

## STATE OF NEVADA

### *State-Specific Boating Requirements*

#### **SL 1. Law Enforcement Authority**

The Nevada Department of Wildlife game wardens primarily enforce the boating laws of Nevada although sheriffs and other peace officers are also authorized to enforce these laws. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) also has enforcement authority on Lake Tahoe and the Colorado River System (including Lake Mead, Lake Mohave and the Colorado River below Davis Dam). In addition, the U.S. National Park Service has enforcement authority on Lake Mead and Lake Mohave.

Officers have the authority to stop and board a vessel to check for compliance with state and federal laws.

It is unlawful to refuse to stop or move when ordered to do so by a person with law enforcement authority.

#### **SL 2. Age Restrictions**

As of January 1, 2003, Personal Watercraft (PWC) operators must be at least 14 years old.

#### **SL 3. Boater Safety Education Requirements**

As of January 1, 2003, boaters born on or after Jan. 1, 1983 are required to complete a boater safety education course before operating a boat on Nevada's interstate waters. This requirement applies only to operators using a motorboat with a motor exceeding 15 horsepower. Nevada's interstate waters include Lake Mead, Lake Mohave, the Colorado River from Davis Dam south to the California State Line, Lake Tahoe and Topaz Lake. Nevada law requires operators to carry proof of completion of a boater education course when on interstate waters. Only courses approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) will meet Nevada's education requirement.

#### **SL 4. Vessel Registration**

To operate on Nevada's waters legally, a vessel must have a Nevada Certificate of Number (registration) and validation decals. The following are exempt:

- Non-motorized vessels (sailboats without engines, canoes, kayaks, etc.)
- Vessels properly registered in another state and using Nevada waters for less than 90 consecutive days
- Ship's lifeboats.

Federally documented vessels are also required to be registered within the state. The Certificate of Number and validation decals are obtained by presenting the proper application and fee to:

Nevada Department of Wildlife  
1100 Valley Road  
Reno, NV 89512  
phone: 1-775-688-1500  
fax: 1-775-688-1595

Application forms are obtained by writing to the address above, calling 1-775-688-1500 or visiting one of the Department of Wildlife offices in Reno, Fallon, Elko, Ely, Las Vegas or Henderson.

<b>Fees</b>		
<b>If the transaction is a ...</b>		<b>then your fee is ...</b>
Title		\$ 20.00
Annual Registration of a vessel (by length*)	less than 13 ft.	\$ 20.00
	13 feet to less than 18 feet	\$ 25.00
	18 feet to less than 22 feet	\$ 40.00
	22 feet to less than 26 feet	\$ 55.00
	26 feet to less than 31 feet	\$ 75.00
	over 31 ft.	\$ 100.00
Duplicate decals		\$ 20.00
Duplicate title		\$ 20.00
Transfer title of a used vessel (residents)		\$ 20.00
Transfer title of a used vessel (non-residents)		\$ 20.00
Transfer title of a new vessel		\$ 20.00
<i>*Measured from the tip of the bow to the back of the transom.</i>		

The Certificate of Number (registration card) must be onboard and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is in operation.

The registration number and decals must be displayed in the following manner:

- The number must be painted, decaled or otherwise affixed to the forward half of each side of the vessel, placed in such a way to be clearly legible.
- The number must read from left to right on both sides.
- The number must be in at least 3" high, bold, BLOCK letters.
- The number's color must contrast with its background.
- Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen, as in "NV 3717 ZW" or "NV-3717-ZW."

Decals must be attached to each side of the vessel toward the stern of the registration number, within 6 inches of and in line with the number.

If a vessel requires registration, it is unlawful to operate or allow others to operate that vessel unless it is registered and numbered as described above.

**Other Facts About Titling and Registration**

Vessels that must be registered must also be titled. Application for a title (Certificate of Ownership) must be accompanied by proof of payment of Nevada sales tax or use tax and proof of ownership.

A Certificate of Number is valid until December 31st of the year it was issued. Owners of vessels, which have already been registered, will be sent a renewal notice.

The Department of Wildlife must be notified in writing within 10 days of a change of address, transfer of ownership, or if the vessel has been abandoned, destroyed or stolen, In case of a lost or destroyed Certificate of Number or Certificate of Ownership, the owner must apply 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 USCG. Call the Coast Guard at 1-800-799-8362 for more information.

## **SL 5. Maximum Loading and Horsepower**

The State of Nevada 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.*

PWCs do not have a capacity plate. Always follow the recommended capacity in the owner's manual and on the manufacturer's warning decal.

## **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 Nevada 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.

All vessels, except sailboards, must have at least one USCG-approved Type I, II or III PFD (life jacket) of the proper size for each person onboard or being towed.

One Type IV USCG-approved throwable PFD must be onboard vessels 16 feet or longer, in addition to the above requirement. Throwable PFDs must remain within reach of the operator or a passenger, where the PFD can be used in an instant in case of emergency. Boats 26 feet and longer must carry 30 feet of line attached to the throwable device. Boats 40 feet or longer must carry two of the devices, one forward and one aft. This does not apply to canoes and kayaks enclosed by a deck and spray skirt.

Each person onboard a PWC or being towed behind a vessel must wear a USCG-approved PFD. Inflatable PFDs are not approved for these activities.

A Type V PFD may be substituted for any other type if specifically approved by the USCG for the activity. To be acceptable, Type V hybrid PFDs (inflatables) must be worn while the vessel is underway, except when the wearer is in an enclosed space. Inflatable PFDs are not approved for those under 16 years old.

In addition to having USCG approval, all PFDs must be:

- In good and serviceable condition
- Readily accessible (Meaning that they must be within reach of occupants)
- Of the proper size for the intended wearer (based on body weight and chest size).

### **Mandatory PFD Usage**

All children under the age of 12 must wear a USCG-approved PFD while on a recreational vessel that is underway unless they are in an enclosed cabin or below deck.

### **SL 7. Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs)**

It is unlawful to discharge any treated or untreated sewage into the waters of Nevada. All sewage must be emptied at a sewage pump-out station. If a vessel has installed toilet facilities, it must have a Marine Sanitation Device (MSD) onboard designed to prevent discharge into the water. If a vessel does not have installed toilet facilities, a port-a-potty may be suitable. All installed marine sanitation devices must be USCG-certified and working properly.

### **SL 8. Muffling Devices**

To reduce noise, motorboat engines must be equipped with factory-installed mufflers, exhaust water manifolds or other effective muffling system.

Excessive noise could prevent a vessel operator from hearing signals and voices.

The use of cutouts is prohibited.

It is unlawful to exceed a noise level of:

- 86 decibels measured at a distance of 50 feet or more from the vessel as defined by SAE J34 (testing standards of the Society of Automotive Engineers), or
- 90 decibels measured using a stationary sound level test as defined by SAE J-2005 if the engine was manufactured before January 1, 1993, or 88 decibels if the engine was manufactured on or after January 1, 1993, or
- 75 decibels measured from the shoreline using a stationary sound level test as defined by SAE J-1970.

Exceptions are made for vessels participating in permitted races or speed trials.

A peace officer may require an operator to submit his or her vessel to an on-site noise level test. If the vessel's engine exceeds the noise levels stated above, the officer will instruct the operator to take immediate corrective action and may direct the operator to terminate the voyage until the engine is in compliance.

### **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's name, address and vessel identification information must be given in writing to anyone injured and to the owner of any property damaged by the accident. Boating accidents must be reported to the State of Nevada. The following boating accidents must be reported in writing to the Department of Wildlife if the casualty results in death or injury to a person, a disappearance or damage to property in excess of \$500.

If a person dies or disappears, the operator must immediately notify Department of Wildlife and then report the accident in writing to the Department within 48 hours.

If a person loses consciousness, requires medical treatment or is disabled in excess of 24 hours, the operator must immediately notify the Department and then report the accident in writing to the Department within 48 hours.

If damage to the vessel or other property exceeds \$500 or if there is a total loss of a vessel, the operator must report the accident in writing to the Department within 10 days.

Written reports must be made on accident report forms supplied by the Nevada Department of Wildlife. Forms can be obtained by calling the Nevada Department of Wildlife at 1-775-688-1500.

### **SL 10. Vessel Speed Restrictions**

Improper Speed or Distance relates to maintaining a proper speed or distance while operating a vessel. Specifically, it is unlawful to:

- 1) Operate or allow others to operate a vessel at greater than "no wake speed" within:
  - 100 feet of a person swimming
  - 100 feet of a person being towed by another vessel
  - 200 feet of:
    - a beach used by swimmers;
    - a swimming float, diving platform or lifeline; or
    - a landing float with a vessel(s) secured to it or that is being used to load or unload a vessel's passengers.

- 2) Operate a vessel at greater than "no wake speed" on certain waters designated by the Nevada Division of Wildlife, within all harbors, or within any other marked speed zones. "No Wake Speed" means a speed at which a vessel does not produce a wake, or leaves a flat wave disturbance; not to exceed 5 nautical miles per hour.

### **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**

It is prohibited to operate a vessel in Nevada in a reckless or negligent manner, within an exclusionary zone, in an unsafe condition or to fail to follow navigational rules.

Negligent or Reckless Operation of a vessel or the reckless manipulation of water skis, a surfboard or similar device is defined as operating in a manner that causes danger to the life, limb, or property of any person. Examples of negligent or reckless operation are:

- Riding on the bow, gunwale, transom or swim platform of a vessel while underway at a speed greater than no wake speed.
- Maneuvering a towed skier or towed device such that the towrope passes over another vessel or its skier.
- Operating a vessel or manipulating water skis, a surfboard or similar device so as to pass between a vessel and its tow.
- Chasing, harassing or disturbing wildlife with a vessel.

Operating in an exclusionary zone is operating a vessel within any marked exclusion area such as a swimming area or any other area marked by signs or buoys.

An unsafe condition is operating a vessel in a condition that causes danger to the occupants or others on the waterways. Peace officers may instruct the operator to take immediate corrective action or terminate the voyage if the vessel is:

- Overloaded
- Equipped with insufficient personal flotation devices, fire extinguishers, backfire flame arrestors, ventilation or navigation lights
- Leaking fuel or has fuel in the bilges
- Being operated in extremely adverse conditions.

Failure to follow navigational rules is operating a vessel on Nevada waters in violation of the navigational rules. Operators of all vessels must follow the inland navigational rules.

### **SL 13. Interference with Navigation**

It is unlawful to:

- Anchor or moor a vessel in the traveled portion of a river channel or entrance to a harbor or marina that will prevent or interfere with any other passing vessel.

- Obstruct the area within a 100-yard radius of a public boat ramp.
- Obstruct or mark the waters of Nevada in a way that may endanger the operation of watercraft or conflict with the marking system prescribed by the State of Nevada.
- Operate or otherwise position a vessel, other object or any person in a way that would obstruct a passageway ordinarily used by other vessels on Nevada waters.

#### **SL 14. Boating Under the Influence**

Nevada law prohibits anyone from Operating Under the Influence (OUI). This includes the operation of any powerboat, sailboat, PWC, water skis, sailboard, or similar device while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance.

By operating a boat or PWC on Nevada waters, operators have given "implied consent" to be tested for alcohol or drugs if requested by law enforcement personnel. If an operator refuses to be tested, he or she may be subject to penalties.

Nevada law states that a person is considered to be operating under the influence if he or she:

- Has a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08% or more, or
- Is under the influence of alcohol and/or a controlled substance to a degree that renders him or her incapable of safely operating the vessel.

Nevada law establishes the following penalties for operating under the influence:

- Offenders convicted of operating under the influence may be jailed for up to 6 months and fined up to \$1,000 plus court costs and testing fees.
- Offenders convicted of operating under the influence and causing the death of or substantial injury to another person will be guilty of a felony. Punishment may include jail time of 2-20 years and a fine of \$2,000-\$5,000.

#### **SL 15. Mandatory Violator Education**

The State of Nevada has no mandatory violator education requirements at this time.

#### **SL 16. PWC Regulations**

Every person onboard a PWC must wear a USCG-approved PFD (life jacket). Operators of PWC must be at least 14 years old and operate their vessel 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 the PWC within a zone closer than five lengths of the longest vessel, unless both vessels are traveling at no wake speed.
- Operating within the vicinity of a vessel in a manner that obstructs the visibility of either operator.
- Heading into the wake of a vessel in a zone closer than five lengths of the longest vessel, and causing half or more of the length of the PWC to leave the water.
- Maneuvering quickly, within a zone closer than five lengths of the longest vessel, including turning sharply or swerving, unless the maneuver is necessary to avoid a collision.

Wake jumping with a PWC is prohibited. Operating a PWC is prohibited between sunset and sunrise or during periods of restricted visibility unless it is equipped with the required navigation lights. PWC operators must also carry a USCG-approved fire extinguisher and a sound-producing device onboard their vessel.

Although not required by law, it is strongly recommended that the operator of a PWC attach the lanyard of the engine cut-off switch to his or her wrist or PFD.

#### **SL 17. Water Ski Regulations**

A person operating a vessel that is towing a person on water skis, surfboard or any other device must be:

- At least 14 years old, or

- At least 12 years old if there is onboard a person at least 21 years old in a position to supervise the operator.

Those being towed behind a vessel on water skis, surfboard or other device must wear a USCG-approved Type I, II, III or V PFD (life jacket).

Every vessel towing a person(s) on water skis, surf-board or other device must have onboard, in addition to the vessel operator, an observer:

- At least 12 years of age, or
- At least 10 years of age and another passenger who is at least 21 years of age.

The observer must display the "skier down" flag whenever the towed person(s) is in the water preparing to be towed or awaiting pick up by the towing vessel.

Nevada law states that vessels towing person(s) on water skis or other similar devices must carry and use an international orange "skier down" flag, at least 12 x 12 inches in size, whenever the towed person(s) is in the water preparing to be towed or awaiting pick up by the towing vessel.

Towing anyone on water skis, surfboard or any other device between sunset and sunrise is prohibited.

If towing a person on skis or other device, the vessel must be rated to carry at least three people - the operator, the observer and the retrieved skier. The vessel's recommended carrying capacity must not be exceeded. Teak surfing or "platform dragging" is illegal in all Nevada 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 divers-down flag.

Nevada law requires that scuba divers, skin divers and snorkelers display a diver's-down flag to mark their diving area and that they stay within 100 feet of the flag. The flag must be in place while diving is in progress. If diving between sunset and sunrise, the flag must be illuminated.

Vessels not engaged in diving operations must keep at least 100 feet away from the diver's-down flag, except in the case of an emergency. Vessels not engaged in diving operations must reduce speed to flat-wake speed (not more than 5 nautical miles per hour) if within a distance of 100 to 200 feet of the divers-down flag, except in cases of emergency.

### **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 a vessel, which is designed or permitted by the livery to be operated as a motorboat, the identification number, the departure date and time, and the expected time of return. The record shall be kept for at least 6 months.

The owner of a boat livery or his agent or employee must not allow any motorboat, or any vessel designed or permitted by the livery to be operated as a motorboat, to leave the premises unless it has been provided, either by owner or renter, with the required safety equipment.

The owner of a boat livery or his agent or employee is prohibited from renting a PWC to anyone under the age of 18 years.

## **SL 20. Other State-Specific Regulations**

### **Marine Events**

You must file an application with the Nevada Division of Wildlife at least 30 days in advance in order to hold a race, regatta, parade, tournament or exhibition involving vessels on Nevada waters.

Permits for events held on waters under U.S. Coast Guard jurisdiction are granted through the U.S. Coast Guard by applying at least 135 days in advance.

### **Local Regulations**

NRS Section 488.059 (Nevada Boat Act) authorizes subdivisions of the State of Nevada to adopt special rules and regulations regarding the operation of vessels on territorial waters if necessary or appropriate.

See Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) Section 488.455 for restricted speed areas and NAC 488.450 for waterskiing information at <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Nac/Nac-488.html#NAC488Sec010>.

## **SL 21. Environmental Awareness**

### **Hypothermia**

Hypothermia is the rapid loss of body heat. Hypothermia can be a threat to boaters even in relatively warm waters. To prevent hypothermia, dress in several layers of clothing under your PFD or wear a wetsuit or dry suit. You should learn to recognize the symptoms of hypothermia. Symptoms begin with shivering and bluish lips and nails, and progress to a coma and, ultimately, death.

To reduce the effects of hypothermia once you are in the water:

- Get as much of your body out of the water as possible.
- Don't take your clothes off unless necessary. Remember, clothes trap heat and can help you float.
- Don't thrash or move about. Excess motion consumes energy and increases loss of body heat.
- Always wear a PFD; it helps you to float without excessive movement and insulates your body.
- Draw your knees to your chest and your arms to your sides protecting the major areas of heat loss.
- If others are in the water with you, huddle together with your arms around their shoulders.

### **Restrictions in Wildlife Management Areas**

In the Overton Wildlife Management Area, located in Clark County, vessels are prohibited on all ponds. Vessels are allowed on the portion of the area inundated by Lake Mead, except that on Overton Hunt Days, vessels may be used only by those authorized to hunt waterfowl.

In the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area, located in Churchill County:

All vessels are prohibited on the ponds 5 days before the opening day of the waterfowl season. Airboats are prohibited until 1 hour after the legal shooting time on the opening day of the waterfowl season.

In the Humboldt-Toulon Wildlife Management Area, located in Churchill and Pershing counties: All vessels are prohibited on the ponds in the Humboldt and Toulon Sink areas 5 days before the opening day of the waterfowl season.

Airboats are prohibited on the Humboldt Sink until 1 hour after the legal shooting time on the opening day of the waterfowl season.

Airboats are prohibited on the Toulon portion of the area during the waterfowl season.

In the Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area, located in Lyon County, all vessels are prohibited from February 15 through July 14 of each year, except on:

- Hinkson Slough
- Bluegill Pond
- Bass Pond
- The Walker River
- Crappie Pond
- North Pond

In the Fort Churchill Cooling Pond Cooperative Wildlife Management Area, all vessels and floating devices, except for vessels used by employees of the Sierra Pacific Power Company in the performance of their official duties, are prohibited on the pond.

### **Aquatic Nuisance Species**

Introducing non-native species into Nevada waters can upset the balance of the ecosystem. Aquatic nuisance species 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.

To prevent spreading aquatic nuisance species:

- Inspect your vessel and trailer, removing any plants and animals you see before leaving the water body.
- Drain your motor, live well, and bilge on land before leaving the water body.
- Empty your bait bucket on land. Never release live bait into a water body or release aquatic animals from one water body into another.
- Rinse your vessel, trailer and equipment.
- Air dry your vessel and equipment for as long as possible.

### **Additional Information**

For more information on Nevada boating law refer to the Nevada Division of Wildlife at <http://www.ndow.org/boat/>, or the Nevada Boat Act, Nevada Revised Statutes 488.015 *et seq.*, at <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-488.html>; and <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-488.html#NRS488Sec400>.