23 feet) must display an anchor light when anchored in or near a narrow channel, fairway or anchorage where other vessels normally navigate.
- Power driven and sailing vessels 7-20 meters (23 to 65.6 feet) are required to show an anchor light except when in a special anchorage area designated by the Secretary of Transportation or other authority.

**Note:** A sailing vessel under machinery power and sails is considered a power-driven vessel.

# REGISTRATION

Tennessee law requires that all mechanically powered vessels (including documented vessels and all sailboats) which are principally used in Tennessee must be registered. Mechanical propulsion includes electric trolling motors but does not include boats powered only by oars or paddles. Boats which require registration must be properly registered before placing them upon any public water of Tennessee. Boaters from other states who are changing their principal state of operation to Tennessee, may utilize a current registration from another state for up to 60 days before changing their registration to Tennessee. Sailboats used in Tennessee by persons from states that do not require registration of sailboats, are exempt from registration unless Tennessee is the state of principal use. Sailboards (windsurfers) and other beach toys are not considered vessels and do not have to be registered.

## Registration Fees

Registration fees are determined by the length of the boat. The vessel may be registered for one, two or three years upon option by the owner. However, if an owner acquires another boat, there is no transfer of fees from one boat to another.

SIZE	YEARS		
	1	2	3
16 feet and under .....	\$10 .....	\$19 .....	\$28
Over 16 feet to less than 26 feet .....	20 .....	38 .....	56
26 feet to less than 40 feet .....	30 .....	57 .....	84
40 feet or more .....	40 .....	76 .....	112
Dealer's certificate .....	25 .....	50 .....	75
Duplicate certificate .....	5		

## How to Register

Persons who wish to register a boat must complete a registration form, available through a county court clerk's office or from the dealer who sold you the boat at the time of the sale.

**Initial Registration:** The Tennessee Department of Revenue requires that boats which have never been registered before must show certification that their sales tax was paid when purchased. The owner needs to have the appropriate county court clerk's office or boat dealer stamp the application verifying that the tax was paid. The registration form is then mailed to or taken to the address shown on the form for processing.

**Registered boats transferred from one individual to another:** Follow the same process as described for previously unregistered boats above. If a dealer is not involved, the county court clerk's office will require a bill of sale from the individuals involved.

**Notification of changes:** When a vessel numbered by Tennessee is lost, stolen and/or recovered, destroyed, abandoned or transferred to another person, the Certificate of Number issued for the vessel must be surrendered, together with written notification of its change in status, to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency within 15 days from the event. If the change in status is transfer of ownership, the name and address of the new owner must be included in the notification. Notification of changes should be addressed to:

**Boat Registration  
TWRA  
P.O. Box 41729  
Nashville, TN 37204**

### Renewing a registration that does not involve a change of ownership:

- Request in writing to renew your boat registration. Include you boat number and send to: Boat Registration, TWRA, P.O. Box 41729, Nashville, TN 37062.
- You may also renew instantly by going to any business which sells TWRA hunting and fishing licenses.
- You must know the TN number of the boat you wish to renew and the last name of the person to whom the boat is registered.
- You will receive a temporary registration that will allow you to operate your boat until your new decals and registration card arrive by mail in about two weeks.

**Registration by Dealers or Manufacturers:** Dealers or manufacturers may apply for registration which can be transferred from one vessel to another. A copy of the business license and sales tax number must accompany the application for a dealer or manufacturer number. Such vessels are to be used for demonstration purposes only and more than one vessel may not be operated simultaneously with the same number. In addition, vessels being demonstrated must have the Certificate of Number on board and the registration number must be correctly displayed. However, such vessels may display the number by having it attached to removable signs which can be temporarily but firmly attached to the vessel.

## Hull Identification Numbers

When a vessel is initially registered or transferred to another owner, the vessel must have a Hull Identification Number (HIN) if it was built after 1972. All homemade boats built in Tennessee must be issued a HIN. An application for a new HIN may be obtained by contacting the TWRA at Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Boating Division, Ellington Agricultural Center, P.O. Box 40747, Nashville, TN 37204.



## Numbering

Persons making application for registration will receive from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency a pocket-size certificate of number and decals showing the vessel number and expiration date. The pocket-size certificate (card) must be on board any time the vessel is in use.

## Display of Number and Decal

The vessel's number must be painted on or permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the vessel (the bow), and no other number may be displayed there. Numbers are to read left to right, be in plain vertical block characters, be of a color contrasting with the background, be distinctly visible and legible, and be not less than 3 inches in height. The letters must be separated from the numbers by a dash (-) or by a space the size of one letter. The validation decal must be placed on each side of the bow preceding the Tennessee identification number as shown in the example below.

## Documented Vessels

Vessels documented by the U. S. Coast Guard must be registered but are not required to display the registration number on the vessel. However, the Certificate of Number must be on board when the vessel is being operated.



# BOAT RENTALS

Any marina or other entity which offers boats for rent is responsible for the proper registration and numbering of each vessel. The registration card may be retained at the business if the vessel is less than 26 feet long and rented for less than 24 hours, provided that the operator of the vessel has in their possession a copy of the rental agreement. A record of boat rentals must be retained by the business for a period of not less than six months.

Further, a rental operation shall not permit any vessel to depart from the owner's premises unless it has been provided, either by the owner or the renter, with the required equipment.

## Personal Watercraft Rentals

Any person or business which rents a personal watercraft to a first-time renter must provide a safety orientation approved by the TWRA. A written record of that orientation, signed by the renter, must be kept by the rental operation for at least 30 days. Further, personal watercraft may not be offered for rent, or rented to persons under 16 years of age. Personal watercraft regulations require that the operator and all passengers must wear an approved wearable-type life jacket at all times. The rental operation or renter must certify that these flotation devices are available before the craft leaves the rental premises.

## Responsibility of the Person Renting a Vessel

Compliance with the legal operational requirements of the rented vessel and proper use of the safety equipment is the responsibility of the renter and/or the operator of the rental vessel. In most cases the boat will only be equipped with enough safety equipment for the number of persons listed on the rental agreement. Any additional safety equipment needed for persons beyond those specified by the rental agreement is the responsibility of the renter or operator at all times. A copy of the rental agreement or the registration card must be on board the vessel.

# RULES OF THE ROAD

## Right of Way

### Vessels which have the right-of-way (in order of priority):

- Vessels being overtaken
- Vessels restricted in maneuverability
- Sail or non-powered vessels
- Power driven vessels not restricted in maneuverability
- Seaplanes

Vessels must use the rules listed below whenever possible but must deviate and take whatever steps necessary to avoid a collision.

In all situations listed below, five or more rapid whistle blasts mean danger or that you have doubts about the other vessel's intention to maneuver. Three whistle blasts mean "my engines are in reverse."

## Meeting Situations

- Vessels will generally meet and pass port to port.
- One whistle blast: I intend to pass port to port.
- Two whistle blasts: I intend to pass starboard to starboard.
- On the Mississippi River, vessels traveling with the current have the right-of-way and

will sound the first signal.

- The vessel with the right-of-way must maintain its course and speed until the other vessel is clear.

## Overtaking Situations

- The vessel being overtaken has the right-of-way.
- The vessel being overtaken must hold its course and speed.
- One whistle blast: I intend to pass on your starboard.
- Two whistle blasts: I intend to pass on your port.
- The vessel with the right-of-way must maintain its course and speed until the other vessel is clear.

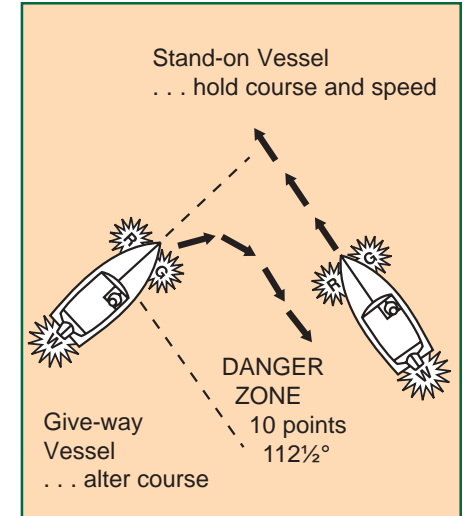
## Crossing Situations

Generally, boats approaching from your right have the right-of-way. Keep in mind, however, that vessels restricted in maneuverability have the right-of-way over sailing vessels, and sailing vessels have the right-of-way over power vessels not restricted in maneuverability.

On the Mississippi River, vessels intending to cross the river must keep out of the way of power-driven vessels traveling up or down the river.

One whistle blast confirms that the crossing will be completed with the vessels remaining on the port sides.

The vessel which has the right-of-way must hold course and speed in a crossing situation.



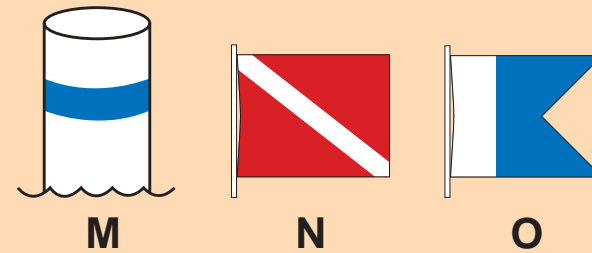
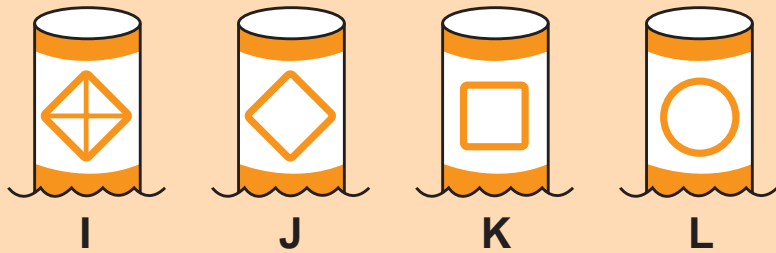
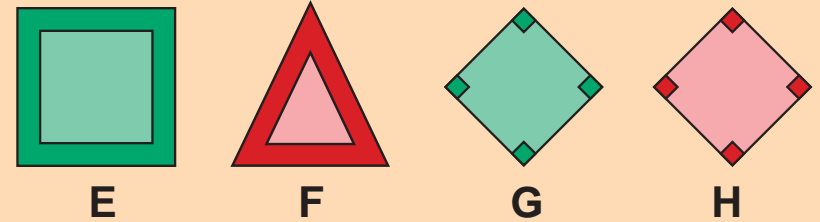
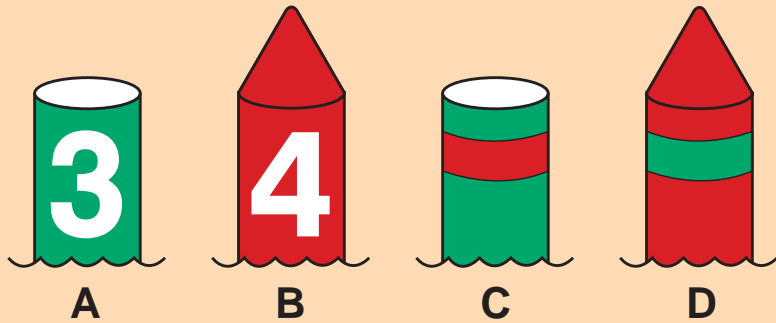
# AIDS TO NAVIGATION

Tennessee uses the uniform system of buoys and markers that are standard in the United States. These buoys and markers are placed for your assistance and safety. In addition to written messages on the buoys, there are a variety of colors, shapes and symbols which aid in the recognition of a particular buoy. Take a minute to study the diagram on page 16 showing how the buoys may be used.

## Establishing Private Aids, Markers or Platforms

- Permission to establish private aids, markers or buoys on public waterways by groups, individuals and municipalities other than the federal government must be obtained by written request to the Executive Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.
- Mooring or fastening watercraft to any buoy or marker other than a mooring buoy is prohibited except in case of emergency.
- Removal of any buoy or marker by any unauthorized personnel is prohibited.
- Ski jumps and slalom courses may be established on public water only through permit from the Executive Director of the Wildlife Resources Agency.
- Unauthorized buoys or markers will be removed.

# UNIFORM STATE WATER WAY MARKER SYSTEM



- A) **Green (or black) Channel Marker Buoy:** Traveling upstream, you should pass to the right of this buoy as it marks the left side of the channel.
- B) **Red Channel Marker Buoy:** Traveling upstream, you should pass to the left of this buoy as it marks the right side of the channel.
- C) **Junction Buoy** (green over red): means two channels are coming together and you should pass to the right of the buoy as you travel upstream.
- D) **Junction Buoy** (red over green): means two channels are coming together and you pass to the left of the buoy as you travel upstream.
- E) **Passing Daymark** (green): A sign mounted on poles in the water or on the bank which is used in the same manner as a channel marker buoy. In this case it marks the left side of the channel as you travel upstream.
- F) **Passing Daymark** (red): A sign mounted on poles in the water or on the bank which is used in the same manner as a channel marker buoy. In this case it marks the right side of the channel as you travel upstream.
- G) **Channel Crossing Daymark** (green): A sign mounted on poles in the water or on the bank which means the channel is crossing from the left bank to the right bank as you travel upstream.
- H) **Channel Crossing Daymark** (red): A sign mounted on poles in the water or on the bank which means the channel is crossing from the right bank to the left bank as you travel upstream.

- I) **Boats Keep Out Buoy:** Marks a swimming area, area near a dam, or any area where boats are not allowed.
- J) **Danger Buoy:** Marks an obstruction, ferry cable, or any area where boats should not navigate or should use extreme caution.
- K) **Information Buoy:** Used to relay information. Words printed in black (usually inside the border) tell place names, distances, directional arrows, availability of supplies, gasoline, etc.
- L) **Control Buoy:** Marks a restricted area such as "slow no-wake," 5 MPH, no skiing or no fishing.
- M) **Mooring Buoy:** Means an anchor buoy. This is the only buoy to which a boat may tie or secure to.
- N) **Diver's Flag:** Must be used any time a diver is in the water. Boats must not come closer than 50 feet of the flag and must operate at a slow, no-wake speed within 200 feet.
- O) **Alpha Flag:** Means a vessel is engaged in diving operations or is restricted in its ability to navigate. Boaters must use extreme caution and are advised to look for a diver's-down flag.

# SAFETY TIPS

## Water Skiing

To make your water skiing fun, safe, sensible and successful, practice these safe driving tips:

- Check steering and throttle controls for proper operation before towing skier.
- On takeoffs, never accelerate until a definite signal is given by skier.
- When under way, keep attention ahead. The observer is to watch the skier.
- Never follow other boats. Always look before turning. Avoid shallow water.
- Promote safety by staying away from other boats, swimmers, fishermen and solid objects.
- Return to fallen skier immediately. Slow to idle as you approach skier, moving in on the driver's side.
- Shut off engine while skier climbs into or out of boat. Discourage skiers from boarding over transom.
- When skiing into shore, reduce speed and parallel the landing area at a safe distance.
- Do not tow nonswimmers or weak swimmers unless they wear an approved and appropriate flotation device.

## Person Overboard

If someone falls overboard, follow these procedures:

- Toss a lifesaving device even if the person can swim. A life ring is the preferred device. It can be thrown farther and is easier to hang on to. However, use whatever device is nearest. Time is essential.
- Slow the boat, keeping the person in view. Other persons on board should act as look outs. At night, direct the best possible lights on the victim.
- Try to approach the person from downwind or into the waves. Always use common sense and good judgment. Consider existing condition and ability of the victim and what other help is available. If someone aboard is capable, have the person put on a lifesaving device with a line attached to the boat and enter the water to assist the person.
- Always stop the motor when someone is going over the side, or coming aboard.
- Assist the person in boarding the boat. It is difficult to climb into a boat from the water. The person may be hurt or cold and may require help.

## Passengers

- Wearing a life jacket is your best defense against drowning.
- Do not overload the boat.
- Avoid horseplay.
- Have Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) readily available for everyone.
- In small boats, remain seated.
- Trim boat by placing passengers and gear in balance.

## Before Leaving

- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Check weather forecasts.
- Ventilate bilges before starting engine.
- Be sure your boat is basically equipped.

## While Underway

- Know and obey the rules of the road.
- Post a lookout for bathers, fishermen, swimmers, debris.
- Reduce speed in harbors and in confined areas.
- Avoid excessive speed.
- Make no sharp turns at high speed.
- Watch your wake! You could be responsible for injury or damage caused by it.
- In rough water, stay low in the boat and cross waves at a slight angle.
- Keep red-buoys on your right when traveling upstream.
- Tying up to buoys or anchoring in channels is forbidden.
- Carry sufficient tools for minor repairs.

## Fueling

- Stop smoking and extinguish all fires.
- Close all vents, doors, and hatches.
- Ground the nozzle to tank opening.
- Portable tanks should be filled outside of the boat.
- Ventilate the engine compartment before starting.

## Power Line Dangers

When sailing, especially in unfamiliar waters, keep a close watch for low-hanging power lines. A great danger of electrocution exists if the mast of your vessel contacts the power line or gets close enough for the electricity to arc to your mast.

## Weather

- Observe cloud formation for pending weather changes.
- Play safe and head for shore if the wind increases.

## Marine Theft

- Always secure your vessel and valuables.
- Keep a copy of all important documents and identifying numbers for your vessel at home.
- Notify your local authorities if your vessel is missing or stolen.
- Contact Boat Registration to list your boat as stolen with the TWRA.

## Sportsmen, Hunters & Anglers

Sportsmen account for 36% of the total number of boating accidents.

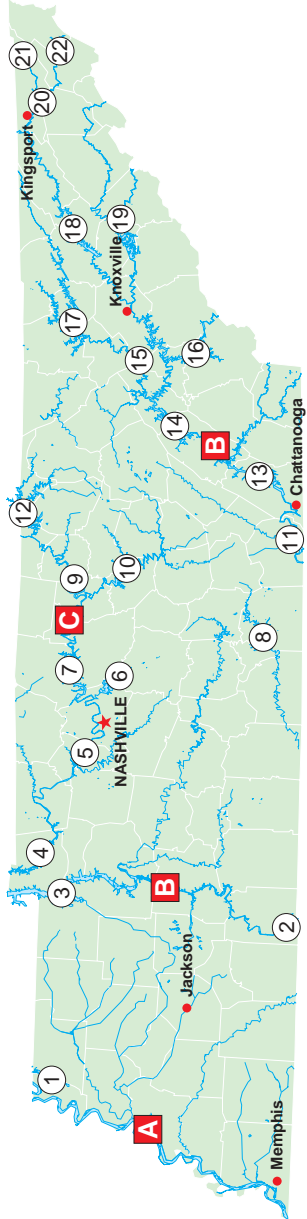
- Wear your life jacket.
- Do not overload your boat.
- Distribute gear and people evenly.
- Avoid standing in the boat.
- When setting out decoys, toss them overboard instead of setting them in the water.
- Dress to protect against hypothermia.
- If you should find yourself in cold water, try to relax and stay with the boat.
- Do not drink alcohol.

# WHAT YOU NEED

WHAT YOU NEED		Valid Registration Card On Board <sup>1</sup>	Registration Number On Both Sides Of Bow <sup>1</sup>	Wearable Coast Guard Approved Flotation Device For Each Person <sup>5</sup>	One Coast Guard Approved Type IV Throwable Flotation Device On Board <sup>2</sup>	Lights Required Between Sunset And Sunrise	Sound Signaling Ability	Fire Extinguisher <sup>3</sup>	Bell And Powered Whistle Or Horn	Engine Exhaust Muffling Device	Ventilation Required <sup>4</sup>	Backfire Flame Arrester
UNDER 16 FEET	<b>OUTBOARD ENGINE</b>											
	Fuel tanks portable and not enclosed	X	X	X		X	X			X		
	Fuel tanks portable but in closed compartments	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	
	Fuel tanks permanently installed and not vented to the outside <sup>4</sup>	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	
	<b>INBOARD ENGINE</b>											
	Covered engine compartment	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
Uncovered engine compartment	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
<b>SAILBOAT WITHOUT AUXILIARY POWER</b>	X	X	X			X	X					
16 FEET TO UNDER 26 FEET	<b>OUTBOARD ENGINE</b>											
	Fuel tanks portable and not enclosed	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		
	Fuel tanks portable but in closed compartments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
	Fuel tanks permanently installed and not vented to the outside <sup>4</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
	<b>INBOARD ENGINE</b>											
	Covered engine compartment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Uncovered engine compartment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
<b>SAILBOAT WITHOUT AUXILIARY POWER</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
26 FEET TO UNDER 40 FEET	<b>OUTBOARD ENGINE</b>											
	Fuel tanks portable and not enclosed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
	Fuel tanks portable but in closed compartments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
	Fuel tanks permanently installed and not vented to the outside <sup>4</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
	<b>INBOARD ENGINE</b>											
	Covered engine compartment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Uncovered engine compartment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
<b>SAILBOAT WITHOUT AUXILIARY POWER</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
40 FEET TO UNDER 65 FEET	<b>OUTBOARD ENGINE</b>											
	Fuel tanks portable and not enclosed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	Fuel tanks portable but in closed compartments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Fuel tanks permanently installed and not vented to the outside <sup>4</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	<b>INBOARD ENGINE</b>											
	Covered engine compartment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Uncovered engine compartment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
<b>SAILBOAT WITHOUT AUXILIARY POWER</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			

1. If the boat is not powered by motor or sail, then registration is not required.
2. Canoes and kayaks are not required to carry a throwable flotation device regardless of the length of the boat.
3. All boats with closed living space must carry a fire extinguisher.
4. Enclosed fuel tanks which are vented to the outside need no further ventilation.
5. Persons using personal watercraft, children on open decks while underway, and all boaters below dams must wear an approved flotation device.

# TENNESSEE'S RESERVOIRS



- |                                   |                        |                       |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>A</b> Mississippi River System | 6 J. Percy Priest Lake | 15 Fort Loudoun Lake  |
| <b>B</b> Tennessee River System   | 7 Old Hickory Lake     | 16 Tellico Lake       |
| <b>C</b> Cumberland River System  | 8 Tims Ford Lake       | 17 Norris Lake        |
|                                   | 9 Cordell Hull Lake    | 18 Cherokee Lake      |
|                                   | 10 Center Hill Lake    | 19 Douglas Lake       |
| 1 Reelfoot Lake                   | 11 Nickajack Lake      | 20 Boone Lake         |
| 2 Pickwick Lake                   | 12 Dale Hollow Lake    | 21 South Holston Lake |
| 3 Kentucky Lake                   | 13 Chickamauga Lake    | 22 Watauga Lake       |
| 4 Lake Barkley                    | 14 Watts Bar Lake      |                       |
| 5 Cheatham Lake                   |                        |                       |

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Central Office - Nashville

Boating Safety  
 P. O. Box 40747  
 Nashville, TN 37204  
 ..... 615-781-6682  
 Boating Registration ..... 615-781-6522  
 TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) ..... 615-781-6691

### West Tennessee - Region I

200 Lowell Thomas Drive  
 Jackson, TN 38301  
 ..... 731-423-5725  
 Toll Free ..... 1-800-372-3928

### Middle Tennessee - Region II

Ellington Agricultural Center  
 P. O. Box 41489  
 Nashville, TN 37204  
 ..... 615-781-6622  
 Toll Free ..... 1-800-624-7406

### Cumberland Plateau - Region III

464 Industrial Blvd.  
 Crossville, TN 38555  
 ..... 931-484-9571  
 Toll Free ..... 1-800-262-6704

### East Tennessee - Region IV

3030 Wildlife Way  
 Morristown, TN 37814  
 ..... 423-587-7037  
 Toll Free ..... 1-800-332-0900

### U. S. Coast Guard Marine Safety

229 Great Circle Road, Suite 148  
 Nashville, TN 37228  
 ..... 615-736-5421

For emergencies contact your nearest TWRA office. Local sheriff's departments can also contact TWRA officers or call: Tennessee Emergency Management Agency ..... 615-741-0001  
 ..... 1-800-262-3300

[www.tnwildlife.org](http://www.tnwildlife.org)



[www.tnwildlifefoundation.org](http://www.tnwildlifefoundation.org)

Many TWRA programs receive Federal financial assistance in Sport Fish and/or Wildlife Restoration. Under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information please write to: The Office for Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22203.



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