

# Kentucky: The Legal Requirements Of Boating

## Your Vessel's Certificate of Registration and Decal

- ◆ Requirements for vessel registration vary from state to state. In Kentucky, you must have a Kentucky Certificate of Registration and registration decals to legally operate your vessel on public waters. The only exceptions are:
  - Non-motorized vessels
  - Vessels registered in other states using Kentucky waters for 60 days or less
  - Vessels documented with the U.S. Coast Guard.
- ◆ The Certificate of Registration and registration decals are obtained by submitting the proper application and fee to the office of the county clerk in the county in which you reside or the county where you use your vessel.
- ◆ *This Certificate of Registration must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is being operated.*
- ◆ The registration number and registration decal must be displayed as follows:
  - Number must be painted, applied as a decal, or otherwise affixed to both sides of the forward half of the vessel where no other number may be displayed.
  - Number must read from left to right on both sides of the vessel.
  - Number must be in at least three-inch-high, vertical **BLOCK** letters.
  - Number's color must contrast with its background.
  - Letters must be separated from the numbers by hyphens or spaces; for example: **KY-3717-ZW** or **KY 3717 ZW**.
  - Decal must be placed behind the number (towards the stern) and be within six inches of and in-line with the number.
- ◆ If your vessel requires registration, it is illegal to operate or allow others to operate your vessel unless it is registered and numbered as described above.

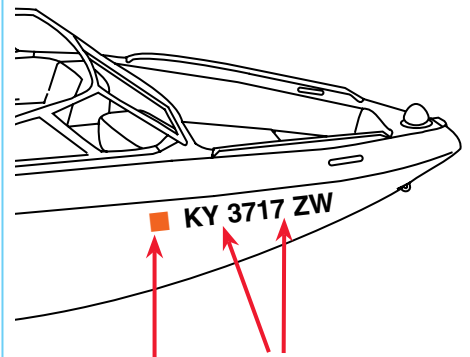
## Other Facts About Titling and Registering Your Vessel

- ◆ All vessels which require registration must also be titled in Kentucky. You must apply for a title within 15 days of the purchase or transfer.
- ◆ A Certificate of Registration is valid for one year. Owners of vessels that have already been registered will be sent a renewal notice at least 30 days prior to the expiration date.
- ◆ The owner of a numbered vessel must notify the county clerk within 15 days if:
  - He or she changes address.
  - The vessel is lost, stolen, destroyed, abandoned, or sold.
- ◆ Vessels registered in another state may operate on Kentucky waters for 60 consecutive days before Kentucky registration is required.
- ◆ If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Registration or decal, you must apply to the county clerk 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. Call the USCG's Documentation Center at **1-800-799-8362** for more information.



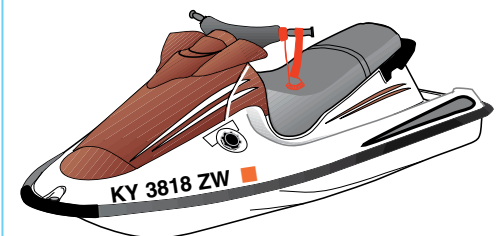
## Certificate of Registration

*The Certificate of Registration must be carried on board the vessel whenever the vessel is operated.*

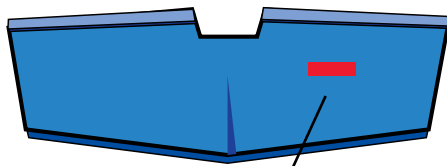


*Spaces or hyphens should appear here.*

## Registration Decal



*PWCs are also required to display the certificate's number and registration decals.*



ABC 67689 B9 99

Manufacturer's  
Identification  
Code (MIC)

Hull Serial  
Number

Date of  
Manufacture

Model  
Year



### Boater Education Certificate

*Operators required to have a boater education certificate must carry it on board the vessel. These certificates are obtained by passing a boating safety course approved by the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources.*

## State Law

### 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—the same as serial numbers distinguish one car from another
  - Are engraved in the fiberglass or on a metal plate attached to the transom
  - Should be recorded by the owner and put in a place other than the vessel in case warranty problems arise or the vessel is lost or stolen
- ◆ Home-built vessels may apply for an identification number (HIN) with the Kentucky Department of Transportation.

### Who May Operate a Vessel

- ◆ **Those less than 12 years of age:** May not legally operate any motorized vessel over 10 horsepower (including personal watercraft).
- ◆ **Those 12 to 17 years of age:** May legally operate a motorized vessel over 10 horsepower (including personal watercraft) *only if* they:
  - Have passed an approved boating safety course and carry on board their boater education certificate *or ...*
  - Are accompanied on board by a person 18 years old or older or by a person who possesses a boater education card.
- ◆ **Those 18 years of age or older:** May operate any vessel on the waters of Kentucky without restrictions.

## Unlawful Operation of a Vessel

Kentucky law states that it is unlawful to operate a watercraft in a reckless, negligent, or dangerous manner. Specifically, these operating practices are illegal:

- ◆ **Reckless Operation** of a vessel is the failure to exercise the care necessary to prevent the endangerment of another person or their property. Examples of illegal, reckless operation are:
  - Weaving your vessel through congested waterway traffic
  - Steering toward another object or person in the water and swerving at the last possible moment in order to avoid collision
  - Following behind another vessel that is towing a person(s) on water-skis, surfboard or similar device
  - Cutting between a vessel and the person(s) being towed by that vessel
  - Jumping the wake of another vessel in a way that endangers another's life, safety, or property
  - Crossing the path of another vessel when visibility is obstructed
  - Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife with your vessel
- ◆ **Improper Speed or Distance** is not maintaining a proper speed and distance while operating a vessel. Specifically, it is illegal to:
  - Operate at a rate of speed that endangers the life or property of any person. Operators are also liable for any danger or damage produced by their vessel's wake.
  - Operate a vessel at greater than **idle speed or slow-no wake speed** in any areas marked as "No Wake."
  - Operate within 50 feet of a commercial vessel and its tow which is in operation on the waterway, unless the operator of the commercial vessel has given consent.
  - Operate within restricted areas posted above or below navigation, power generating or flood control dams.
- ◆ **Prohibited Riding** is allowing passengers to ride on a vessel in places where there may be a chance of falling. Specifically, when operating a vessel above idle speed, the operator or passengers may not ride:
  - On a covered bow of a vessel
  - Outside the protective railing of a pontoon boat or houseboat
  - On the **gunwales**, back, or engine cover of a vessel
  - On a seat which extends six inches above the gunwales
  - On the back of seats
  - On any other dangerous position where there is a chance of falling
- ◆ **Overloading** is defined as loading the vessel beyond the recommended capacity shown on the capacity plate installed by the vessel manufacturer.

## Remember...

*Kentucky boaters on the Ohio River may also be subject to the laws of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and the U.S. Coast Guard.*



### idle speed or slow - no wake speed

*The slowest speed at which it is still possible to maintain steering; the vessel should not produce a wake at this speed*

### gunwale

*Upper edge of vessel's side (generally pronounced gunnel)*

### overboard

*Over the side or out of the vessel*



### Stay up to date on new boating laws!

*Be sure to stay abreast of new boating laws and requirements.*

*For state boating law information, call the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, Division of Law Enforcement:*

- 1-800-858-1549

*For federal boating laws, call the U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Infoline:*

- 1-800-368-5647

*Information in this manual does not replace what is specifically legal for boating in Kentucky which is found in the Kentucky Statutes and federal laws.*

The best thing you can do for your safety and the safety of other boaters is simple...

**Don't drink and boat!**



Because you can drink faster than your system can burn the alcohol off, there is an increasing level of alcohol in your blood. This level is referred to as Blood Alcohol Content (BAC). Learn more about the effects and risks of consuming alcohol while boating in Chapter 5.

**Blood Alcohol Content**  
Number of drinks in a 2 hour period  
12 oz. beer / 5 oz. wine / 1 oz. 80 proof liquor

Body weight in pounds	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
100	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
120	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
140	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
160	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
180	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
200	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
220	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
240	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

**BAC**

- up to .05%** *Be careful!*  
Loss of judgement and coordination
- .05% to .06%** *Abilities impaired!*  
Chance of accident increased
- .07% and over** *Do not operate a vessel!*  
High risk of accident, subject to arrest.

**moor**

To keep a vessel in place by setting anchor or tying the vessel to a fixed object or buoy

**Alcohol and Drugs**

Kentucky law prohibits anyone from boating while intoxicated (BWI)—that is, operating a vessel, or manipulating water-skis or similar devices, while intoxicated or under the influence of any substance that impairs a person's driving ability. Alcohol and drugs cause impaired balance, blurred vision, poor coordination, impaired judgment, and slow reaction time. Alcohol contributes to about one-third of all boating accidents. Read more about the effects and risks of consuming alcohol in Chapter 5.

- ◆ Kentucky law states:
  - A person is considered to be intoxicated if the concentration of alcohol in his or her blood is 0.08% or more.
  - It is also illegal to drink alcoholic beverages in public places—which includes the waterways of Kentucky.
- ◆ Kentucky law establishes the following penalties:
  - Those convicted of boating while intoxicated or under the influence of any substance which impairs his or her driving ability will be subject to a fine of \$200 to \$250 upon a first conviction.
  - Upon a second conviction, the person will be subject to a fine of \$350 to \$500.
  - Upon a third or subsequent conviction, a person will be subject to a fine of \$600 to \$1,000, or imprisonment for at least 30 days, or both a fine and jail time.
- ◆ By operating a vessel on Kentucky waters, you have consented to be tested for alcohol or drugs if requested by a law enforcement official. If you refuse to be tested, you will be subject to arrest and punishment consistent with the penalties described above.

**Obstructing Navigation**

Vessel operators should always be considerate of other vessel operators even when stopping to anchor or **moor**. Keep in mind that it is illegal to:

- ◆ Anchor a vessel in the traveled portion of a river or channel that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.
- ◆ Moor or attach a vessel to a buoy (except mooring buoys), beacon, light, or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities. Also, it is illegal to move, displace, tamper with, damage, or destroy any navigational aid.
- ◆ Obstruct a pier, wharf, boat ramp, or access to any facility.

**Homeland Security Restrictions**

Recreational boaters have a role in keeping our waterways safe and secure.

- ◆ Observe and avoid all security zones, including restricted areas near dams, power plants, etc. Do not stop or anchor beneath bridges or in the channel. Violators can expect a swift and severe response.
- ◆ Keep a sharp eye out for anything that looks peculiar or out of the ordinary. Report all activities that seem suspicious to the local authorities or the Coast Guard.

## Personal Flotation Devices (Life Jackets)

All vessels must be equipped with life jackets, approved by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), called personal flotation devices or PFDs. The quantity and type depends on the length of your vessel and the number of people on board and/or being towed. Each PFD must be in good condition, the proper size for the intended wearer, and very importantly, must be readily accessible! Readily accessible means you must be able to put the PFD on in a reasonable amount of time in an emergency (vessel sinking, on fire, etc.). PFDs should not be stowed in plastic bags, in locked or closed compartments or have other gear stowed on top of them.

Vessel operators should ask everyone on their vessel to wear a PFD whenever on the water. PFDs can save lives, but only if they are worn!

### PFD Requirements

- All vessels must carry one Type I, II, or III USCG–approved PFD for each person on board.
- All PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition and must be readily accessible. The PFDs must be of the proper size for the intended wearer. Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.
- In addition to the above requirements, vessels 16 ft. in length or longer must have one Type IV USCG–approved PFD on board and immediately accessible.
- Children under 12 years of age must wear a USCG–approved PFD at all times while underway in an open vessel or on an open deck of a vessel.
- Each person on board a personal watercraft must wear a USCG–approved PFD.
- Each person being towed behind a vessel must wear a USCG–approved PFD.
- A Type V PFD may be substituted for other required PFDs if the Type V PFD is approved for the type of vessel and the activity for which the PFD is being used.

### PFD Descriptions

#### TYPE I: Offshore Life Jackets

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

#### TYPE II: Near-Shore Vests

These vests are good for calm waters when quick assistance or rescue is likely. Type II vests will turn some unconscious wearers face-up in the water, but the turning is not as pronounced as a Type I.

#### TYPE III: Flotation Aids

These vests or full-sleeved jackets are good for calm waters when quick assistance or rescue is likely. They are not for rough waters since they will not turn most unconscious persons face up. This type of PFD is generally used for water sports. Some Type III PFDs are designed to inflate when you enter the water.

#### TYPE IV: Throwable Devices

These cushions or ring buoys are designed to be thrown to someone in trouble. They are not for long hours in rough waters, non-swimmers or the unconscious.

#### TYPE V: Special-Use Devices

These windsurfing vests, deck suits, hybrid PFDs and others are designed for specific activities, such as kayaking or water-skiing. Some Type V PFDs are designed to inflate when you enter the water. *To be acceptable, Type V PFDs must be used in accordance with their label.*

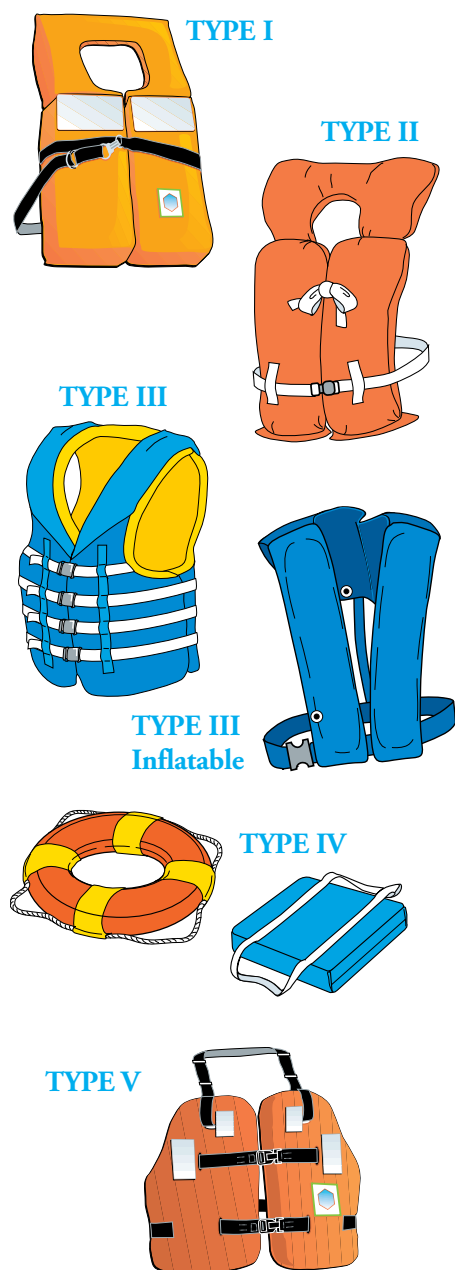
## BOATER'S TIP!

Others who should wear PFDs include:

- Anyone boating at night
- All persons during rough weather
- Everyone on board a small vessel
- Persons who cannot swim

### Types of Personal Flotation Devices

Read and follow the label restrictions on all

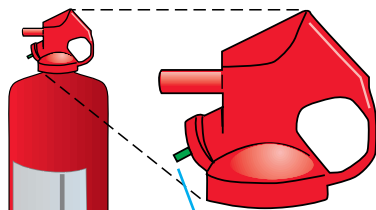




PWC operators need to take special steps in case of fire. Because their fire extinguisher may not be easily accessible, they should simply get away fast and use another operator's extinguisher.

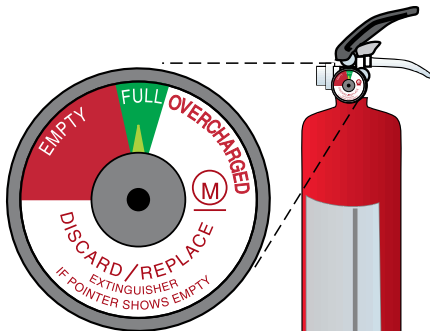
## Fire Extinguisher Charge Indicators

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.

## Remember...

Keep bilges clean and free of trash in order to reduce the risk of fire.

## State Law

### Fire Extinguishers

- ◆ All vessels, including PWCs, are required to have a Type B fire extinguisher(s) on board if the vessel is equipped with any device which consumes a petroleum product (for example, engines, lanterns, stoves, etc.).
- ◆ Extinguishers are classified by a letter and number symbol. The number indicates the relative size of the extinguisher and the letter indicates the type and size of fire it will extinguish:
  - **Type A** fires are of combustible solids like wood.
  - **Type B** fires are of flammable liquids like gasoline or oil.
  - **Type C** fires are electrical fires.
- ◆ Approved types of fire extinguishers are identified by the following marking on the label—"Marine Type USCG Approved"—followed by the size and type symbols and the approval number.

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

Length Class of Vessel	Without Fixed System	With Fixed System*
A (Less than 16 feet)	one B-I	None
1 (16 feet to less than 26 feet)	one B-I	None
2 (26 feet to less than 40 feet)	two B-I <b>or</b> one B-II	one B-I
3 (40 feet to less than 65 feet)	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

- ◆ Extinguishers should be placed in an accessible area—not near the engine or in a compartment, but where they can be reached immediately. Be sure you know how to operate them.
- ◆ Fire extinguishers must be maintained in usable condition. Extinguishers should be serviced at least every two years. See the label for additional servicing information. Inspect extinguishers regularly to make sure that:
  - Seals and tamper indicators are not broken or missing
  - Pressure gauges or indicators read in the operable range
  - There is no physical damage, corrosion, leakage or clogged nozzles

## Backfire Flame Arrestors

Because vessel engines may **backfire**, all powerboats (except outboards) fueled with gasoline must have an approved backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor. They are designed to prevent the ignition of gasoline vapors in case the engine backfires.

- ◆ Backfire flame arrestors must be:
  - In good and serviceable condition
  - U.S. Coast Guard–approved (must comply with SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 standards)
- ◆ Periodically clean the flame arrestor and check for any damage.

## Proper Ventilation

The importance of ventilation is crucial. 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 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.
- ◆ If your vessel is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes after fueling, prior to starting your engine.
- ◆ If your vessel is not equipped with a power ventilation system (like PWCs), open the engine compartment and sniff for gasoline fumes before starting the engine.

## Mufflers

All vessel engines must be equipped with an effective muffling device. Excessive noise can prevent a vessel operator from hearing signals and voices.

- ◆ It is illegal to modify the muffling system if the result is increased noise.
- ◆ There may be federal and local regulations restricting vessels with an over-the-transom exhaust system.



### WARNING:

Gasoline vapors can explode. Before starting engine, operate blower for four minutes and check (using your nose) engine compartment for gasoline vapors.

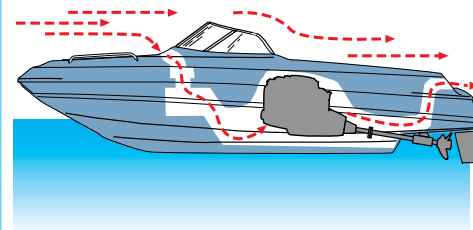
*Vessels built after July 31, 1980, which contain power exhaust blowers in gasoline engine compartments, must have the above warning sticker near the instrument panel.*

### backfire

*Explosion of prematurely ignited fuel or of unburned exhaust gases in an internal combustion engine*

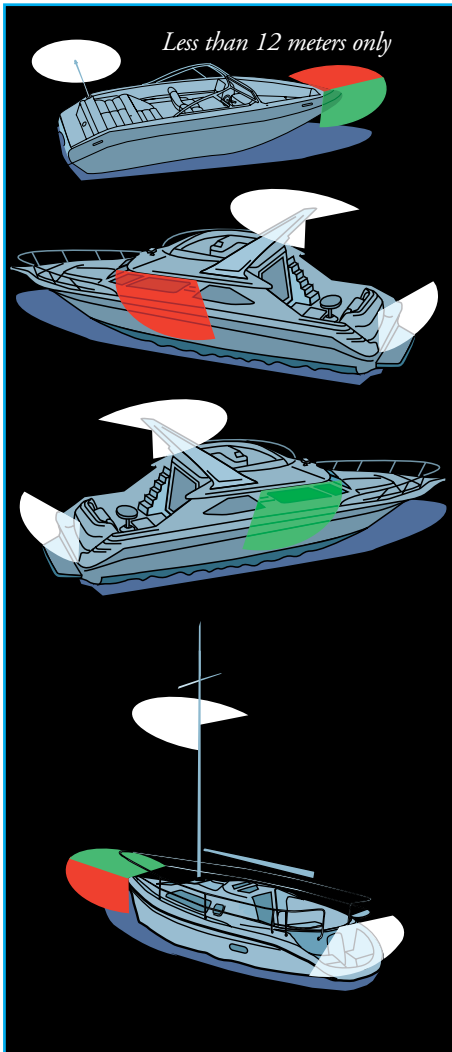
### cowl

*Hooded opening used for ventilation*



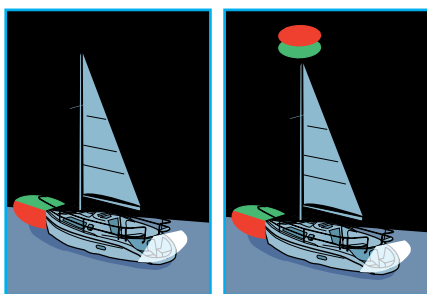
*Vessels are built to ventilate the engine when underway. As the vessel moves along, an air intake scoops up fresh air and forces it down the air duct into the engine compartment. The exhaust sucks out the explosive fumes from the lowest part of the engine and fuel compartments.*

## I. Power-Driven Vessels Less Than 20 Meters



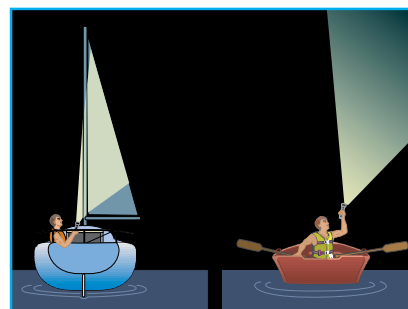
The red and green lighting must conform to the above illustration. Red should be on the left side of the bow and green on the right side of the bow.

## 2. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 20 Meters



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 7 Meters



To prevent a collision, 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.

## Navigation Lights

- ◆ Vessel operators must make sure that their vessels are equipped with the proper navigation lights and use the lights during these conditions:
  - When away from the dock between sunset and sunrise
  - During periods of restricted visibility such as fog or heavy rain
- ◆ The different types of navigation lights are described in “Night Navigation” in Chapter 3. No other lights that may be mistaken for required navigation lights may be exhibited. *Note: blue flashing lights are restricted to use by law enforcement vessels only.*
- ◆ The required navigation lights differ depending on the type and size of your vessel. The common lighting configurations for recreational vessels are shown below. For other configurations and requirements for larger vessels see the U.S. Coast Guard’s *Navigation Rules*.

### Power-Driven Vessels Less Than 20 Meters Long When Underway

If less than 20 meters (65.6 ft.) long, these vessels must exhibit the lights as shown in illustration 1. Remember, power-driven vessels include sailboats operating under power. The required lights are:

- ◆ Red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least two miles, or if less than 12 meters (39.4 ft.) long at least one mile, on a dark clear night.
- ◆ An all-round white light or both a masthead light and a sternlight. These lights must be visible from a distance of at least two miles on a dark clear night. The all-round white light (or the masthead light) must be at least one meter (3.3 ft.) higher than the sidelights.

### Unpowered Vessels When Underway

Unpowered vessels are sailing vessels or those that are paddled, poled, or rowed.

- ◆ If less than 20 meters (65.6 ft.) long, these vessels must exhibit the lights as shown in illustration 2:
  - Red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least two miles, or if less than 12 meters (39.4 ft.) long at least one mile, on a dark clear night.
  - A sternlight visible from a distance of at least two miles.
- ◆ If less than 7 meters (23.0 ft.) long, these vessels should:
  - If practical, exhibit the same lights as required for unpowered vessels less than 20 meters (65.6 ft.) in length.
  - If not practical, have on hand at least one lantern or flashlight shining a white light as shown in illustration 3.

### All Vessels When Not Underway

All vessels are required to use an all-round white light whenever they are moored or anchored away from dock between sunset and sunrise.

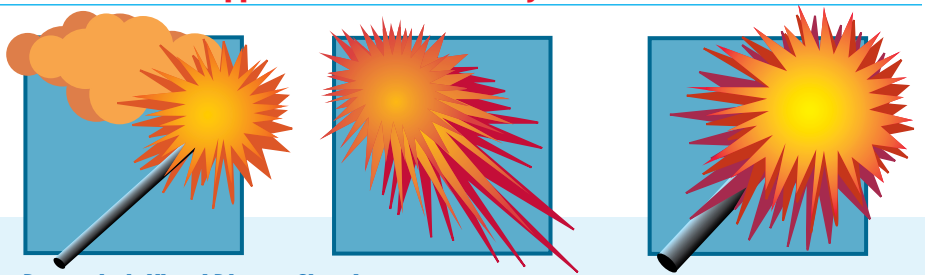


## Visual Distress Signals

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

- ◆ Vessels on **federally controlled waters** must be equipped with U.S. Coast Guard–approved visual distress signals. All vessels, regardless of length or type, are required to carry night signals when operating between sunset and sunrise. Most vessels must also carry day signals. Exceptions to the requirement for day signals are:
  - Recreational vessels that are less than 16 feet in length
  - Non-motorized open sailboats that are less than 26 feet in length
  - Manually-propelled vessels
- ◆ If pyrotechnic VDSs are used, a minimum of three must be carried in the vessel. Pyrotechnic VDSs must be U.S. Coast Guard–approved, in serviceable condition, and readily accessible.

## U.S. Coast Guard–Approved Visual Distress Signals

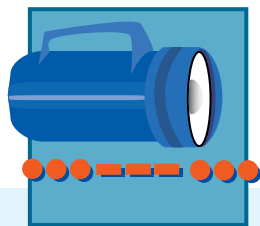


### Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals

**Orange Smoke**  
Day Signal

**Red Meteor**  
Day and Night Signal

**Red Flare**  
Day and Night Signal



**Electric Light**  
Night Signal



**Orange Flag**  
Day Signal

### Non-Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals

- ◆ The following combinations of signals are examples of VDSs that could be carried on board to satisfy U.S. Coast Guard requirements:
  - Three hand-held red flares (day and night)
  - One hand-held red flare and two red meteors (day and night)
  - One hand-held orange smoke signal (day), two floating orange smoke signals (day) and one electric light (night only)
- ◆ It is prohibited to display visual distress signals on the water except when assistance is required to prevent immediate or potential danger to persons on board a vessel.

## Pyrotechnic Devices

- *Pyrotechnics are excellent distress signals. However, there is potential for injury and property damage if not properly handled. These devices produce a very hot flame and the residue can cause burns and ignite flammable materials.*
- *Pistol launched and hand-held parachute flares and meteors have many characteristics of a firearm and must be handled with caution. In some states they are considered a firearm and are prohibited from use.*
- *Pyrotechnic devices should be stored in a cool, dry, and prominently marked location.*

## Non-Pyrotechnic Devices

- *Non-pyrotechnic VDSs must be in serviceable condition, readily accessible, and certified as complying with USCG requirements.*
- *The distress flag is a day signal only. It must be at least 3 x 3 feet with a black square and ball on an orange background.*
- *The electric distress light is accepted for night use only and must automatically flash the international SOS distress signal.*



## Arm Signal

*Day Signal: Use this arm action to summon help if you do not have other visual distress signals available.*

## federally controlled waters

*Waters on which vessels must observe federal requirements, including VDS requirements. These waters include:*

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

## Common Sound Signals

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

### Changing Direction

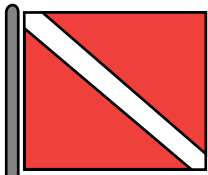
- **One short blast** tells other boaters “I intend to pass you on my port (left) side.”
- **Two short blasts** tell other boaters “I intend to pass you on my starboard (right) side.”
- **Three short blasts** tell other boaters “I am backing up.”

### Restricted Visibility

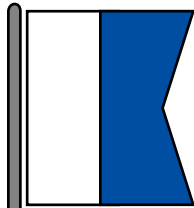
- **One prolonged blast** at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by power-driven vessels when underway.
- **One prolonged plus two short blasts** at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by sailing vessels.

### 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 disagree with the other boater’s intentions.



**Divers Flag**



**Alfa Flag**

Scuba divers and snorkelers should not place a flag in an area already occupied by other boaters or where diving operation will impede the normal flow of waterway traffic. Divers should also follow all of the water safety rules themselves.

## Sound Producing Devices

In periods of reduced visibility or whenever a vessel operator needs to signal his or her intentions or position, a sound producing device is essential. Navigation rules for meeting head-on, crossing, and overtaking situations described in Chapter 3 are examples of when sound signals are required.

- ◆ On Kentucky state waters, the requirements for sound producing devices are:
  - Vessels less than 16 feet long are not required to have a sound producing device, but it is *strongly recommended* that these vessels carry a horn or whistle on board.
  - Vessels 16 feet to 26 feet long are required to carry on board a hand-, mouth-, or power-operated sound producing device that is audible for at least one-half (1/2) mile.
  - Vessels 26 feet to 40 feet long are required to carry on board a hand-, mouth-, or power-operated sound producing device that is audible for at least one (1) mile.
  - Vessels 40 feet to 65 feet long are required to carry on board a hand-, mouth-, or power-operated sound producing device that is audible for at least one and one-half (1 1/2) miles.
- ◆ On federally controlled waters, the requirements for sound producing devices are:
  - Vessels less than 20 meters (65.6 ft.) in length, which includes PWCs, are required to carry on board a whistle or horn or some other means to make an efficient sound signal.
  - Vessels that are 20 meters (65.6 ft.) or more in length are required to carry on board a whistle or horn, *and* a bell.

## Other Equipment and Local Regulations

- ◆ **Diver Down Flag:** State law requires that scuba divers or snorkelers display the “diver down” flag to mark the diving area. Vessel operators must not operate within 100 feet of a displayed “diver down” flag. Divers must surface within 50 feet of the flag. The “diver down” flags are:
  - A rectangular red flag, at least 12 inches x 12 inches with a white diagonal stripe at least 3 inches in width, if on state waters.
  - A blue and white International Code Flag A (or Alfa flag) if on federally controlled or international waters.
- ◆ **Marine Permits:** Permits are required for some waterway events and activities. All tournaments, regattas, races, parades, and exhibitions involving more than 100 vessels must be authorized by the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources (KDFWR). An application must be filed with KDFWR at least 15 days prior to the event.
- ◆ **Local Regulations:** Many waterways in Kentucky have special regulations such as horsepower or speed restrictions.

## Requirements Specific to PWCs

In addition to adhering to all boating laws, PWC operators have requirements specific to their watercraft.

- ◆ *Everyone* on board a PWC must wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved Type I, II, or III personal flotation device (PFD) at all times.
- ◆ PWCs must have either a self-circling capability or be equipped with an ignition safety switch. An operator of a PWC equipped with an ignition safety switch must attach the lanyard of the switch to his or her person, clothing, or PFD.
- ◆ PWCs may be operated only during daylight hours (between sunrise to sunset).
- ◆ PWCs must operate in a responsible manner. Remember, it is illegal to:
  - Weave your PWC through congested waterway traffic
  - Steer toward another object or person in the water and swerve at the last possible moment in order to avoid collision
  - Follow behind another vessel that is towing a person(s) on water-skis, surfboard or similar device
  - Cut between a vessel and the person(s) being towed by that vessel
  - Jump the wake of another vessel in a way that endangers another's life, safety, or property
  - Cross the path of another vessel when visibility is obstructed
  - Operate within 50 feet of a commercial vessel and its tow that is in operation on the waterway, unless the operator of the commercial vessel has given consent
  - Chase, harass, or disturb wildlife with your PWC

## Towing a Person Legally with a Vessel

Vessel operators towing a person(s) on water-skis, aquaplanes, kneeboards, inner tubes, or any other device must also obey these laws:

- ◆ All persons being towed behind a vessel on water-skis or any other device must wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved Type I, II, or III PFD.
- ◆ It is illegal for vessels to tow persons on water-skis, surfboards, or any other device between sunset and sunrise.
- ◆ It is illegal for a vessel to tow a person(s) on water-skis, a surfboard, or any other device unless:
  - A person at least 12 years old, in addition to the vessel operator, is on board observing the towed person(s) *or* ...
  - The vessel has a wide-angle (160 degree field of vision) rearview mirror mounted such that the operator can observe the towed person(s) at all times
- ◆ The vessel must have adequate seating for all riders, including the retrieved skier.
- ◆ A reasonable distance from other vessels, people and property must be maintained so as not to endanger life or property. It is illegal to ski within:
  - 100 feet of a commercial boat dock, a moorage harbor or a swimming area
  - 2,000 feet of a lock or dam
- ◆ Vessels towing person(s) on airborne devices, such as parasails or kites, must:
  - Have on board a person at least 12 years old, in addition to the vessel operator
  - Stay at least 500 feet from commercial docks and ramps
  - Limit the tow rope to 150 feet or less in length
  - Not tow more than two persons at any time

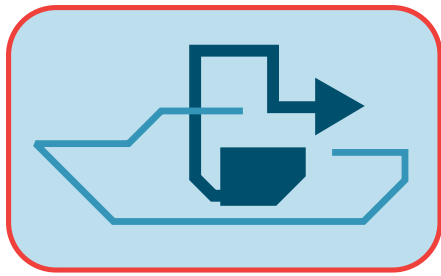


### Remember...

*A parent, legal guardian, or other adult who has direct supervision over a child under the age of 18 years, is responsible if he or she knowingly allows the child to operate a vessel in violation of Kentucky law.*



*If towing a skier with a personal watercraft and an observer on board, the PWC must be rated for at least three people—the operator, the observer, and the skier.*



### Pump Out Station Sign

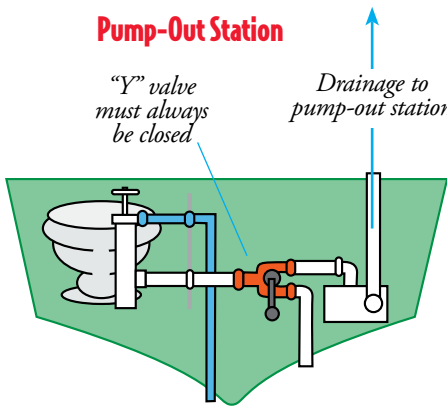
Signs like these are posted at pump-out stations in Kentucky.



### Pump-Out Station

"Y" valve  
must always  
be closed

Drainage to  
pump-out station



### Typical Marine Sanitation Device

## Waste, Oil, and Trash Disposal in Kentucky and Federal Waters

- ◆ It is illegal to discharge untreated waste, oil, or trash into any federally controlled or Kentucky state waters and for very good reasons.
  - Sewage carries disease and is harmful to people, aquatic plants and animals.
  - Trash thrown into the water can injure swimmers and wildlife alike. It can also plug engine cooling water intakes.
  - Pollution is unsightly and takes away from your enjoyment of the water.
- ◆ Vessel operators need to be aware of the following regulations for waste, oil and trash disposal that apply to both federally controlled and state waters. The Refuse Act prohibits throwing, discharging or depositing any refuse matter of any kind (including trash, garbage, oil, and other liquid pollutants) into the waters of the United States.

## Discharge of Sewage and Waste

If you have a recreational vessel with installed toilet facilities, it must have an operable marine sanitation device (MSD) on board.

- ◆ The types of MSDs are:
  - Type III MSD, the simplest and most common, consists of holding tanks or portable toilets. It requires only a small storage space and is simple to operate. Type III MSDs have the least effect on the environment since the waste is to be discharged on shore into a local sewage treatment facility.
  - 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 have "Y" valves that can direct the waste overboard.
- ◆ It is illegal to discharge raw sewage into any public waters.
- ◆ Treated sewage may be discharged from a marine toilet only into legal discharge waters. Legal "discharge" waters are Barkley Lake, Kentucky Lake, Lake Cumberland, Dale Hollow Lake, and any of the major river systems.
- ◆ The "Y" valve on a Type I or II MSD must be sealed or locked while the vessel is on "no discharge" waters.

## Discharge of Trash

It is illegal to dump garbage and plastics into federally controlled or state waters. Many forms of litter can kill birds, fish, and marine mammals.

- ◆ You should store trash in a container on board, and place it in a proper receptacle after returning to shore.
- ◆ If boating on federal waters, you must display a Garbage Disposal Placard in a prominent location on vessels 26 feet or longer. The Garbage Disposal Placard is a durable sign at least 4 x 9 inches that notifies passengers and crew about discharge restrictions.

## Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

Regulations issued under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act require all vessels with propulsion machinery to have a capacity to retain oil mixtures on board.

- ◆ You are not allowed to discharge oil or hazardous substances. The penalty for illegal discharge may be a fine up to \$10,000.
- ◆ You are not allowed to dump oil into the bilge of the vessel without means for proper disposal. On recreational vessels, a bucket or bailer is adequate. Fuel spills can be removed using absorbent bilge pads.
- ◆ You must discharge oil waste to a reception facility.
- ◆ You must immediately notify the U.S. Coast Guard if your vessel discharges oil or hazardous substances in the water. Call toll-free **1-800-424-8802**. Report the discharge's location, color, source, substances, size, and time observed. You must also call the Kentucky Division of Water and report the discharge.
- ◆ If boating on federal 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 following:

### Discharge of Oil Prohibited

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act prohibits the discharge of oil or oily waste upon or into any navigable waters of the U.S. The prohibition includes any discharge which causes a film or discoloration of the surface of the water or causes a sludge or emulsion beneath the surface of the water. Violators are subject to substantial civil and/or criminal sanctions including fines and imprisonment.

## Waste Management Plan

- ◆ Ocean going vessels of 40 feet or longer with a galley and berth must have a written Waste Management Plan.
- ◆ The captain of the vessel is responsible for implementing the Waste Management Plan.
- ◆ The Waste Management Plan, identifying the vessel's name and home port, should be posted and include directives to all passengers and/or crew about:
  - Discharge of sewage and hazardous substances
  - Discharge of garbage and other food waste
  - Disposal of plastics, bottles, and cans
  - Applicable placards for additional information
  - Advising the captain in case of oily discharges or diesel spills



### Oil Discharge Placard

A 5 x 8 inch sign that states the law pertaining to oil discharge



### What to do in case of discharge:

If your vessel discharges oil or hazardous substances in the water, notify the U.S. Coast Guard by calling:

- **1-800-424-8802.**

Also notify the Kentucky Division of Water by calling:

- **1-800-928-2380.**



### Stop the Spread of Zebra Mussels!

It is illegal to import or possess zebra mussels in Kentucky. Zebra mussels most often spread between waterways by hitching a ride on vessels and trailers. When transplanted into new waters, these organisms proliferate, displacing native species and damaging the water resource and your vessel.

To prevent spreading zebra mussels:

- Inspect your vessel, motor, live wells, and trailer, scraping off any zebra mussels you see before leaving the waterbody.
- Flush vessel engines with uncontaminated water to remove any mussels not found.
- Wash vessel parts that contact the water with hot water to remove zebra mussel larva.
- Air dry your vessel and equipment in the sun for two to four days before entering another waterway.

## Boating Accident Report Form

**BOATING ACCIDENT REPORT**

Scale law requires this report to be completed and filed within 48 hours by the operator of any boat involved in an accident resulting in death, disappearance or injury requiring medical treatment beyond first aid. Accidents involving aggregate property damage exceeding \$200 must be reported within 10 days if the operator is unable, the owner of every vessel involved must submit the accident. All reports are confidential. Reports must be completed on both sides.

Include any comments on PFDs under Accidents Description in other side

**INFORMATION ABOUT BOAT OPERATOR**

Name and address of operator: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age of operator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Operator's phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Owner's phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name and address of owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is this boat rented?  Yes  No  
 Number of persons on board: \_\_\_\_\_

**INFORMATION ABOUT OPERATOR'S BOAT**

Boat registration #: \_\_\_\_\_ Boat name: \_\_\_\_\_ Boat make: \_\_\_\_\_ Boat model: \_\_\_\_\_ Hull ID #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of boat:  Open motorboat  Cabin motorboat  Auxiliary sailboat  Sailboat  Row boat  Canoe  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hull material:  Wood  Aluminum  Steel  Fiberglass  Rubber/plastic  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Engine:  Outboard  Inboard gas/diesel  Inboard-outboard  Jet  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Propulsion:  Number of engines: \_\_\_\_\_  Total horsepower: \_\_\_\_\_  Type of fuel: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Year built: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Has boat had a safety examination? (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 None  State/Coast Guard examination  USCG Auxiliary Courtesy Marine Exam  
 For current year?  Yes  No

**ACCIDENT DATA**

Date of accident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Nearest city or town: \_\_\_\_\_ Body of water: \_\_\_\_\_ Precise location: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Weather:  Clear  Rain  Cloudy  Fog  Mist  Wind:  None  Light (0-6 mph)  Moderate (7-14 mph)  Strong (15-25 mph)  Storm (over 25 mph)  
 Visibility:  Day  Night  Good  Fair  Poor  
 Estimated temperature: Air: \_\_\_\_\_°F Water: \_\_\_\_\_°F

**OPERATION AT TIME OF ACCIDENT**

(check all that apply)  
 Commercial activity  Cruising  Manoeuvring  Approaching dock  Leaving dock  Water skiing  Towing  Paddling  Drifting  
 Alk and/or  Fueling  Hunting  Skin diving  Fishing  Being towed  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Collision with boat (level)  Collision with object  Collision with floating object  Grounding  Flooding/swamping  Sinking  Hit by boat or structure  Fire or explosion (level)  Fire or explosion (other than level)  Fallen skier  Falls in boat  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Excessive speed  Restricted vision  Operator inattention  Operator impairment  Fault of hull  Fault of machinery  Fault of equipment  Operator inexperience  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE DEVICES (PFDs)**

Was the boat adequately equipped with U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices?  Yes  No  
 Were they accessible?  Yes  No  
 Were they used by survivors?  Yes  No  
 Were PFDs properly used?  Yes  No  
 Were they stored?  Yes  No  
 Were the boat carrying non-approved PFDs?  Yes  No  
 Were they used?  Yes  No  
 If yes, indicate kind: \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, indicate kind: \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

Were fire extinguishers used?  No  Yes (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPERTY DAMAGE**

Describe property damage: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name/Address of owner of damaged property: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Estimated amount of property damage:  
 This boat \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other boat \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other property \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Vessel Accidents and Casualties ... What the Law Requires You To Do

- ◆ An operator involved in a boating accident must stop their vessel immediately at the scene of the accident and:
  - Give assistance to anyone injured in the accident, unless doing so would endanger their own vessel or passengers
  - Give their name, address and identifying number of their vessel to the other vessel's operator and/or owner of damaged property
- ◆ Vessel operators involved in an accident must report the accident to the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources if the accident has resulted in:
  - Death or the disappearance of a person from a vessel
  - Injury that requires medical attention or that incapacitates a person for 24 hours or more
  - Property damage of \$500 or more
- ◆ Most reports of accidents must be made within 5 days of the accident. However, you must report an accident within 48 hours if the accident involves a death or a serious injury.
- ◆ If the operator of the vessel is not capable of making the report and is not the owner of the vessel, the owner must file the report.
- ◆ Accident report forms are available from the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources.



### Accident or boating emergency?

In the event of an accident or other boating emergency, call the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, Division of Law Enforcement's 24-hour emergency number:

• 1-800-252-5378.

Enforcement of boating laws and regulations is the responsibility of the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources' officers. Some of the waters of the state are also patrolled by other agencies such as the U.S. Coast Guard.



### Enforcement

The boating laws of Kentucky are enforced by the officers of the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources. They have the authority to stop and board vessels in order to check for compliance with federal and state laws. The U.S. Coast Guard has enforcement authority on federally controlled waters.