



Nebraska Boating Regulations

This section contains information on **Nebraska Boating Regulations** that are in addition to the Federal Requirements covered in the Basic Boating Course. If you have not reviewed the course material, please do so now. All Federal Requirements in the basic boating course apply to Nebraska; this section lists Nebraska Boating Requirements that are above and beyond Federal Requirements.

Age Restrictions:

Nebraska - Age Restrictions and Education Requirements:

Persons less than 14 years of age shall not operate a motorboat or Personal Watercraft on waters within the State of Nebraska. As of January 1, 2004, any motorboat operator (including personal watercraft) at least 14 but less than age 18 must complete a Boating Safety Course and be in possession of a course certificate when operating the boat. The only acceptable course for those under 18 is Nebraska's 6-hour classroom course with a proctored exam. The passing score is 70%.

Personal Flotation Devices:

Children under 12 years old aboard any vessel must wear a USCG approved PFD. The only exception is when hunting waterfowl in an anchored boat.

Every vessel, except sailboards, must carry one USCG approved, Type I, II, III or V PFD for each person on board. In addition every vessel except PWC, canoes, kayaks and sailboards, must carry at least one USCG approved throwable flotation device (Type IV).

Required PFDs must be readily accessible.

Additional required equipment:

The State of Nebraska requires equipment in addition to the federal requirements. When operating on Nebraska waters vessels shall have the following items onboard.

- Every vessel, except PWC, sailboards and boats over 26 feet in length, must carry an oar or paddle.
- Every vessel, except PWC and sailboards, must be equipped with a bailing bucket, bilge pump or sponge.
- Exhaust of all engines used on motorboats shall be effectively muffled.

Speed Limits and Reckless Operation:

No vessel shall be operated within Nebraska in a reckless or negligent manner. Examples of reckless or careless operation include:

- Excessive speed in regulated, prohibited or congested areas
- Speeding in excess of 5 MPH is illegal at all times within 30 yards of any vessel, harbor, marina, landing pier, fishing pier, anchorage or bathing beach.
- Operating in a manner that may cause an accident
- Operating in a swimming area with bathers present
- Operation of a personal watercraft which endangers life or property

Navigation Rules:

The State of Nebraska adopts and enforces all Federally mandated boating safety laws.

Every vessel operating in the State of Nebraska shall carry and use safety equipment in accordance with U. S. Coast Guard requirements as specified in the Code of Federal Regulations. Additionally, every vessel shall display the lights and shapes required by the navigation rules. See the Basic Boating Course for these requirements.

Diving and Snorkeling:

All divers and spear-fisherman shall display a free-flying, 12 by 12 inch minimum, white diagonal stripe on a red background **divers-down flag** in the area in which the diving occurs. Divers shall attempt to stay within 150 feet of the divers-down flag.



Boaters should stay at least 150 feet away from a diver-down flag.

Personal Watercraft:

Persons less than 14 years of age shall not operate a Personal Watercraft.



Each person on a Personal Watercraft (PWC) must wear a Coast Guard approved PFD. PWC's are considered boats and must abide by all boating laws.

The operator of a Personal Watercraft should operate in a reasonable and prudent manner. This includes being aware of other boats in the operating area, awareness of environmental concerns and respecting the rights of shoreline property owners. The PWC operator should not follow other boats closely and should not jump the wake of other boats.

Water Skiing:

No person shall tow a person on water skis, aquaplane or similar device without or an observer 12 years or older aboard or wide-angle rear view mirror.



In addition each person engaged in water skiing or

aquaplaning must wear a U. S. Coast Guard approved PFD.

All ski lines, when not in use, shall be stowed immediately aboard the towing vessel.

Water skiing is not permitted between the hours of one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise.

Accident Reporting:

Any accident involving death, disappearance or personal injury, or damage greater than \$100 must be reported in duplicate. A "*boating accident*" includes, but is not limited to, capsizing, collision, foundering, flooding, fire, explosion and the disappearance of a vessel other than by theft. Accidents which involve death, disappearance and injury must be reported within 48 hours; reports of other cases are required within 5 days. Report accidents to the nearest office of the Nebraska Game and Parks, Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503.

Boating While Intoxicated:

BUI is a criminal offense punishable by fines up to \$1,000, imprisonment of up to 6 months, and loss of boating privileges for six months. A person is considered operating under the influence of alcohol if they have a blood-alcohol content of .10 or greater.

By operating on Nebraska waterways, you are deemed to have given consent to be tested for alcohol if arrested for operating under the influence. Refusal to submit to a test will result in the same penalties as BUI.

Registration/Documentation:

All vessels powered by any mechanical device and operated on the waters of Nebraska must be registered and/or numbered in Nebraska, except as follows:

- Vessels not powered by machinery at any time
- Vessels owned by any government or political subdivision
- Motorboats registered in another state and operated in Nebraska less than 60 consecutive days
- Vessels documented by the USCG
- racing type motorboats when competing in state approved races and during trial runs 48 hours prior to or 48 hours after competition

All registrations are issued for three year periods and expire on December 31st of the last year.

Effective January 1, 1997 the Motorboat Title Law became effective. After that date all first time owners of newly acquired motorized vessels and previously owned motorboats will be required to obtain a title from the County Clerk in the county where the owner resides, before the County Treasurer will issue or renew any motorboat registration. You will need to know your Hull I.D. number to title and register your boat.

Upon registration, you will be issued a certificate of number and a validation decal. The certificate must be on board whenever the boat is used. The boat's numbers must be properly displayed on both port and starboard side starting with the validation sticker followed by two capital block letters "NB" followed by a 2 inch space and three or four digits in a numerical group followed by a 2 inch space and two or three capital block letters.

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Nebraska and federal boating laws are presented in a summarized form. The laws in their entirety can be found by consulting the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. These laws are subject to change. It is the responsibility of the operator to be aware of the most current laws when using a boat.

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

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