WATER SAFE THE TEXAS

A Summary of Boating Laws

TEXAS CERTIFICATE OF NUMBER

The certificate of number (registration), if required:
• Must be displayed at all times while on the water by an enforcement officer;
• Is valid for the two-year period shown on the certificate;
• Must be carried aboard USCG Documented vessels that require Texas registration.

HOMEO MADE BoATS

Requires affidavit of the manufacturer stating that the boat, proof of the materials used in the construction of the boat (i.e., bills from marine and hardware dealers for the construction of the boat), for the boat to be inspected and certified by a TPWD game warden. Inspection fee – $25.

HULL IDENTIFICATION AND MOTOR SERIAL NUMBERS

It is illegal to possess or intentionally sell, offer for sale, or purchase a vessel or outboard motor with a serial number that has been altered, defaced, mutilated, or removed. To acquire registration or title, a sworn statement must be filed with the department describing the vessel or outboard motor, providing proof of legal ownership, and stating the reason for the destruction, removal or defacement of the number. This statement must be accompanied by a copy of the $25.00 and an inspection certificate from a game warden. This section does not apply to USCG Documented vessels.

DISPLAY OF YOUR NUMBER

The number must be displayed as next to each side of the forward half of the vessel, in such a position as to provide easy identification. The number must be displayed in letters not less than three inches in height and be of a color that contrasts with the background. In addition, the number must be displayed in a proposal not less than three inches in height and be of a color that contrasts with the background. The numbers must be separated from the prefix and suffix by hyphens or spaces. Examples: 520-116 or 01-07-TX.

The validation decal must be affixed in a line and three (3) inches towards the rear of the boat from the registration number.

The number printed on the decal must match the number listed on the certificate of number or the vessel registration fee was paid and the registration described on the card.

USCG Documented Vessels:
• Must always be aboard and available for inspection by an enforcement officer;
• Requires affidavit of the person as to the origin of the boat, proof of the materials used in the construction of the boat (i.e., bills from marine and hardware dealers for the construction of the boat), for the boat to be inspected and certified by a TPWD game warden.

TEXAS CERTIFICATE OF NUMBER
(MOTORBOAT/SAILBOAT REGISTRATION-TX NUMBER)

IF BOAT IS ..........................

$150.00

40 feet in length and over

$32.00

16 feet but less than 26 feet in length

$53.00

14 feet but less than 16 feet in length

$32.00

12 feet but less than 14 feet in length

$27.00

10 feet but less than 12 feet in length

$11.00

8 feet but less than 10 feet in length

$64.00

6 feet but less than 8 feet in length

$27.00

4 feet but less than 6 feet in length

$27.00

2 feet but less than 4 feet in length

$11.00

1 foot but less than 2 feet in length

$2.75

1 foot or less in length

$1.00

TexAS BoAT SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

Effective November 11, 2010, any boat with a permanently installed marine sanitation device (MSD) must display a certification decal if the boat is operated on any waters in Texas, including Texas港口s, demonstrates that the MSD is properly installed and certified and identifies the owner's contact information.

BOAT SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The seller must complete:
• Certification statement, which includes a tax affidavit (bill of sale), for registration and title (boat and motor, not trailers);
• Application for Vessel (form PWD 143); application forms can be printed from the TPWD website, tpwd.texas.gov/boating/forms.phtml;
• Current USCG Documentation Certificate or documented vessel information provided by the seller;
• Verification of sales tax payment or proof that the vessel transaction occurred in Texas.

The transferor of ownership must complete:
• Application for Vessel (form PWD 143); application forms can be printed from the TPWD website, tpwd.texas.gov/boating/forms.phtml;
• Current USCG Documentation Certificate or documented vessel information provided by the buyer;
• Verification of sales tax payment or proof that the vessel transaction occurred in Texas.
An abandoned boat or outboard motor may be eligible for titling through the bonded title process with appropriate documentation. An “abandoned vessel or outboard motor” means a vessel or outboard motor that has remained on private property without the consent of the owner or person in charge of the property for more than one year.

REQUISITED SAFETY EQUIPMENT
OPERATING VESSELS WITHOUT
REQUISITED EQUIPMENT PROHIBITED

No person may operate a vessel unless the safety equipment prescribed in this chapter is not provided with the required safety equipment.

LIFE PRESERVING DEVICES
All PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICES required by U.S. Coast Guard approved, in serviceable condition, ready accessible, and of the appropriate type must be carried on board. A Type V PFD is acceptable only if used in accordance with the specific instructions on the label regarding wear.

Vessels 16 feet and longer, excluding canoes and kayaks, are required to be equipped with one Type I, Type III, or Type V PFD. A Type III PFD is acceptable only if used in accordance with the specific instructions on the label regarding wear.

Inflatable PFDs are authorized only when used in accordance with requirements as presented on the label.

SOUND PRODUCING DEVICES
Any vessel less than 12 meters in length (39.4 ft) is required to carry on board a whistle or horn, and a bell. Any vessel less than 12 meters in length (39.4 ft.) is required to carry a whistle in addition to the horn.

Maneuvering Devices

MIRRORS REQUIRED

A sailing vessel of less than 7 meters (23 ft.) shall, if practicable, exhibit the lights in either Figure 1 or Figure 2. No other lights may be exhibited that may be mistaken for those prescribed.

Lighting Required

A sailing vessel of less than 7 meters (23 ft.) shall, if practicable, exhibit the lights in either Figure 1 or Figure 2. No other lights may be exhibited that may be mistaken for those prescribed.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS REQUIRED

Outboard motorboats less than 26 feet in length, of open construction, not carrying passengers for hire, are not required to carry fire extinguishers; however, inboard motorboats less than 26' to less than 40' are required to carry fire extinguishers; all others are required to carry a Type I, II, III, or V extinguisher.

1. If the engine compartment of the motorboat is equipped with a fixed (built-in) or portable extinguishing system, at least one extinguisher per type installed is required.

2. Inflatable boats less than 16 feet in length and that are installed in serviceable condition are not required to carry fire extinguishers; however, the operator of any vessel involved in a boating accident must stop and render whatever aid is necessary.

The operator of any vessel involved in a boating accident must stop and render whatever aid is necessary.

3. A motorboat must have an exhaust water manifold or a factory-type muffler installed on the engine.

4. The operator of any vessel involved in a boating accident must stop and render whatever aid is necessary.

MOTORBOATS HELD IN VIOLATION OF LAW: The operator of any vessel involved in a boating accident must stop and render whatever aid is necessary.

5. It is UNLAWFUL for any person to:

   a. Operate at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and prudent or greater than is reasonably safe for the traffic conditions.

   b. Engage in a willful or wanton disregard of the rights or safety of others and at a speed or in a manner that endangers life or property.

   c. Any vessel or motorboat, PWC, or individual engaged in water activities unless retrieving a downed or fallen water skier or a person in distress.

   d. Anchor in the traveled portion of a river or channel so as to prevent, impede, or interfere with the normal use of the waterway.

   e. Operate within an area designated as bathing, fishing, swimming, or otherwise restricted.

   f. Operate within a designated “no wake” area except at headway speed without a wake, or in waters so restricted.

   g. Engage in water skiing, surfboarding or other similar activity between the hours of 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise, provided that the vessel shall not approach other vessels in restricted areas, create a swell or wake.

   h. Operate in a circular course around another vessel, PWC, or individual engaged in water activities unless retrieving a downed or fallen water skier or a person in distress.

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Minimum Required Weight</th>
<th>Minimum Required Pounds</th>
<th>Maximum Pounds</th>
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<td>500</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<td>32,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Any vessel not carrying a whistle or horn, and a bell shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $50 or more than $200 nor more than $2,000 or by confinement in jail not to exceed 180 days. On a second or subsequent violation, the penalty shall be doubled.

MANDATORY BOATER EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS
A TPWD certified boating education course and photo ID is required for any person born on or after January 1, 1956, who operates a motorboat of more than 15 horsepower or; (2) a boat in excess of 14 feet in length.

No person operating a PWC powered by a motor of more than 15 horsepower on the public waters of this state unless the person is at least 18 years of age, 26 feet in length, is equipped with a built-in extinguishing system of an approved type, at least 1 B-III extinguisher is required.

The number of approved extinguishers required depends on the class of the motor- boat, whether fixed, portable, or factory-type muffler installed on the engine.

Vessel length

without fixed system 
with fixed system 

in machinery space

in machinery space

B-I

1 1/4

2

B-II

2 1/2

15

10

10

10

10

The minimum required extinguisher size depends on the class of vessel and the specific extinguishing system required.