

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *SAFE BOATING GUIDE*. Transport Canada publishes this resource to make sure that you know the regulations that apply to boating and that you learn more about safe and responsible boating practices.

Boating is fun, but about 100 people die and many more get seriously injured every year in boating incidents. Most boating deaths and injuries can be avoided.

Cartwright Village, NEWFOUNDLAND

KNOW THE REGULATIONS

The *Canada Shipping Act, 2001* is the law that, along with its regulations, governs pleasure craft. It includes the requirements that govern the conduct of all vessels. The regulations affecting pleasure craft under this law include:

- *Competency of Operators of Pleasure Craft Regulations;*
- *Small Vessel Regulations;*
- *Collision Regulations;*
- *Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations;* and
- *Vessel Pollution and Dangerous Chemicals Regulations.*

Canada's Criminal Code also applies to boating. Activities like operating a boat while impaired, failing to stop at the scene of an accident and operating an unseaworthy boat are crimes.

REMEMBER: Because boating laws change from time to time, make sure you have the most current information. If the SAFE BOATING GUIDE differs from the regulations, always follow the regulatory text. To learn more about regulations, use the direct links in the CONTACT INFORMATION AND REFERENCES section of this guide.

Regulations set a minimum safety standard. Following them or an even higher standard will help make every trip a safe one.

Note: As the owner or operator of a pleasure craft, you may also be required to comply with additional regulations and/or laws that are specific to a sector (e.g. the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*).

Use this guide as a starting point to safe boating

While this guide offers a basic overview of boating safety, it should not be your only source of information. No matter your age or experience, you should take a boating safety course. Visit our website for a complete list of [Transport Canada accredited course providers](#).

REMEMBER: This is not a study guide for the Pleasure Craft Operator Card course or test.

To buy a training manual for the test, contact an [accredited course provider](#).

You will find more information about the regulations that apply to pleasure boating as well as boating safety tips [on our website](#). You may also call the Boating Safety Infoline at 1-800-267-6687.

GETTING STARTED

Do you want to start boating but you are not sure what you need to do to get a boat ready for Canada's waterways? This section will guide you through getting your boat out on the water for the first time and explain how to make sure that you are ready to operate it safely.

Rocher Percé, GASPÉ PENINSULA





HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE BOAT OWNER

Stages of Responsible Boat Ownership



USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Pleasure craft

A pleasure craft is any boat that you use only for pleasure activities like fishing, water sports and entertaining friends. It also includes a boat you use for subsistence hunting and fishing or for daily living (for example, in remote areas, going from one village to another).

Non-Pleasure Craft

A non-pleasure craft is a vessel that you use for work or commercial activities. You must meet the requirements for non-pleasure craft any time you use your pleasure craft for non-pleasure activities. If you want to know how to operate a passenger vessel, workboat, commercial fishing vessel or any other non-pleasure craft, visit www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety or contact your local Transport Canada Centre.

PFD

PFD refers to personal flotation device.

In this guide:

- **Boat** means pleasure craft.
- **Vessel** refers to pleasure craft as well as non-pleasure craft.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Small vessels that are equipped or designed to be equipped with a motor (including pleasure craft up to 24 m or 78'9") and operated in Canada must comply with Part 7 of the *Small Vessel Regulations* and Transport Canada's *Construction Standards for Small Vessels* (TP 1332E). If you are selling, importing, building, rebuilding or operating such a vessel in Canada, you must make sure it meets these construction requirements.

Pleasure craft over 24 m (78'9") must be built or rebuilt according to recommended practices and standards appropriate for that type of vessel. These requirements are published by a marine classification society, standards development organization, government agency, or industrial or trade association.

Compliance Notices

Compliance notices are the manufacturer's or importer's confirmation that the vessel is built according to the *Small Vessel Regulations* construction requirements (see **CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** section). Before attaching a compliance notice to a vessel, a manufacturer or importer must provide Transport Canada with a declaration of conformity for the vessel.

The *Small Vessel Regulations* require, with a few exceptions, that all pleasure craft of less than 24 metres, that are or can be fitted with a motor, have a compliance notice affixed to them in a location visible from the helm.



Although no law prohibits you from having other types of compliance notices affixed to your vessel, you **must** have an affixed Canadian compliance notice if your boat was bought in Canada.

Compliance notices for pleasure craft up to 6 m (19'8") also have information on recommended maximum safe limits. These recommended maximum safe limits will tell you:

- what motor sizes are safe (outboard powered vessels only);
- how many people can be on board; and
- how much weight the boat can hold.

**CANADIAN COMPLIANCE NOTICE
AVIS DE CONFORMITÉ CANADIEN**

**MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED SAFE LIMITS
LIMITES MAXIMALES DE SÉCURITÉ RECOMMANDÉES**

	XX	XXXX kg XXXX lbs/lb
 +  + 		XXXX kg XXXX lbs/lb
	XX kW XX HP	XXXX kg XXXX lbs/lb

THE MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED SAFE LIMITS MIGHT HAVE TO BE REDUCED IN ADVERSE SEA AND WEATHER CONDITIONS.

LES LIMITES MAXIMALES DE SECURITE RECOMMANDEES PEUVENT DEVOIR ETRE REDUITES DANS LES CONDITIONS DE MER ET DES CONDITIONS METEOROLOGIQUES DIFFICILES.

* **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

SAFEBOAT COMPANY INC. (MIC)

CITY, PROVINCE, COUNTRY

MODEL / MODÈLE: RUNABOUT 555X

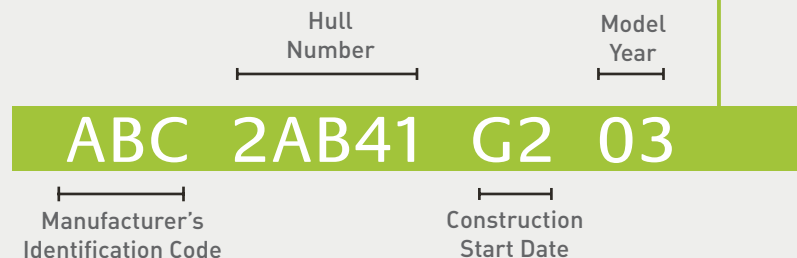
THE MANUFACTURER DECLARES THAT THIS PRODUCT COMPLIES WITH THE CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS OF THE SMALL VESSEL REGULATIONS AS THEY READ ON THE DAY ON WHICH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VESSEL WAS STARTED OR ON THE DAY ON WHICH THE VESSEL WAS IMPORTED.

LE FABRICANT ATTESTE QUE CE PRODUIT EST CONFORME AUX EXIGENCES DE CONSTRUCTION DU REGLEMENT SUR LES PETITS BATIMENTS EN VIGUEUR A LA DATE DU DEBUT DE SA CONSTRUCTION OU DE SON IMPORTATION.

REMEMBER: This information applies only in good sea and weather conditions. The number of people you may carry safely depends on the type of boat, the waterway you are using (i.e. open water, inland waterway, etc.), and weather and water conditions. As an operator, you must know and respect your boat's limits.

Hull Serial Number

All pleasure craft made in Canada, or imported into Canada after August 1, 1981 (with or without a motor), must have a hull serial number. This number helps to find lost or stolen boats and boats that are subject to a recall. The hull serial number must be permanently marked on the outside upper starboard (right side) corner of the transom (the boat's rear, flat end – above the waterline), or as close to that area as possible. It is 12 digits long and each character must be at least 6 mm (1/4") in height and width.



Things to Know Before Buying a Boat

Buying a New Boat

If you are buying a new boat in Canada, make sure it has:

- a [hull serial number](#);
- a [Canadian compliance notice](#), if it applies; and
- a copy of the [declaration of conformity](#).

If you see a new boat for sale that does not have the required hull serial number and Canadian compliance notice (if it applies), ask the seller to get them for you **before** you buy. It is the manufacturers' and importers' responsibility to demonstrate that the boats that they sell in Canada meet the Canadian construction requirements.

Buying a Used Boat

If you are thinking about buying a used boat, the first thing you should do is make sure that it meets the construction requirements that were in force when it was built. A good way to do this is to hire a marine surveyor to examine the boat, who will give you a fair opinion on the boat's current condition and will let you know what changes (if any) will need to be made to bring the boat up to standard.

If you have already bought a boat that does not have the required hull serial number or compliance notice, you should request one from the original manufacturer or importer. If you are unable to obtain them, you do not need to take additional actions. However, make sure you are able to prove that you have made reasonable attempts to obtain them.

REMEMBER: A Canadian compliance notice indicates that the boat met the construction requirements at the time it was built. Changes to the boat over time may mean that the compliance notice is no longer valid. Once you own the boat, you must make sure that it meets the standard when you operate it on the water — so get all the facts before you buy.

Buying a Boat From Another Country

If you are buying a boat from another country, remember that:

Construction requirements for pleasure craft differ from country to country. Make sure that the boat meets the [Small Vessel Regulations](#) construction requirements that are in force on the day it entered Canada. If the boat does not meet these requirements, make sure that you can modify the boat to meet them before you operate it.

Other requirements you must meet are:

- **Import requirements.** When you plan to bring the boat to Canada, the [Canada Border Services Agency \(CBSA\)](#) requires that you have specific documents, as well as information on the boat and the seller to confirm the sale and assess the duties and taxes on the boat. Before buying the boat, [visit the CBSA online](#) or contact them to find out what you will need from the seller to bring the boat to Canada.

If you are towing the boat on a trailer, [contact the CBSA](#) to learn more about the requirements you should meet.

- **Export requirements.** Contact the appropriate authorities in the country where you plan to buy the boat (and the trailer if you are buying one) to find out if any export requirements apply.

Buying a Trailer

A trailer is considered a motor vehicle. This means that different requirements apply to it than to your boat. If you plan to buy a trailer, contact your [provincial or territorial transportation office](#) to learn about any requirements that may apply.

Things to Know Before Building a Boat

If you decide to build or rebuild a pleasure craft, it must meet or exceed the construction requirements of the [Small Vessel Regulations](#) and Transport Canada's [Construction Standards for Small Vessels](#) (TP 1332E).

Building a Boat You Are Planning to Sell

If you plan to sell the boat you are building, you must:

- apply to Transport Canada for a manufacturer's identification code (MIC);
- provide Transport Canada with a declaration of conformity and give a copy to the reseller or the end user;
- place a compliance notice on the boat;
- place a hull serial number on the boat.

Building a Boat For Your Personal Use

If the boat will be for your own personal use, you are not required to attach a compliance notice and a hull serial number. But remember, it must meet or exceed construction requirements.

LICENSING AND REGISTRATION

A Canadian pleasure craft may be licensed or registered.

Pleasure Craft Licence

If you operate or keep your boat mostly in Canada, and it is powered by one or more motors adding up to 7.5 kW (10 hp) or more, **you must get it licensed**, unless you register it. You must also license dinghies or tenders you carry aboard or tow behind a larger boat.

A pleasure craft licence is a document giving your boat a unique licence number that is valid for 10 years. The Pleasure Craft Licensing System allows Search and Rescue personnel to access information about your boat 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the event of an emergency. This could mean the difference between life and death! If your boat does not need a pleasure craft licence, you can choose to get one for safety reasons.

How Can You Get a Licence?

Application forms are available on our website.

- Follow the instructions included in the form to fill out the appropriate sections.
- Attach all the required documents to the completed signed form.
- Mail the documents to the Pleasure Craft Licensing Centre at the mailing address indicated in the instructions.

REMEMBER: This is the only way to complete the pleasure craft licence application process. You cannot complete the process in person nor by sending your information to your local Transport Canada office. Once you get your pleasure craft licence, **keep a copy on board.**

What a Licence Number Looks Like?



You must display the pleasure craft licence number on your boat:

- on both sides of the bow;
- above the waterline;
- as far forward as practical; and
- where it is easy to see.

The characters must be:

- in block letters;
- at least 7.5 cm (3") high; and
- of a colour that contrasts with the background.

Is a Licence a Proof of Ownership?

A pleasure craft licence does not prove ownership. When entering another country, be sure to have proof of ownership for your boat along with its pleasure craft licence, including documents for dinghies or tenders aboard or towed behind a larger boat. Not having the proper documents on board can result in delays or trouble clearing customs, or even a fine.

Vessel Registration

Although you are no longer required to register pleasure craft over 15 gross tons, you can still choose to do so.

What a Vessel Registration Looks Like?



Why Should You Register Your Boat?

Registration gives you some important benefits, which include:

- proof of ownership (legal title) for your boat;
- the right to fly the Canadian flag;
- a unique name and official number for your boat; and
- the right to use your boat as security for a marine mortgage.

Is a Vessel Registration a Proof of Ownership?

Yes. It is a good idea to register any boat you plan to operate outside of Canada since you will have to prove ownership at international borders.

To learn more about registering your boat and the costs associated with it, visit [Transport Canada's Vessel Registration Office](#) online.

BOATING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE

Proof of Competency

Going out on the water requires basic boating safety knowledge and a good understanding of the "rules of the road" for Canadian waterways. That's why **everyone** who operates a motorized pleasure craft must carry proof of competency on board. This includes all types of motorized boats, no matter their size or horsepower of the engine (this includes small boats with electric motors.)

REMEMBER: Proof of competency is not required in the waters of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

What are the Accepted Forms of Proof of Competency?

Proof of competency can be any of the following:

- a Pleasure Craft Operator Card;
- proof of having passed a boating safety course in Canada before April 1, 1999;
- a specified marine certificate; or
- a completed rental boat safety checklist (good only for rental period).

Get Your Pleasure Craft Operator Card!



You can get your Pleasure Craft Operator Card by passing a boating safety test available through a Transport Canada accredited course provider. These course providers help recreational boaters gain basic boating safety knowledge through flexible education and testing options including classroom, Internet, and self study.

Transport Canada (TC) recommends taking a boating safety course as the best way to prepare for the test. Taking a course, while not required, is a small investment that has a big payoff: it will make you more aware of safe boating practices, prevention measures, and practical ways to reduce risks.

The course itself covers a full range of basic boating information such as:

- the minimum safety equipment required on board your boat;
- what Canadian buoys look like and what they mean;
- how to share waterways;
- a review of regulations that relate to pleasure boating; and
- how to respond in an emergency.

Boating safety course and test services are available only through accredited private-sector course providers listed on our website.

What if You Rent a Boat?

If you plan to rent a boat and you do not already have proof of competency (such as a Pleasure Craft Operator Card or specified marine certificate), you may complete the rental boat safety checklist to meet the requirement. The rental agency will use the checklist as the basis for providing you with a basic safety orientation to the boat, its equipment and features, and information about any hazards in the local waterways. Both parties (rental agency and the boat operator) must sign the checklist, and as the boat operator, you must carry it on board. It serves as proof of competency for the rental period only.

Replace Your Lost or Damaged Pleasure Craft Operator Card

The Pleasure Craft Operator Card is good for life. Remember to make a photocopy of your card as soon as you get it so you can have it replaced if you lose it. To replace your lost or damaged Pleasure Craft Operator Card, you will need to contact the course provider who issued it.

Please note:

- Only currently accredited course providers may issue replacement cards.
- Course providers charge a fee for replacing Pleasure Craft Operator Cards.

Transport Canada can help you if:

- you don't know the name of your original course provider;
- the course provider is no longer in business; or
- the course provider is suspended.

Simply call the Boating Safety Infoline at 1-800-267-6687. An agent will look up your name in a national database of card holders and tell you what you need to do next.

Age and Horsepower Restrictions

Horsepower restrictions apply to operators under 16 years of age.

REMEMBER: Age and horsepower restrictions do not apply in the waters of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Are you old enough to operate a motorized boat without direct supervision?

AGE	HORSEPOWER RESTRICTIONS
Under 12 years of age with no direct supervision*	May operate a boat with up to 7.5 kW (10 hp)
Ages 12 to under 16 with no direct supervision	May operate a boat with up to 30 kW (40 hp)
Under 16 years of age, regardless of supervision	May not operate a personal watercraft
16 years of age or older	No horsepower restrictions

*Direct supervision means a person (16 years of age or older) is in the boat and directly supervising the operator.

REMEMBER: Youth must also carry proof of competency to operate any motorized boat, supervised or not.

Carry Your Documents



When heading out in your motorized boat, make sure to bring on board:

- Proof of competency
- Personal identification
- Pleasure craft licence (for 10hp or more)