

BOAT SMART. BOAT PREPARED.

As a recreational boater, you are responsible for knowing the legal requirements of your vessel.

REQUIRED BY LAW

Every vessel, no matter what size—including kayaks, canoes and stand up paddle boards—is required by federal and Washington state law to carry the following:

- Life jackets**—one for every person on board that is U.S. Coast Guard approved, the right size and type and in good condition
- A sounding device**—horn, whistle or bell
- A white navigation light**—during low visibility
- Nighttime visual distress signal** (such as flares)—required only on federal waterways

Depending on boat length and engine type, state law requires the following:

- Vessel registration** on board
- Registration decals** and numbers—displayed correctly on each side of the boat
- Washington Boater Education Card**—mandatory for boats with motors 15 (or more) horsepower
- Throwable flotation device** (type IV)
- Type B-1 fire extinguisher**
- Visual distress signals**—day and night time
- Navigation lights**
- Carbon monoxide warning sticker** on boats with motors

For a list of specific requirements by boat length and type, visit www.boatprepared.com.



ARE YOU RESCUE READY?

The legal requirements are minimal and do not maximize your chances of being rescued in a timely manner when an accident happens. You should be rescue ready at all times. That means having the right gear at the right time—and knowing how to use it. We recommend you carry the following:

- Two forms of communication** (VHF radio, cellphone, flares or distress locator beacon) in a waterproof bag or container. Keep them on you in case you're separated from the vessel.
- Bailing system**—a bucket, bailer or bilge pump
- Anchor, chain and rope**
- First-aid kit**
- Flashlight**
- Knife**
- Oars/paddles**
- Binoculars**
- Compass**
- Navigation charts/GPS**
- Tide book**
- Rescue throw bag**—to assist rescuing someone overboard
- Lifting tackle**—equipment used to assist hoisting someone back into a boat
- Strobe lights**—a bright flashing light that floats so you don't lose sight of a person overboard
- Ditch bag**—in an accident, it may be impossible to collect many of these items, so keep them centralized and accessible, in case you need to abandon ship.

A safe vessel operator is alert at all times. Help prevent dehydration and fatigue by bringing sun protection, water and snacks.

