

STATE OF UTAH

State-Specific Boating Safety Requirements

***** NOTICE *****

The Boater101 course does not meet Utah's education course requirement for PWC operators, ages 12 through 17. In addition to the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) course approval, Utah requires a course with a proctored exam and a course completion certificate that provides positive identification of the student.

For more information regarding registering for Utah's Personal Watercraft Education Course, visit <http://www.stateparks.utah.gov/boating/education.html> via the Internet or telephone Utah's Boating Hotline at (801) 538-2628 from within the Salt Lake area, or (800) 743-3792 from outside the Salt Lake area.

However, the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation does recognize Boater101 as an additional tool for learning valuable boating safety information and common boat operation courtesies. Please continue this learning process by completing the Utah version of Boater101.

State-Specific Boating Safety Requirements

(The Utah information may differ or add to topics taught in the Boater101 course. Some topics may be duplicated for added emphasis.)

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Utah's Boating Program aims to educate boaters about the laws and rules that promote public safety and protect our natural resources connected with boating activities in Utah. These efforts are funded through boat registration fees, a state tax on gasoline used in motorboats, and federal boating safety grants.

With an ever-increasing demand on Utah's limited number of lakes, reservoirs, and rivers, boaters have the responsibility to practice and advocate safe, courteous, and ethical use of our waterways. This responsibility includes learning and obeying the boating safety laws and rules, properly registering boats, being environmentally conscious, and sharing the waterways with boaters, swimmer, and anglers.

Recent surveys indicate that more than 80 percent of Utah's registered boat owners have not completed a boating safety course. This implies that a vast majority of Utah's boaters are unaware of basic safety issues such as understanding the Navigation Rules, which safety equipment to carry on board, and how old a person must be to operate a boat. Not only will successful completion of this course increase a boat operator's knowledge and participation in boating safety, but it may also reduce boat insurance premiums.

SL 1. Law Enforcement Authority

Utah State Park Rangers and other law enforcement officers have authority to stop and board any vessel, whether it is on water or land. If an officer finds the vessel is overloaded,

unseaworthy, or deficient in the required safety equipment, that officer may prohibit the launching of the vessel or may stop the vessel from operating.

The Utah Boating Act and Rules of the Board of Parks and Recreation apply to waters within the territorial limits of the State of Utah.

The following penalties are associated with violating the Utah Boating Act or Rules of the Board of Parks and Recreation: Unless otherwise noted, anyone convicted of a provision or rule under the Utah Boating Act is guilty of a class B misdemeanor. A class B misdemeanor is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or up to 6 months in jail.

The seven-member Utah Boating Advisory Council, appointed by the Board of Utah State Parks and Recreation, represents boaters and others regarding boating matters. Members include the following interests: United States Coast Guard (USCG) Auxiliary/United States Power Squadron, sailing or non-powered craft users, wildlife and outdoor recreation associations, marine dealers, river runners and a youth member.

SL 2. Age Restrictions

Motorboats (except for PWC) may be operated by anyone 16 years old or older without age or supervision restrictions. Those under 16 years may operate a motorboat if accompanied on board and directly supervised by a responsible person at least 18 years old.

Sailboats may be operated by anyone 16 years old or older without age or supervision restrictions, and maybe operated by someone under 16 when under the direct supervision of a responsible person at least 18 years old.

Personal Watercraft (PWCs) may be operated by those 18 years and older without age or supervision restrictions.

Those 16 through 17 may operate a PWC if he or she has completed a boating safety education course approved by the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation and has in his or her possession the certificate of completion.

Those 12 through 15 may operate a PWC if he or she has completed a boating safety education course approved by the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation, has in his or her possession the certificate of completion, and is under the direct supervision of a responsible person at least 18 years old.

Anyone under 18 who does not meet the requirements above may not operate a PWC unless accompanied on board and directly supervised by a responsible person at least 18 years old.

“Direct supervision” is defined as sight at a distance within which unaided, visual contact is maintained by the adult responsible for the minor boat operator.

A boat is defined as every type of watercraft used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water. Vessels such as sailboats, PWCs, canoes, rafts, float tubes and “kick” boats, in addition to motorboats, are subject to Utah’s boating laws and rules.

A PWC is defined as a motorboat under 16 feet long, propelled by a water jet pump and designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the vessel, rather than sitting or standing inside the vessel.

SL 3. Boater Safety Education Requirements

The State of Utah does not currently have education requirements except for PWC operators 12 to 17 years of age. It is highly recommended for boaters to take a boating safety education course to familiarize themselves with boating procedures and regulations. New boaters should continue their education by taking a course focusing on boat handling and operation. Boaters should be aware that state boating safety laws are updated annually. Boaters need to stay informed of changes to state boating safety requirements.

SL 4. Vessel Registration

The State of Utah requires sailboats and any vessel equipped with a motor, either gas or battery-powered, to be registered and numbered. A person may not place, or give permission to place, a motorboat or sailboat on Utah waters or operate or give permission to operate a motorboat or sailboat on Utah waters, unless that motorboat or sailboat is registered.

Boats owned by Utah residents but registered out-of-state must be registered in Utah if used on Utah waters. Boats exempt from Utah registration include sailboards and properly registered motorboats and sailboats owned by residents of other states that have not been in Utah for more than 14 days in a calendar year. Boats exempt from numbering include sailboards, USCG-documented vessels and numbered motorboats and sailboats owned by residents of other states that have not been in Utah for more than 60 days in a calendar year.

The annual registration fee is \$12.00 plus a \$0.50 search and rescue surcharge allocated to the county of residence/registration. Four dollars of this registration fee are allocated to the Utah Division of Motor Vehicles for processing vessel registration. The remaining \$8.00 is allocated to the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation to fund Utah's Boating Program.

When a boat is registered, a registration certificate and two annual registration decals are issued. The bow number assigned to each boat must be displayed with the registration decals on the boat as described below. The bow number stays with the boat as long as it remains registered in Utah.

The registration card must be on board the boat for which it is issued and available for inspection whenever the boat is in operation.

In Utah boat registrations are issued for one year and expire annually at the end of the month during which the boat was originally registered.

Those who purchase boats from dealers may be issued a 30-day temporary registration certificate by the dealer.

Boat owners must notify the Utah Division of Motor Vehicles of changes of address and/or ownership within 15 days of the change. Under the laws of Utah, the sale, transfer, destruction or abandonment of a motorboat or sailboat terminates its registration.

The Utah Division of Motor Vehicles issues titles for boats manufactured in 1985 or later. Boats built before 1985 need not be titled. Boats with motors under 25 horsepower need not be titled.

Under Utah law, yearly registration decals, month of expiration decals, and bow numbers must be displayed according to the following instructions:

The bow number must be painted on or permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the boat. The numbers must be plain, one color, vertical block characters at least 3 inches in height and read from left to right. They must contrast with the background color of the hull and be distinctly visible and legible. Spaces or hyphens, equal to the width of a

letter, must separate the letter and numeral groupings. The bow number consists of the prefix letters UT, four numerals, and two suffix letters, as in the following example: UT 1234 AA or UT-1234-AA.

Yearly registration decals must be displayed 3 inches aft of the bow number on each side of the boat. Only current year decals may be displayed. The month of expiration decals must be displayed immediately aft of the yearly registration decals. On documented vessels, both the yearly registration decal and month of expiration decals must be displayed on each side of the forward half of the vessel.

For boats in which the placement of the bow number and registration decals on the hull or superstructure would not be visible, or where the type of hull material used would make it impractical to attach the bow number, yearly registration decals and month of expiration decals, the bow number and decals may be mounted on a backing plate and displayed in the manner indicated above.

SL 5. Maximum Loading and Horsepower

In the state of Utah, it is illegal to overpower or overload your vessel in excess of the stated capacity on your vessel's USCG capacity plate or in the owner's manual provided by the boat manufacturer. This capacity includes the total number of people as well as total weight of persons, motor and gear carried onboard your vessel.

Vessels less than 20 feet in length manufactured after Nov. 1, 1972 except for sailboats, canoes, kayaks, inflatable vessels or homemade motorboats, must have a USCG capacity and certification label permanently affixed to the vessel. This label may contain both capacity and certification information and must be fixed to the vessel in a location that is clearly visible to the operator when boarding or operating the vessel. Altering, removing, or defacing any USCG capacity or certification information label affixed to a vessel is prohibited.

SL 6. Equipment and Lighting Requirements

All required safety equipment must be in a good and serviceable condition.

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

Each vessel must have onboard at least one Type I, II, III or V USCG-approved PFD of proper size and readily accessible for each person. Type V PFDs must be used according to the U.S. Coast Guard approval label. Each person being towed on water skis, other towed devices, or operating or riding on a PWC or sailboard must wear a properly fitted USCG-approved PFD.

Inflatable PFDs may not be used by children or by those boating on rivers, riding a PWC, or being towed behind a vessel.

Boats 16 feet or longer must carry at least one Type IV - Throwable Device, USCG-approved PFD, which is immediately accessible and within easy reach of the operator or passenger(s) on board. On rivers, in place of the Type IV PFD, a throw bag with a minimum of 40 feet of line may be carried.

On rivers, every person on board a vessel must wear a properly fitted USCG-approved Type I, III, or V PFD, if approved for the activity (see label). For those older than 12, PFDs may be loosened or removed while on designated flat-water river sections. Contact the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation for a listing of designated flat-water river sections in Utah.

Mandatory PFD Usage

Passengers 12 years old and under must wear a Type I, II, III or V USCG-approved PFD when the boat is in operation. Children do not have to wear PFDs while inside an enclosed cabin area on boats 19 feet or longer.

Fire Extinguishers

All motorboats must carry a serviceable USCG or U.L. marine-approved fire extinguisher on board. Open-construction, outboard motorboats under 26 feet, which do not have permanently installed fuel tanks, are exempt unless they are used to carry passengers for hire. Fire extinguishers, however, are strongly recommended.

Navigation Lights

When being operated on Utah waters between sunset and sunrise, all boats must display the required navigation lights. Navigation lights must conform to and be located in accordance with USCG specifications.

A PWC may not be operated between sunset and sunrise, even when equipped with proper navigation lights.

A sailboat under motor power must display navigation lights required for a motorboat.

A manually propelled vessel may exhibit the navigation lights required for a sailboat or have a flashlight or white light, ready at hand, to be displayed in enough time to avoid a collision.

Other Equipment

Boats from 16 to 40 feet long must have a whistle or horn able to produce a four-to-six second blast of sound.

Boats 40 feet and longer must have a horn and a bell.

A whistle or horn is strongly recommended for boats under 16 feet long.

Vessels under 21 feet long must have on board at least one spare motor, paddle, or oar capable of maneuvering the vessel, if necessary. On rivers, when one- or two-man capacity vessels under 16 feet long are traveling in a group, this requirement is met by having one spare paddle or oar for every three vessels in the group. On hard-hulled white-water kayaks, paddles designed to be strapped to or worn on the hand meet this requirement.

All boats not of a self-bailing design must have a bail bucket or mechanical means to pump the bilge.

SL 7. Marine Sanitation Devices

It is unlawful to dispose of human waste, whether treated or untreated, into Utah's waters or on lands adjacent to these waters. Marine toilets must be emptied at dockside or at other approved sanitation facilities.

Every marine toilet must be equipped with an approved pollution control device in operating condition. Owners and operators of vessels equipped with a marine toilet may not use or permit the use of a toilet on Utah waters, unless that toilet is equipped with facilities to adequately treat, hold, incinerate, or otherwise handle human body waste to avoid water pollution.

SL 8. Muffling Devices

To reduce noise, motorboat engines must be equipped with factory-installed mufflers, exhaust water manifolds or other effective muffling system. A person is prohibited from removing, altering or otherwise modifying in any way a muffler or muffler system on a motorboat in a way that will prevent the motorboat from complying with the sound requirements. It is unlawful to manufacture, sell or offer for sale any motorboat not equipped with a muffler or muffling system, or does not meet the sound requirements. Exemptions include: motorboats registered in and actually participating in a racing event approved by the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation and scheduled tune-up periods prior to the racing event; and a motorboat being operated by a boat or engine manufacturer for the purpose of testing and/or development, and the testing has been authorized by the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation.

Vessels operated on Utah waters must not emit noise in excess of 90 decibels (if manufactured before January 1, 1993) or 88 decibels (if manufactured on or after January 1, 1993) with the measurement taken three feet three inches (one meter) to the rear of the boat when the motor is idling. A motorboat may not emit more than 75 decibels of noise at the shoreline.

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 seriously endanger the operator, his or her passengers, crew or the vessel.

An operator involved in a boating accident is obligated to give his or her name, address, and the identification of his or her vessel in writing to any person injured or to the owner of any property damaged in the accident.

The operator must immediately notify the nearest state park ranger or other law enforcement officer of an accident involving a vessel or its equipment when one of the following occurs:

- a person dies or is missing from a vessel under circumstances that indicate death;
- a person is injured and receives medical treatment beyond first aid; or
- combined property damage exceeds \$2,000.

The owner or operator of a vessel involved in a boating accident must submit a completed and signed boating accident report to the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation within 10 days. The investigating law enforcement officer also submits an accident report. Information in accident reports is confidential.

Boating accident report forms are available from the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation, a boating ranger, or from <http://www.stateparks.utah.gov>.

SL 10. Vessel Speed Restrictions

Utah's Speed and Proximity law states that a vessel operator may not exceed a wakeless (idle) speed when in an area designated as a wakeless speed area or within 150 feet of:

- (i) another vessel;
- (ii) a person in or floating on the water;
- (iii) a water skier being towed by another boat;
- (iv) a shore fisherman;
- (v) a launching ramp;
- (vi) a dock; or
- (vii) a designated swimming area.

SL 11. Mooring to Markers or Buoys

It is unlawful to moor or attach a vessel to a beacon, light, buoy (unless it is mooring buoy) or any other navigational aid. A mooring buoy is white and is designated with a blue band, which is at least three inches wide and encircles the buoy halfway between the waterline and the top.

SL 12. Reckless and Careless Operation

Vessels, water skis, aquaplanes, or similar devices may not be operated in willful or wanton disregard of the safety of persons or property.

Vessel owners are liable for all injuries or damages caused by the negligent operation of his or her vessel by a minor under 18 years of age when operating the owner's vessel with the express or implied consent of that owner.

The operator of a motorboat may not exceed a wakeless (idle) speed while a person is riding on the bow decking, gunwales, transom, seatbacks, or motor cover unless the vessel is equipped with adequate rails that would prevent a person from falling overboard. On vessels less than 16 feet long, passengers may not ride on the bow when the boat is being operated at greater than wakeless (idle) speed unless they are sitting in designated seats. Passengers may ride on the bow of a boat 16 feet or longer, except on Lake Powell, if they straddle an upright support on the rail without blocking the operator's view.

SL 13. Interference with Navigation

It is unlawful to:

- To remove, destroy, or damage any waterway marker authorized to be placed by an appropriate federal agency or by the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation.
- To place any permanent or anchored objects on the waters of this state without written authorization by an appropriate federal agency or by the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation.
- To place any waterway marker, except a diver's flag, without written authorization by an appropriate federal agency or by the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation.

SL 14. Boating Under the Influence

In Utah, a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited from operating a boat. A person is considered under the influence of alcohol or any drug, or under the combined influence of alcohol and any drug, if the person is rendered incapable of safely operating a vessel. Conviction of Boating Under the Influence (BUI) may result in the loss of the violator's motor vehicle driver license, the imposition of a fine, mandatory jail sentence, and/or community service, and rehabilitation assessment. Boat operators are considered to have given consent to take any chemical test requested by a peace officer who feels the person has been operating a boat while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

Refusal to take a chemical test is admissible in civil and criminal actions and proceedings and may result in the loss of the violator's motor vehicle driver license.

The arresting officer is authorized to seize and impound the violator's boat, trailer and tow vehicle.

Utah's legal Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) level is 0.08 grams per liter. Alcohol concentration in the blood is based on grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood; alcohol concentration in the breath is based on grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath.

A motorboat operator may not be in possession of an open container of an alcoholic beverage while the boat is in operation.

A person under age 21 may not operate a motorboat with any measurable amount of alcohol in his or her system.

It is unlawful for vessel owners to allow their vessels to be operated by a person under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

SL 15. Mandatory Violator Education

The State of Utah does not currently require mandatory education for boating law violators.

SL 16. PWC Regulations

PWCs are considered powered vessels and must abide by the same rules and regulations as any other boat. Engineered differently from most boats, PWCs are jet boats: the water forced out through the steerable nozzle controls the direction of travel. If the throttle is released or the ignition turned off, all steering control will be lost. PWCs must be registered, carry PFDs and be operated at a speed safe enough for the operator to avoid a collision or to stop in time to avoid an accident. When operating a PWC, boaters can avoid stranding by carrying a full reserve fuel tank. All PWC operators and passengers must wear a USCG-approved PFD. An inflatable PFD does not meet this requirement.

Additional PWC Regulations:

A person may not operate a PWC on the waters of the State of Utah between sunset and sunrise.

Personal Watercraft (PWCs) may be operated by those 18 years and older without age or supervision restrictions.

Those 16 through 17 may operate a PWC if he or she has completed a boating safety education course approved by the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation and has in his or her possession the certificate of completion.

Those 12 through 15 may operate a PWC if he or she has completed a boating safety education course approved by the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation, has in his or her possession the certificate of completion, and is under the direct supervision of a responsible person at least 18 years old.

Anyone under 18 who does not meet the requirements above may not operate a PWC unless accompanied on board and directly supervised by a responsible person at least 18 years old.

It is unlawful to exceed the capacity recommendations of a PWC.

All PWCs must carry proof of liability insurance while being operated on Utah waters. See SL 20.

SL 17. Water Ski Regulations

Boat operators must maintain a proper lookout and a safe course of travel when towing a person on water skis or other devices.

In addition to the operator, an observer who is at least 8 years of age must be on board to watch and communicate with the skier. The observer must display an international orange flag, at least 12 inches square and mounted on a handle, when the skier is down in the water.

Water skis and other towed devices may be used only between sunrise and sunset.

All persons being towed behind a vessel must wear a properly fitted USCG-approved PFD. An inflatable PFD does not meet this requirement.

There must be room on board a boat, within the boat's maximum persons capacity, for those being towed behind the boat.

SL 18. Divers-Down Flag

A square, red flag with a white diagonal stripe from one top corner to the opposite bottom corner is used to indicate the presence of a diver below. A rigid replica of the International Code "A" (Alpha) flag, not less than one meter in height, may also be used.

The operator of any vessel shall not approach within 150 feet of a posted diver's flag, unless the vessel is part of the equipment in use by the divers.

No person shall place a diver's flag on the waters of this state unless diving activity is in progress in that area. A scuba diver shall display a diver's flag prior to diving activity and shall dive and surface in close proximity to the flag.

SL 19. Liveries (Rental Agencies)

A "Boat Livery" is an entity, which holds any vessel for leasing, renting, or chartering. The owner of a boat livery must keep a record of the following: the name and address of the person hiring any vessel, the identification number of the vessel, the vessel's departure date and time, and the vessel's expected time of return. The record must be preserved for at least one year.

Neither the owner of a boat livery, nor his agent or employee may permit any vessel to depart from the premises of the boat livery unless the owner has equipped it as required under the Utah Boating Act and unless he has advised the lessee or renter of the vessel of all rules that the lessee or renter must follow.

The owner of a boat livery or his representative must provide a copy of the lease or rental agreement, signed by the owner or his representative and by the person leasing or renting the vessel. The lease or rental agreement must contain the following information and be carried on board the vessel: the vessel's assigned number, the period of time for which the vessel is leased or rented, and a check-off list of the required safety equipment. The registration card certificate may be retained on shore by the boat livery.

**SL 20. Other State-Specific Regulations
Commercial Boating Activities**

Contact the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation for boating rules that may be in addition to the above regarding carrying passengers for hire (guiding on lakes, reservoirs, and rivers) and for marine dealer registrations (demonstrating boats for the purpose of sales).

Liability Insurance

Effective July 2006, all PWCs and motorboats (motorboats with engines less than 50 horse power are exempt) must carry proof of liability insurance while being operated on Utah waters. The minimum liability insurance requirements are \$25,000/\$50,000 bodily injury/death, \$15,000 property damage, and/or a combined \$65,000 per accident. Non-resident owners are exempt if the PWC is in Utah for less than 90 days a year, unless the

home state also requires insurance coverage. The Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation recommends that all boat owners carry liability insurance for their boats.

SL 21. Environmental Awareness

Littering in or on the water or land adjacent to the water in Utah is prohibited. The discharge of toxic fluids, such as gasoline, in or on the water or land adjacent to the water in Utah is prohibited. The operator of a vessel may not allow a person on board his or her vessel to discharge toxic fluids, such as gasoline, in or on the water land adjacent to the water in Utah.

To help prevent the spread of aquatic diseases and aquatic nuisance species of plants and animals:

- Inspect the boat, trailer, and equipment, removing any visible plants and animals before leaving the waterbody or launch ramp.
- Drain water from the engine, live wells, bilge, and transom well before leaving the waterbody or launch ramp.
- Never release or transport live aquatic plants or animals from one body of water to another.
- Empty bait buckets on land. Never release live bait into a waterbody.
- Rinse the vessel, trailer, and equipment and allow to air dry for as long as possible.

Contact the Utah Department of Environmental Quality for additional environmental awareness issues and requirements.

Additional Information

For more information regarding boating safety in the State of Utah, please refer to the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation web site at <http://stateparks.utah.gov>.

State contact Information:

Utah Division of Parks and Recreation
1594 West North Temple, Suite 116
PO Box 146001
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6001
801-538-7220
801-538-7458 (TTY)

For boat registration and titling information, contact:

Utah Division of Motor Vehicles
210 North 1950 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84134
801-297-7780
800-368-8824