

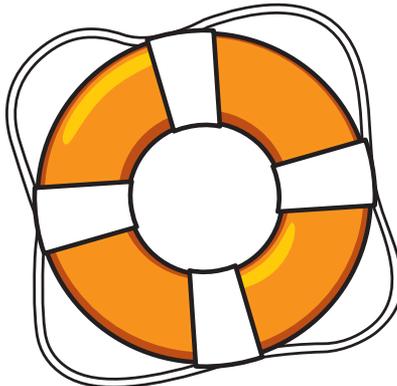
State of Alabama

BOATING RULES & REGULATIONS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Alabama Registration Requirement	3-4
Certificate of Number	4
Registration Number and Decal	5-6
Alabama PFG Requirements	7-8
Accident Reporting in Alabama	9
Personal Watercraft laws and Regulations	10
Additional PWC Requirements	11
Towed Water Sports in Alabama	12
Dividing and Snorkeling in Alabama	13
Aquatic Nuisance Species	14
Marine Sanitation Device Regulations	15-16
No Discharge Zones in Alabama	17
Litter Laws in Alabama	17
Operator Age Restrictions in Alabama	18-19
No Wake Speed	19
Slacken Speed	20
Mufflers and Noise Levels	21
Unsafe Practices	22-24
Boating Under the Influence	25



ALABAMA REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS



Registration

The Marine Police Division of the Department of Natural Resources regulates the boating laws in Alabama.

All powered watercraft (including gasoline, diesel and electric motors) that are operated mainly on Alabama waters must be registered. Some vessels are exempt from the boat registration requirements, including those that are:

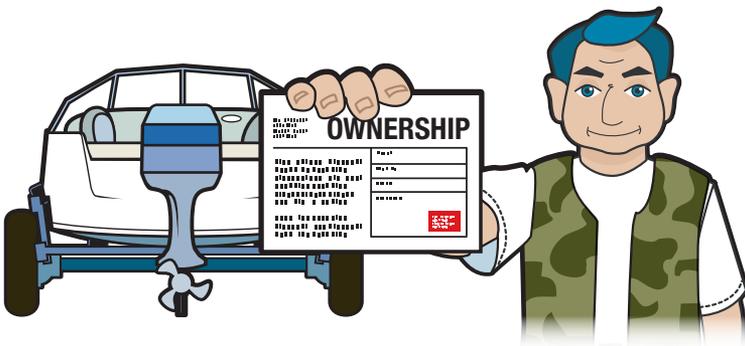
- Non-motorized, not including sailboats and vessels for rental.
- Currently registered and kept in another state;
- Holding a valid temporary Certificate of Number;
- Registered in a country other than the U.S. and using Alabama waters only on a temporary basis;
- A ship's lifeboat; or
- Owned by either federal, state, county or municipal governments within the U.S.

To register, renew or transfer ownership, you can visit your local county Judge of Probate or License Commissioner. You can also register or renew your vessel registration, only with proof of payment of sales and use tax, at the Marine Police Division office in Montgomery.

An application can be downloaded and filled out prior to registering at the Probate, License Commissioner's or Marine Police Office. Be sure to bring all documentation such as previous registration, bill of sale, and proof of payment of sales tax with the application.

[Download a New Registration, Transfer, & Replacement Application.](#)

CERTIFICATE OF NUMBER

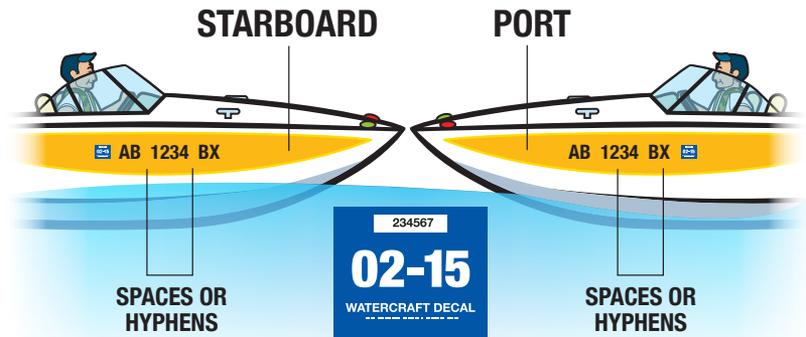


As a boat owner in Alabama, you must have at least a valid temporary certificate of number before you can legally operate on state waters. Once the registration has been issued, you are required to:

- Sign the certificate and carry it on board when operating; and
- Notify the Alabama Marine Police Division within 15 days if you change residences, or if the vessel has been lost, stolen, destroyed, or abandoned.

Your registration is valid for one year from the date of issue. The date of required renewal depends on the first letter of the vessel owner's last name. For more information, visit the [Outdoor Alabama website](#).

REGISTRATION NUMBER AND DECALS



When you successfully register your vessel, you'll receive a certificate and a decal.

Your permanent registration number appears on the right-hand side of the certificate preceded by the letters AL. This number must be placed on each side of the bow of the registered vessel in a position that is clearly visible at all times. The number must also be:

- BLOCK characters, no less than three inches high and contrasting with the background color of your boat;
- Separated by letters with a space or a hyphen; and
- Read from left to right; For example: AL 1234 BX or AL-1234-BX.

The validation decal must be displayed within 6 inches before or after and in line with the registration numbers on both sides of the boat's bow.

It's your responsibility to make sure your boat is properly marked and documented. It's also a good idea to always keep your papers with the boat, in a waterproof case for safe keeping.

Refer to the chart below for a list of registration fees.

Registration Item	Fee
Class I Registration	\$11.00 plus \$1.00 issuance fee
Class II Registration	\$15.00 plus \$1.00 issuance fee
Class III Registration	\$30.00 plus \$1.00 issuance fee
Class IV Registration	\$50.00 plus \$1.00 issuance fee
Class V (Dealer) Registration	\$26.00 for initial, \$4.00 for each
Transfer of a Vessel's Ownership	additional dealer tag
(Applies to vessels with a current year registration but needing to be transferred into the new owner's name)	
Transfer/Renewal	\$1.00 plus .25 issuance fee
(If the vessel has no current registration, the class fee will also apply to transfer the vessel into the new owner's name)	

ALABAMA PFD REQUIREMENTS



Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

When boating in Alabama, you are required to have a wearable PFD available for each person on board your boat. In addition, if your vessel is longer than 16 feet, you must also have at least one U.S. Coast Guard approved Type IV PFD, either a ring buoy or seat cushion. There are some exceptions to this requirement, including:

- Personal Watercraft;
- Canoes, kayaks; and
- Inflatable rafts

Passengers being towed behind a vessel must wear a U.S. Coast Guard Approved PFD at all times that is designed for the activity.

All persons on a personal watercraft must wear a PFD while underway.

Inflatable PFDs are not approved for children and should not be used for high impact sports such as water skiing or operating a personal watercraft.

If you are operating a vessel within 800 feet of any hydro-electric dam or navigational lock or dam, all persons on board must be wearing a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD (either type I, II, III or IV) in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

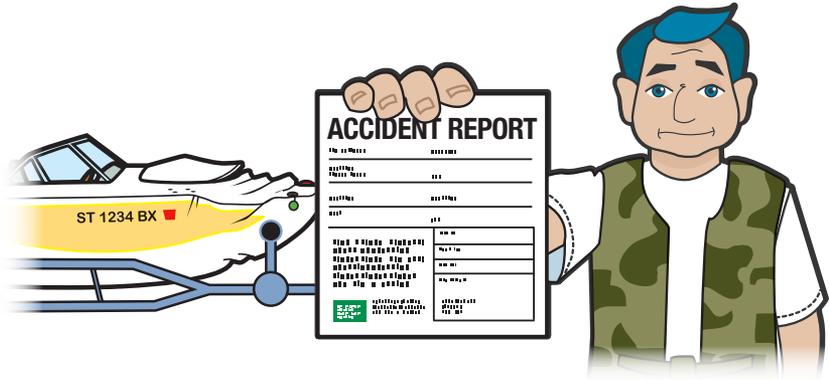
ALABAMA PFD REQUIREMENTS



Child PFD Requirements

All boaters or passengers under 8 years of age are required to wear a PFD while on board, unless they are below deck or in an enclosed cabin.

ACCIDENT REPORTING IN ALABAMA



If you are operating a boat that is involved in a collision on the water, a report must be filed for any accident involving:

- \$50 or more in damages;
- Complete loss of a vessel;
- Injuries causing disability for more than 72 hours; or
- The death or disappearance of any person.

In these situations when a written report is required, it's your responsibility as the boat operator to submit a completed accident report form, as quickly as possible, to the Alabama Marine Police Division (AMPD). The report must be submitted within 10 days of the accident.

If the operator of the vessel involved is not able to give the required notice, it becomes the responsibility of each person on board to notify the AMPD or a member of its law enforcement team, or determine that the notice has been given.

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT LAWS AND REGULATIONS



As you learned in Chapter 7, personal watercraft are very powerful for their size and demand the same respect as any boat. Likewise, PWC operators are required to follow the same rules and regulations as any powerboat operator, including registering with the state and carrying a B-1 fire extinguisher on board. In addition, there are specific requirements for PWC operated in Alabama.

- The operator and all passengers of a PWC must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD at all times.
- Persons can only be towed behind a PWC if the watercraft is equipped with rearview mirrors on both the left and right sides. Each mirror must have a viewing area of 2.5 inches in height by 4 inches in width for a total minimum viewing area of 20 square inches. The mirrors must not be attached to the steering portion of the PWC.

ADDITIONAL PWC REQUIREMENTS



Hours of Operation

PWCs may be operated at all hours of the day, but must be fitted with the required lights in order to operate between sunset and sunrise.



Operator Age Restrictions

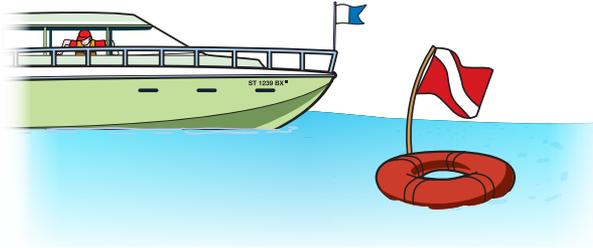
PWC operators in Alabama must be at least twelve (12) years old, but cannot operate without adult supervision until at least fourteen (14) years of age. Operators must have an Alabama Boat Operators Certificate.

TOWED WATER SPORTS IN ALABAMA



- When participating in towed water sports in Alabama, there are several rules and regulations you must follow.
- All persons, regardless of age, must wear a Type I, II, III or V U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD while water skiing, riding a tube or being towed behind a vessel in any manner.
- Skiing while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription narcotics and illegal drugs is forbidden.
- When towing an individual behind a vessel, except personal watercraft, in addition to the operator, there must also be an observer that is 12 years of age or older,
 - OR, the boat must be equipped with a wide angle mirror that has a minimum viewing surface of 78 square inches and a minimum field of vision of 170 degrees.
- Water skiing or towing people on other devices is only allowed 1 hour before sunrise until 1 hour after sunset.
- The operator of the boat may not manipulate or control the boat so as to cause the person being towed to collide with any object or person, with the exception of persons engaged in competitive or recreational skiing with regards to jump buoys and similar devices.

DIVING AND SNORKELING IN ALABAMA



Diving and swimming are popular activities to participate in while on the water. Whether you are operating a boat or diving from a boat, it's important to take the following safety precautions.

The operator of a vessel engaged in diving must display a blue and white flag on the vessel. A red “diver-down” flag with a white diagonal stripe carried on a buoy is used to mark areas where there is diving activity.

Operator Responsibilities

As a boat operator, be sure you know what the diver down flag looks like. If you see this flag, keep a safe distance from the vessel displaying the flag and the diving site, and proceed at a slow speed, keeping a close lookout for divers in close proximity to your watercraft.

In Alabama, you are required to keep a distance of at least 100 feet from the vessel engaged in diving and the diving site.

Remember, divers can be on any body of water, so it's important to keep a close watch when you see a diver down flag.

Diver Responsibilities

If you are snorkeling or diving, you must display the diver down flag. You should not dive in busy areas where there are numerous boats occupying the space, and should also refrain from diving in narrow channels or water ways that would restrict vessels from passing.

AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES

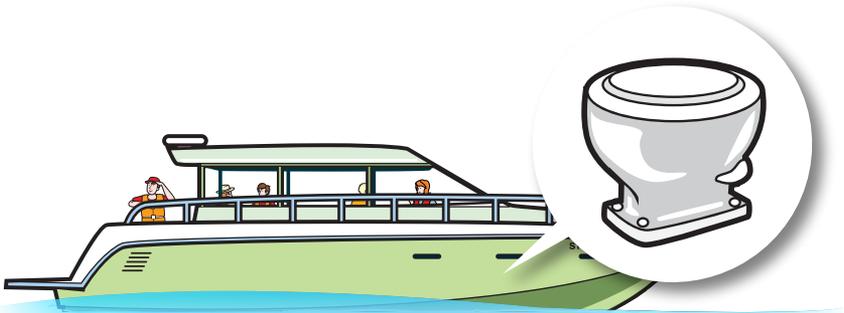


Non-native aquatic species, plants, fish and animals are invading Alabama's waters. Hydrilla, Egeria Densa, water hyacinth and zebra mussels are nuisance species that can be accidentally transported by recreational boaters when caught in propellers, intakes or attached to hulls. These pests can multiply dramatically under the right conditions, displacing native species, clogging waterways, and impacting navigation and recreation. Once introduced, they are nearly impossible to eliminate.

To help prevent the introduction and spread of non-native species from one body of water to another, you should take the following actions.

- Before leaving a body of water, inspect your boat and dispose of any animals or aquatic plants.
- Flush raw-water cooling systems and clean sea strainers before moving your boat from one body of water to another.
- Empty bait buckets and remove any plant fragments from bait wells, fishing gear, trailers, dive gear or props.
- Dispose on land into a garbage receptacle.
- Drain all water from your bilge, motor and live wells.
- Wash your boat before putting it into a new body of water; and
- Report new infestation of non-native aquatic species to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

MARINE SANITATION DEVICE REGULATIONS

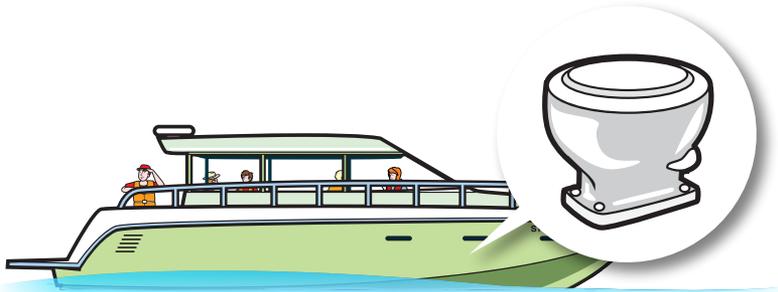


Boats operating on state waters with an installed toilet must also have a sanitation system to prevent pollution and discharge of raw sewage. A typical sanitation system consists of: an installed toilet, a waste treatment system, or MSD, and/or a holding tank.

All vessels with MSDs installed require annual inspection by Marine Police Officers. Upon successful completion of the inspection, the vessel owner will be issued a Compliance Decal which will be valid for one year.

With over one million boaters enjoying Alabama's 1 million acres of lakes, 1,600 miles of rivers and 53 miles of coastline each year, comes a growing concern for clean water and other environmental issues, such as marine sewage and litter disposal. To combat these health and environmental problems, the State Legislature passed the Marine Sanitation Act, (2002-59), which became effective in 2003. This Act regulates sewage discharge from recreational vessels and residence boats.

MARINE SANITATION DEVICE REGULATIONS



The following is a synopsis of the Act:

- Portable toilets are prohibited from dumping raw sewage into any state waters.
- Discharge of untreated sewage is prohibited on all state waters. Gray water, including galley water, bath and shower water, and bilge water, is exempt.
- All recreational vessels and residence boats with marine sanitation devices must be inspected annually by a Marine Police officer or other Department of Conservation employee. A compliance decal is issued if vessel meets the requirements of the Act and Department.
- All marine sanitation devices must meet the U.S. Coast Guard and EPA standards.
- Marine Police officers or any duly sworn peace officer may board and inspect for compliance if there is probable cause to believe that a violation of this act or departmental rules has occurred. First time offenders will receive a warning and will have 90 days to come into compliance. Conviction of this Act will result in a minimum fine of \$100 up to a maximum fine of \$1000.

NO DISCHARGE ZONES IN ALABAMA

Alabama's no discharge zones include the following bodies of water and any others that meet the federal guidelines:

- Smith Lake,
- All lakes on the Tallapoosa River system
- All lakes on the Coosa River system with the exception of Weiss Lake.

LITTER LAWS IN ALABAMA

Disposal of Trash, Garbage or Plastics from a Vessel

In Alabama, it is unlawful for any person to discharge overboard, or place in or upon the waters of the state, any trash, garbage or plastics. Such items must be taken to shore and legally disposed of on land.

All vessels must have on board a container or storage compartment for the proper disposal of trash, garbage, or plastics. Such container or storage compartment must assure that all waste, trash or plastics cannot be inadvertently blown overboard.

All vessels must also have a container or bag that is appropriate for moving trash, garbage or plastics to shore for legal disposal.

OPERATOR AGE RESTRICTIONS IN ALABAMA



Persons who are under the age of 12 may not, in any instance, operate a motorized vessel including personal watercraft.

In accordance with the Roberson/Archer Act of 1994, all persons who operate a motorized vessel, including personal watercraft, on Alabama's waters are required to obtain an Alabama Boat Operators Certificate.

Boat operators must be at least 12 years of age to receive their Alabama Boat Operators Certificate.

The Boating Safety Enhancement Act which came into effect on January 1, 2002 set the minimum age for operating a motorized vessel without direct adult supervision at 14 years of age. However, there are certain exceptions to this rule; the following may operate a vessel without adult supervision:

- Residents of the state of Alabama who were 12 years of age or older on January 1, 2002 that have obtained their Boat Operators Certificate.
- Residents of the state of Alabama who had obtained a Boat Operators Certificate prior to January 1, 2002.

- Non-Residents aged between 12 and 14 years, who had obtained a Boat Operators Certificate in their home state prior to January 1, 2002.
- A non-resident 12 years old but less than 14 years old who has not obtained an operator's license, or who has an operator license from his or her home state may not operate a vessel unless there is a person 21 years old or older with a valid operator's license (unless a non-resident) on board and in a position to take immediate physical control of the vessel if necessary. Non-residents 14 years old or older may operate alone in Alabama under the 45 day grace period.

NO WAKE ZONE



“No wake” speed refers to the slowest possible speed required in order to maintain steerage and headway.

In Alabama, it is unlawful to operate at greater than ‘no wake’ speed when around gas docks, marinas, boat ramps, and people in the water even if not marked by a regulatory marker.

You may be held responsible for damage caused by your vessel's wake or wash resulting from negligent or careless operation.

SLACKEN SPEED



As an operator in Alabama, you must reduce your vessel's speed to avoid endangering persons or property from the effect of your vessel's wake. You must reduce speed when approaching or passing the following:

- Vessels underway, lying to, at anchor, or made fast to the shore;
- Piers, Docks or Boathouses;
- Persons in the water;
- Persons involved in towed water sports; and
- Persons on a surfboard

Certain bodies of water in Alabama may have local restrictions as to type and size of vessel or motor horsepower, restricted use areas, boat speed, and times for use. Check with the local authorities for these additional restrictions.

MUFFLERS AND NOISE LEVELS



In Alabama, all vessels propelled by an internal combustion engine are required to have a mechanical means of reducing (muffling) the engine exhaust sound level.

No one may operate, or give permission to operate, a motorboat whose exhaust sound exceeds 86 dBA when measured from a minimum distance of 50 feet.

The use of cut-outs is prohibited, except for vessels competing in a regatta or official boat race, and for such vessels while on trial runs.

UNSAFE PRACTICES



The following acts and maneuvers are considered dangerous & illegal while boating in Alabama:

Reckless Operation

It is illegal to operate a vessel in a manner that endangers the ability to conserve the safety, rights or property of others. The following are a few examples:

- Endangering others or their property, by allowing the wake of your vessel to potentially harm another or their property.
- Operating a vessel at such speed or maneuvers a vessel in such a manner as to endanger the life, limb or property of another person. You are responsible for your vessels wake. Wake jumping in close proximity to another vessel.
- Failing to conform to boating signage such as posted speeds, indicated restricted entry zones, diver down flags, etc. No person shall operate a boat at a speed in excess of a Slow - No - Wake in a posted no wake zone. No person may operate a vessel at speeds greater than are reasonable or prudent given the existing weather conditions, watercraft traffic or persons in the water.

Operating at an unsafe speed

Boaters must always operate their vessel at a safe speed as well as adhere to any indicated speed limitations.

Failure to maintain adequate distance

Boaters must maintain the designated 'slow-no-wake' speed in the circumstances discussed above as well as keep their distance from water skiers or vessels towing someone on another device.

Exceeding maximum capacity

The recommended capacity indicated on the boats' capacity plate should not be exceeded. Operation of a vessel loaded or powered in excess of the maximum capacity affects the stability of the vessel and makes the chance of a capsizing or fall overboard more likely.

Not maintaining a proper lookout

All operators are required to keep a constant lookout for other vessels, hazards and/or people in the water.

Dangerous operation

Boaters must make sure that the vessel is being operated in such a manner that its occupants or others sharing the water are not in any danger. In Alabama, if any officer empowered to enforce the laws observes a vessel being used without sufficient lifesaving or fire-fighting devices or in an overloaded or otherwise unsafe condition and in his judgment such use creates an especially hazardous condition, he may direct the operator to take whatever immediate and reasonable steps that would be necessary for the safety of those aboard the vessel, including termination of activity until the situation creating the hazard is corrected or ended.

Not maintaining proper seating aboard your vessel

In Alabama, it is unlawful to allow any person to ride or sit on the bow, gunwales, transom, or on the decking over the bow of the vessel while underway unless such a vessel is provided with adequate guards or railing to prevent passengers from falling overboard. Passengers or other persons aboard a vessel may occupy these areas of the vessel to moor or anchor the vessel, to cast off, or for any other necessary purpose.

For safety reasons it is recommended that boaters do not stop or anchor beneath bridges, in a channel or at a launch ramp.



UNSAFE PRACTICES



A boater with a blood alcohol content of .08% or more is presumed to be under the influence of alcohol. This also applies to persons under the influence of:

- Any controlled substance;
- Alcohol and any combination of controlled substances; or
- Any substances which mentally or physically impair a person's normal functioning.

If you are found guilty of Boating Under the Influence, or BUI, your boat operating privileges will be revoked for a period of 90 days, you may face fines of up to \$2,100 and also face the possibility of imprisonment for up to one year.

If found guilty of BUI a second time, boat operating privileges will be revoked for a period of one year, you will face fines of up to \$5,100, and the possibility of imprisonment for up to one year, but not less than 5 days or a minimum of 30 days of community service.

Upon a third BUI conviction, you will lose your boat operating privileges for a period of three years, face fines of up to \$10,100 as well as the possibility of imprisonment for up to a maximum of one year, but not less than 60 days.



For more information about boating rules and regulations, and to obtain your Washington Boater Education Card, please visit

<http://www.BOATERexam.com/usa/alabama/>

