

STATE OF ARIZONA

State-Specific Boating Safety Requirements

SL 1. Law Enforcement Authority

In Arizona, boating laws and regulations are enforced by a variety of agencies, including: the National Park Service, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Arizona State Parks & Recreation, and the Arizona Game & Fish Commission and Department. Federal officers, such as National Park Service Rangers or USCG officials enforce both federal and state regulations. The USCG has enforcement authority on all federally controlled waters.

SL 2. Age Restrictions

In Arizona, it is unlawful for a person under the age of 12 years to operate a vessel with a motor, including personal watercraft (PWCs), of greater than 8 horsepower unless:

- An emergency exists,
- The person's parent or legal guardian is onboard, or
- Another person at least 18 years of age is onboard.

SL 3. Boater Safety Education Requirements

While Arizona does not have a law requiring mandatory boating safety education, it is highly recommended that boaters take a course to familiarize themselves with their boat, the proper navigation rules, safety equipment and other important information. The completion of a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) approved course may also allow you to be eligible for a discount on boat insurance.

SL 4. Vessel Registration

To legally operate, moor, or anchor a vessel on Arizona waterways requires an Arizona Certificate of Number (registration number) and registration decal. Exceptions include:

- Non-motorized vessels,
- Vessels used solely as lifeboats,
- Vessels documented with the U.S. Coast Guard, and
- Vessels with valid registration in another state or country, on the waters of Arizona for 90 or fewer consecutive days.

The Certificate of Number and registration decal are obtained by the boat owner submitting the proper application and fee to the Arizona Game & Fish Department. The Certificate of Number (registration card) must be onboard and available for inspection by a law enforcement officer whenever the vessel is in operation. The Arizona Game and Fish Department must be notified within 15 days in the event of a change address or if a numbered vessel is sold, stolen, lost, destroyed or abandoned. If a Certificate of Number or decal is lost or destroyed, you must apply to the Arizona Game and Fish Department for a duplicate.

SL 5. Maximum Loading and Horsepower

The State of Arizona does not have any maximum loading and horsepower requirements that are in addition to federal regulations. To review federal regulations, refer to the section on Capacity Plates included in Chapter 1 of this course.

The following information was approved by NASBLA and is included in Chapter 1 of the Boater101 Course:

Capacity Plates

It is required for all mono-hull boats under 20 feet built on or after November 1, 1972 to have a capacity plate approved by the USCG. In addition some manufacturers voluntarily install capacity plates on boats larger than 20 feet. This plate must be visible from the operator's

station. The capacity plate lists a safe motor size, the maximum number of persons to be carried onboard, and the total weight the boat can carry including persons, motor, and gear. When operating your boat be sure to adhere to the restrictions listed on the capacity plate. Not only is it dangerous to overpower or overload a small boat, since they can swamp or capsize more easily, but it is also illegal. In many states, there are fines and penalties for exceeding capacity recommendations, including carrying more than the maximum number of people.

SL 6. Equipment and Lighting Requirements

The USCG sets minimum safety standards for vessels and associated equipment. To meet these standards, some of the equipment must be USCG-approved. All boats operating on Arizona waters must carry and, if required, have in operation, acceptable personal flotation devices (PFDs), visual distress signals, fire extinguishers, sounding devices, backfire flame arrestor, ventilation systems, and navigation lights as required by federal law. If a boat manufacturer installs the safety equipment, it should not be assumed that the vessel is properly equipped at time of purchase. Boat owners are responsible for ensuring that his or her vessel meets USCG regulations in accordance with vessel size and the waters in which the vessel is being operated. To review the federal requirements for safety equipment, refer to Chapter 2 of this course.

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

All vessels, except sailboards, must have at least one Type I, II, or III USCG-approved PFD of the proper size for each person onboard. Sizing is based on body weight and chest size. All PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition and must be readily accessible.

In addition to the above requirements, vessels 16 ft. in length or longer, except a canoe or kayak, must have one Type IV (throwable) USCG-approved PFD onboard and readily accessible.

Mandatory PFD Usage

All children ages 12 and under must wear a USCG-approved PFD while on a watercraft that is underway.

Fire Extinguishers

All vessels must have a Type B fire extinguisher(s) onboard if one or more of the following conditions exist:

- Inboard engine;
- Closed compartments where portable fuel tanks may be stored;
- Double-bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not completely filled with flotation material;
- Closed living spaces;
- Closed storage compartments in which flammable or combustible materials may be stored; or
- Permanently installed fuel tanks (any tank where the removal of the tank is hampered by the installation of tie-down straps or clamps).

The following marking on the label, "Marine Type U.S. Coast Guard-Approved," followed by the size, type symbols and the approval number, identifies approved types of fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers should be accessible, but not near the engine or in a compartment. All persons either operating or onboard a vessel should know how to operate a fire extinguisher. The number of fire extinguishers required varies with boat class. To review the fire extinguisher requirements, refer to Chapter 2 of this course.

Backfire Flame Arrestors

All powerboats (except outboards) fueled with gasoline must have an approved backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor. Backfire flame arrestors prevent the ignition of gasoline vapors if the engine should backfire. Backfire flame arrestors must be in good and serviceable condition, and USCG-approved. They should be periodically cleaned with soap and water and checked for any damage. The elements must be clean and the grids must be tight enough to prevent flames passing through.

Ventilation Systems

Ventilation is critical because it avoids 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 could entrap fumes, must have at least two ventilation ducts fitted with cowls to remove fumes. Further:

- If a vessel is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes after fueling, before starting it.
- If it is not equipped with a power ventilation system (such as PWC), open the engine compartment and sniff for gasoline fumes before starting the engine.
- Make sure you can feel air coming out of the cowl when the ventilation system is turned on.

Lighting Requirements

All boats need to display the red, green and white navigation lights required by the U.S. Coast Guard. Red and green sidelights should be visible from a distance of at least two miles (or if the vessel is 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 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. To review the types of lights that are appropriate for different sized vessels, refer to the lighting sections in Chapter 2 of this course.

Sound Producing Devices

Arizona state law does not require but highly recommends that vessels carry a sound-producing device. Federal law requires that vessels boating on federal waters, such as the Colorado River and Lake System, have onboard a whistle, horn or bell audible for one-half mile. To review federal requirements for sound producing devices, refer to Chapter 2 of this course.

SL 7. Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs)

State law prohibits vessels from discharging any sewage into the waters or onto the shorelines of Arizona. Recreational vessels with installed toilet facilities must have an operable, USCG-certified marine sanitation device (MSD) onboard. Vessels 65 feet in length and under may use a Type I, II, or III MSD. Vessels over 65 feet must install a Type II or III MSD. Type I and II MSDs with "Y" valves that direct the waste overboard should be secured so that the valve cannot be opened. This can be done by placing a lock or non-reusable seal on the "Y" valve or by taking the handle off the "Y" valve.

SL 8. Muffling Devices

To reduce noise, motorboat engines must be equipped with factory-installed mufflers, exhaust water manifolds or other effective muffling system. It is unlawful to operate a vessel that produces a sound level exceeding 86 decibels on the "A" weighted scale as measured from a distance of 50 feet or more from the vessel, unless a special permit has been obtained.

SL 9. Boating Accidents

If a boat is involved in an accident, the operator must give necessary assistance to the other vessel and passengers, as long as it will not personally endanger the operator, his or her passengers, crew or the vessel.

The operator must also give his or her name, address, and the identifying number of his or her vessel to anyone injured in the accident and to the owner of any damaged property.

The following boating accidents must be reported:

- Any boating accident involving death or injuries must be reported in writing to the Arizona Game and Fish Department within 48 hours.
- All accidents involving property damage greater than \$500 (to one vessel or a combination of both vessels) must be reported in writing to the Arizona Game and Fish Department within 5 days.

Accidents should be reported on accident report forms available from any office of the Arizona Game and Fish Department and mailed to the address on the form.

SL 10. Vessel Speed Restrictions

All boat operators must operate their vessels in a safe manner and within speed restrictions at all times. Specifically, it is unlawful to:

- Operate a vessel at speeds greater than are reasonable or proper given the existing waterway traffic, persons in the water, and weather conditions.
- Exceed any posted speed limits.
- Operate, or give permission to operate, a vessel at greater than no-wake or idle speed in a posted no-wake zone.
- Operate a vessel at speeds that may cause danger, injury, or damage to any other person, another vessel, or property of others. This includes causing damage or danger from the wake of a vessel.

SL 11. Mooring to Markers or Buoys

It is unlawful to moor or attach a vessel to a beacon, light, buoy (except a mooring buoy) or any other navigational aid installed on public waters by proper authorities. It is also unlawful to tamper with, move, displace, damage or destroy any navigational aid.

SL 12. Reckless and Careless Operation

Reckless operation of a vessel, water skis or similar device is a serious offense. Negligent or reckless operation of a vessel is prohibited in the State of Arizona and is defined as operating in a manner that causes danger to others or their property. Examples include:

- Operating in a restricted area such as a marked swimming area;
- Operating while passenger(s) are positioned in the bow such that the operator's view is obstructed;
- Weaving through congested waterway traffic;
- Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife with your vessel; and
- Riding on the bow or gunwales or allowing passengers to ride where there may be a chance of falling overboard while underway at greater than no-wake speed on a powerboat. Specifically, this means allowing passengers to ride on the covered bow, transom or gunwales, unless the area is designed for carrying passengers at all speeds.

Violations are class 2 misdemeanors.

SL 13. Interference with Navigation

It is unlawful to:

- Anchor a vessel in the traveled portion of a river or channel that will prevent or interfere with any other passing vessel.
- Obstruct a boat ramp, pier, wharf or access to any facility.
- Obstruct or mark the waters of Arizona in a way that may endanger the operation of watercraft or conflict with the marking system prescribed by the State of Arizona.
- Operate or otherwise position a vessel, other object or any person in a way that would obstruct or impede the normal flow of traffic on the lakes of this state.

SL 14. Boating Under the Influence

Operating a motorized vessel while under the influence of alcohol or any drug that causes a person to be even slightly impaired is prohibited. By operating a vessel on Arizona waters, you have given "implied consent" to be tested for alcohol or drugs if arrested by a law enforcement officer. A person is considered to be under the influence of alcohol if he or she has an alcohol concentration of 0.08% or greater as determined by a test of his or her breath, blood or urine within 2 hours of operation. If convicted of operating while under the influence, a person can be fined up to \$2,500 and jailed for up to six months. Subsequent convictions carry even more severe penalties.

SL 15. Mandatory Violator Education

Arizona does not currently have any regulation requiring boating safety education for boating law violators.

SL 16. PWC Regulations

The State of Arizona has established the following regulations regarding PWC usage:

- Each person onboard a PWC must wear a USCG-approved Type I, II, or III PFD.
- An operator of a PWC equipped with a lanyard-type ignition safety switch must attach the lanyard to his or her person, clothing or PFD.
- Operating a PWC between sunset and sunrise or during periods of restricted visibility (such as fog) is prohibited, unless the PWC is equipped with the required navigation lights.

PWCs must be operated in a careful and responsible manner. It is considered reckless operation if a PWC operator commits two or more of the following acts simultaneously:

- Operating within 60 feet of another watercraft above a wakeless speed.
- Operating in the vicinity of a watercraft in a manner that obstructs the visibility of either operator.
- Heading into the wake of a watercraft that is within 60 feet and causing half or more of the length of the PWC to leave the water.
- Operating within 60 feet of another watercraft, maneuvering quickly, turning sharply or swerving, unless the maneuver is necessary to avoid a collision.
- Loading a PWC with passengers and gear beyond the safe carrying capacity recommended by the PWC manufacturer.
- Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife with your PWC.

SL 17. Water Ski Regulations

Arizona law requires that vessels towing person(s) on water skis or similar devices display a red or orange "skier down" flag, at least 12 x 12 inches in size and mounted on a handle, whenever the towed person(s) is preparing to ski or has fallen into the water.

When operating a vessel for the purpose of towing a person on water skis or other similar devices, these regulations must be followed:

- No watercraft with a person or persons on water skis in tow, a surfboard, or similar contrivance must be operated on any waterway unless such watercraft is occupied by at least two persons, an operator and an observer.

- The operator must observe other watercraft traffic, swimmers, and hazards and shall not tow a person(s) on water skis, a surfboard, or similar contrivance so close to other watercraft, swimmers, or structures as to constitute a hazard to life or limb of any person.
- The observer must continuously observe the person or persons being towed and must display a flag immediately after the towed person or persons falls into the water and during the time preparatory to skiing while the person or persons are still in the water
- A watercraft operator cannot tow a person or persons on water skis, a surfboard or similar contrivance during the hours between sunset and sunrise.
- Each person being towed behind a vessel on water skis or similar devices must wear a PFD or buoyant belt. However, note that the USCG does not approve buoyant belts for use on federal waters.

SL 18. Divers-down Flag

Federal navigation rules require vessels restricted in the ability to maneuver to display appropriate day shapes or lights. To meet this requirement, recreational vessels engaged in diving activities may exhibit a rigid replica of the international code flag "A" or a "Divers-Down" flag not less than one meter in height, or at night, display navigation lights 360 degrees red on top, white in middle and red on the bottom. Scuba divers, skin divers and snorkelers must mark their diving area by means of a diver's down flag. It is suggested that boaters maintain at a distance of 100 yards from any displayed Divers-Down flag.

SL 19. Liveries (Rental Agencies)

The owner of a boat livery must keep a record of the name and address of the person or persons hiring any watercraft, as well as the departure date and time and the expected and actual time of return. Such record shall be preserved for at least three months. The owner of a boat livery or his agent may not permit any watercraft to be operated from his premises unless it shall have been provided with the required safety equipment.

SL 20. Other State-Specific Regulations

In addition to other duties and powers, the Arizona Game & Fish Commission may:

- make rules and regulations required to carry out all the boating and watersports provisions.
- modify the equipment requirements in conformity with the provisions of the federal navigation laws or with the navigation regulations promulgated by the USCG; and
- prescribe additional equipment requirements that do not conflict with federal navigation laws or regulations.

SL 21. Environmental Awareness

Aquatic Nuisance Species

Aquatic nuisance species are non-native plant and animals species or exotic species that have been introduced to local waterways, endangering native species. Exotic species posing the greatest risk in the State of Arizona are the giant salvinia, zebra mussels, crayfish and mud snails. When transplanted into new waters, these organisms proliferate, displacing native species and damaging the water resource and your vessel. To help to stop the spreading of nuisance species you must:

- Thoroughly inspect your vessel's hull, out drive, trim plates, trolling plates, prop guards, transducers and trailers. If you see any "hitchhikers" remove them. Remove aquatic plants clinging to trailer frame, axles, wheels, hitch, motor lower unit, and interior vessel spaces.
- Spray down your vessel and trailer before leaving any lake or stream or at home before setting out for a new boating location.

- Drain all bilge water, live well and bait buckets before leaving infested waterways. Leftover bait should not be released or transported.

Additional Information

For more information on Arizona boating law refer to the Arizona Game and Fish Department at: http://www.azgfd.gov/outdoor_recreation/boating_rules.shtml, Arizona Revised Statutes Title 5 – Amusements and Sports, Chapter 3 – Boating and Watersports at <http://www.azleg.state.az.us/ArizonaRevisedStatutes.asp?Title=5>.