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HIGHLIGHTS FROM

# UTAH'S BOATING

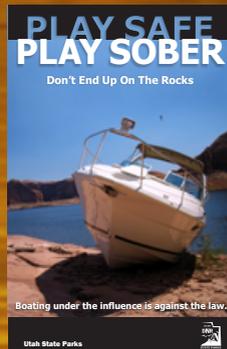
L A W S & R U L E S



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## UTAH'S BOATING PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

To sustain and enhance the quality of boating by providing the facilities, education, enforcement and the coordinated and balanced stewardship necessary to ensure enjoyable, safe, lawful and environmentally acceptable boating experiences on Utah's waterways, now and into the future.



# BOATING IN UTAH

Utah has some of the most beautiful waterways in the nation including the Colorado River, Lake Powell, Bear Lake and Great Salt Lake.



With an ever-increasing demand on Utah's limited number of rivers, lakes and reservoirs, boaters must use their water recreation resources wisely. Boat owners and operators have the responsibility to practice and advocate safe and ethical use of our waterways including properly registering boats, learning and obeying boating safety laws and rules, and sharing waterways with other boaters, swimmers and anglers.

Utah's Boating Program aims to educate and inform boat operators about boating laws and rules established to provide public safety and protect our natural resources. These efforts are funded by boat registration fees, state fuel taxes used in motorboats and federal boating safety grants. This brochure outlines the basic responsibilities of Utah boaters. For a complete copy of Utah's boating laws, contact the Utah State Parks Boating Program.

# REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

## WHAT IS CONSIDERED A BOAT?

A boat is every type of watercraft capable of transporting a person(s) on the water. Boats such as personal watercraft (PWC), rafts, canoes, kayaks, float tubes, inner tubes, kick boats and standup paddle craft are subject to Utah's boating laws and rules.

## DOES MY BOAT NEED TO BE REGISTERED?

If your boat has a motor on it or if it's a sailboat, it needs to be registered and numbered. If you have a sailboard or are visiting Utah (*less than 60 days in a calendar year*) and your boat is currently registered in your state, you do not need to have a Utah registration.

## HOW DO I REGISTER MY BOAT?

All boat registrations are processed by the Utah State Tax Commission, Division of Motor Vehicles. To find an office near you, visit: [dmv.utah.gov](http://dmv.utah.gov).

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

## WHERE DO I ATTACH THE REGISTRATION DECALS AND ASSIGNED NUMBERS?

The **assigned number** must be displayed on each side of the front half of the boat. Numbers and letters must be a solid color and block design and at least three inches in height. The assigned number must contrast with the background color of the hull. Spaces or hyphens, equal to the width of a letter, must separate letter groups from number groups. Numbers are read left to right.

The assigned bow number must be displayed on the boat with the decals as shown in *Figure 1*.

The **yearly registration decals** are to be displayed three inches from the last number on each side of the boat. Only current yearly registration decals may be displayed. The **month of expiration decals** must be displayed immediately behind the yearly registration decals.

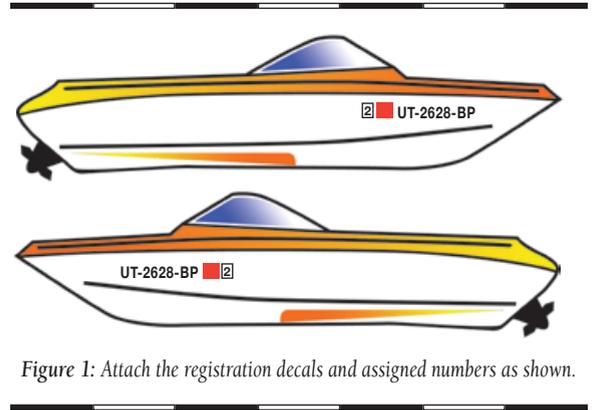


Figure 1: Attach the registration decals and assigned numbers as shown.

## WHEN DOES MY BOAT REGISTRATION EXPIRE?

Just like your vehicle registration, Utah boat registrations expire annually at the end of the month in which the boat was originally registered. Renewal notices are usually mailed to registered owners during the month of expiration.

Owners who purchase boats from a dealer may be issued a 30-day temporary registration from the dealer.

## WHERE IS THE HULL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER?

The hull identification number (HIN) on all boats built after November 1, 1972 is permanently fixed to the rear of the boat, usually on the upper right corner. The number is required by federal law and must appear on the registration application.

The HIN consists of 12 letters and numbers at least one-quarter inch in height indicating manufacturer, hull serial numbers and/or letters and model year and/or month.

## WILL MY BOAT BE TITLED?

Yes, if it was manufactured in 1985 or after. Boats built before 1985 or equipped with motors less than 25 horsepower will not be titled by the Utah Division of Motor Vehicles.

## DO I NEED INSURANCE FOR MY BOAT?

Utah residents need to carry owner or operator liability insurance on motorboats and personal watercraft (PWC). Minimum insurance requirements are: \$25,000/\$50,000 bodily injury/death - \$15,000 property damage or \$65,000 combined minimum per accident. **Motorboats equipped with engines less than 50 horsepower and all airboats are exempt from this requirement.**

**Proof of insurance** must be carried on board whenever boat is in operation.

Non-Utah residents with a vessel registered in another state must meet their state's insurance requirements or comply with Utah's requirements within 90 days.

**Successful completion of a boating safety course may lower your boat insurance premiums.**

## PADDLE SPORTS

Standup paddleboards (SUP), kayaks and canoes are becoming more popular on Utah's waters. Because they handle differently than motorboats, familiarize yourself with the rules of the water before heading out.

Each vessel must have at least one U.S. Coast Guard approved wearable or inflatable life jacket for each person on board. Those 12 years of age and younger must wear a life jacket at all times. You should also carry a spare paddle, bail bucket and whistle. NOTE: Spare paddle and bail bucket are not required for SUP.

**Your craft does not need to be registered in Utah unless a motor or sail is attached.**

# EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS



## WHAT SAFETY EQUIPMENT DO I NEED ON MY BOAT?

**Life Jackets** (Personal Flotation Devices or PFDs)

**Lifejackets save lives!** Nationally, 80% of people who drowned in boating accidents would have survived had they been wearing a PFD. **Wear it Utah!**

Utah law requires that all boats have at least one wearable U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket of proper size, in good and serviceable condition and readily accessible for each person on board. All life jackets must be used in accordance with the age, weight, activity and use restrictions listed on the U.S. Coast Guard approval label.



**Type I PFD | Wearable:** Provides the most buoyancy and turns most unconscious wearers to a face-up position.

**Type II PFD | Wearable:** Turns some unconscious wearers to a face-up position.

**Type III PFD | Wearable:** Designed so wearers can place themselves in a face-up position.

**Type IV PFD | Throwable:** Designed to be thrown to a person in the water, grasped and held by the user until rescued.

**Type V PFD | Wearable:** Designed and approved for specific activities listed on the approval label.

U.S. Coast Guard approved inflatable life jackets are rated as Types I, II, III, or V, and are more comfortable and less bulky to wear than traditional

life jackets. Some models automatically inflate when submerged in the water, while all models can be manually or inflated by mouth. If you plan to wear an inflatable life jacket, read the approval label for age, use restrictions and proper care. Inflatable life jackets may not be used by persons under the age of 13; operating or riding on a PWC; being towed behind a vessel; or while boating on rivers.

Boats 16 to 39 feet in length must carry at least one throwable PFD; vessels 40 feet and greater must carry at least two throwable PFDs. Type IV PFDs need to be stored in plain and open view where they can be quickly accessed.

**Passengers 12 years of age and younger** must wear a properly sized and approved Type I, II, III or V life jacket when the boat is in operation. Type V life jackets must be used according to the requirements on the approval label. Children do not have to wear life jackets while inside an enclosed cabin area of boats 19 feet or more in length.

**Each person being towed on water skis or other devices or operating or riding on a PWC, must wear a properly sized and approved life jacket.**

On rivers, **every person** on any vessel including inner tubes must wear a properly sized and approved life jacket. For persons older than 12 years of age, life jackets may be loosened or removed only while on designated flat water river sections. Contact the Utah State Parks Boating Program for a listing of designated flat water river sections in Utah.

Users of non-standard manually propelled vessels, such as air mattresses and inner tubes, are required to comply with life jacket laws when being used on any river or more than 50 feet away from shore, except in a marked swimming area.

**Wear it Utah! Life Jackets Buy you Time!**



## FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

All motorboats must carry a serviceable U.S. Coast Guard or Underwriters Laboratory (UL) marine approved fire extinguisher. There are two types - rechargeable and disposable.

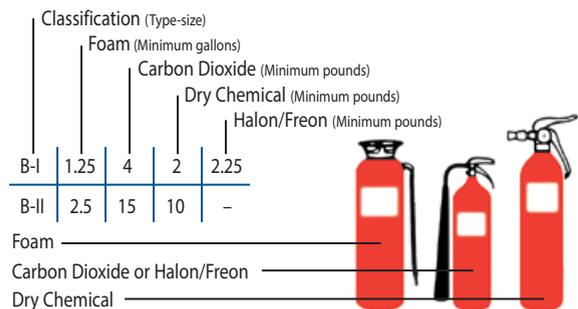
**Rechargeable** fire extinguishers have metal tops and need to be serviced every five years according to the date on the label. If it is discharged, it needs to be recharged or replaced.

**Disposable** extinguishers have plastic tops and expire 12 years from the date it was made (*see label or bottom*). If it is discharged, it needs to be replaced.

Depending on the size of your boat, you will need to carry more than one extinguisher:

- ▶ Less than 26 feet in length: One/B-I
- ▶ 26 feet to less than 40 feet in length: Two/B-I or one/B-II
- ▶ 40 feet to less than 65 feet in length: Three/B-I or one/B-I and one/B-II
- ▶ 65 feet in length and greater: One/fixed system in the engine compartment and three/B-II of which one- helm, one - kitchen, and one - engine compartment

### Marine Fire Extinguisher Classification



**EXEMPTION:** Open construction motors (*outboards*) fewer than 26 feet with portable fuel tanks do not need fire extinguishers, but they are strongly recommended.

## VENTILATION

Gasoline powered boats with covered motors (*inboard or inboard-outboard*) need proper ventilation to remove dangerous and explosive vapors from enclosed engine and fuel tank compartments. Gas vapors are heavier than air and will pool in the bottom with no escape. Be sure the boat is well ventilated before starting the engine, especially after refueling.

## BACKFIRE FLAME CONTROL

All inboard gasoline engines must be equipped with a U.S. Coast Guard or Underwriters Laboratory approved backfire flame arrestor on the carburetor.

## NAVIGATION LIGHTS

All boats must display navigation lights while operating between sunset and sunrise.

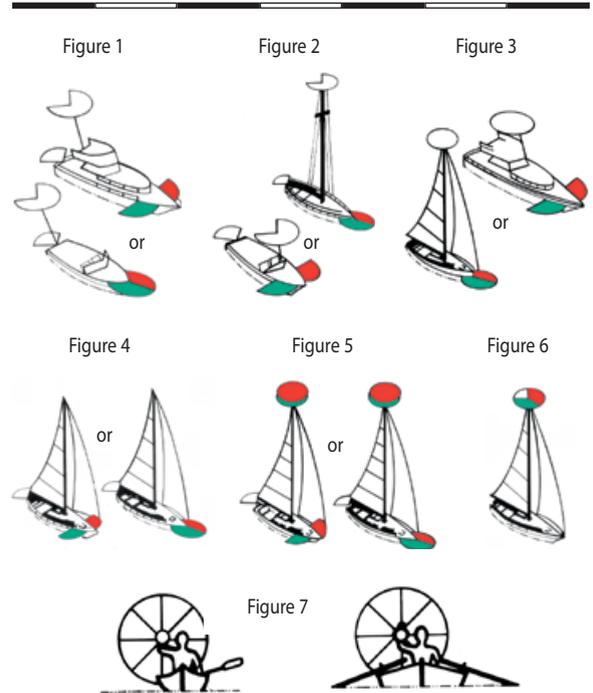
**Motorboats** less than 40 feet must display navigation lights as show in figures 1, 2 or 3. Motorboats 40 to 65 feet long must display navigation lights as shown in figures 1 or 2.

**Sailboats** must display navigation lights as shown in figures 4, 5 or 6. Sailboats under power must follow motorboat navigation light requirements.

**Manually propelled boats** must display either navigation lights required for sailboats or a white light (*flashlight or lantern*) displayed in sufficient time to prevent a collision. See figure 7.

**Personal Watercraft** - PWC (*Jet Skis, Wave Runners, Sea Doos, etc.*) may not be operated between sunset and sunrise, even if they are equipped with navigation lights.

**Boats adrift or at anchor** must display an all-around white light unless anchored in a designated mooring area.



### Visible Range

Location of Lights on Vessel	Less than 40 ft.	40 ft.-60 ft.	Degrees of Arc Lights
 Masthead	2 miles	3 miles	225°
 All-round	2 miles	2 miles	360°
 Side Lights	1 mile	2 miles	112.5° (each color)
 Stern Light	2 miles	2 miles	135°

The display of spotlights, docking lights or other non-navigational lights is limited to intermittent use to approach a dock or to locate a hazard to navigation.

## WHISTLE OR HORN

Boats from 16 to 39 feet long must have a whistle or horn capable of producing a four to six second blast of sound. Boats 40 feet and greater must have a horn or whistle and a bell. A whistle or horn is recommended for boats less than 16 feet in length.



## BAILING DEVICE

All non self-bailing boats must carry a bail bucket or bilge pump. It is a good idea to carry both in case one fails.

## SPARE PROPULSION

Boats less than 21 feet long must have at least one spare paddle, oar or motor on board.

## MUFFLERS

All motorboats must be equipped with a muffler system in good working order and in constant operation to prevent excessive noise. Motorboats manufactured before January 1, 1993 cannot exceed 90 decibels; after 1993 cannot exceed 88. Muffler cutouts or bypass systems are prohibited if they exceed 75 decibels at the shoreline.

## MARINE TOILETS

Pump it, don't dump it! It is illegal to deposit human waste into Utah's waters or on lands adjacent to these waters. Marine toilets must be emptied at dockside or other approved sanitation facilities.

**Keep Utah's waterways clean and beautiful by not littering or polluting in or around them.**



**Pump It!  
Don't Dump It!**

## OTHER EQUIPMENT SUGGESTIONS

Boat owners and operators are advised to carry flashlights, first aid kits, boarding ladders, tool kits, extra line (rope), spare spark plugs, spare bilge plugs, spare propellers, anchors and approved visual distress signals. Cell phones, GPS units and marina band radios have proven vital in many rescue situations.

## AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive quagga and zebra mussels are a major threat to our quality of life. They are small, clam-like creatures that reproduce rapidly and deplete nutrients in the water. They destroy fisheries, pollute shoreline and beaches, damage boats and equipment, and cost millions to control.

They're so small, they could be hitching a ride on your boat without you even knowing it. That is why in 2008, the Utah State Legislature made it illegal to possess or transport invasive mussels. If you have been in infested water, you must decontaminate your boat and equipment before entering or traveling with it in Utah. For more information about infested waters and decontamination processes visit: [wildlife.utah.gov/decontaminate.html](http://wildlife.utah.gov/decontaminate.html) or [stdofthesea.com](http://stdofthesea.com).





## OPERATION REQUIREMENTS



### DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

Alcohol is allowed on all boats; however it is against the law for a person under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs to operate a motorboat. Boating under the influence (BUI) is the same as driving under the influence (DUI) and has the same penalties including suspension of driver license, possible jail time and fines. Please drink responsibly!

A person operating a motorboat on Utah's waters is considered to have given consent to take any field sobriety test requested by a peace officer who feels the person is operating under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. If arrested, your boat, trailer and tow vehicle may be impounded.

### WHAT ARE BOATING STRESSORS?

Natural boating stressors such as the brightness, heat and glare of the sun, noise and vibration of the boat, motion of the boat with the wind and waves, and even darkness can affect a boat operator's coordination, judgment and reaction time. After four hours of being on the water, these stressors will produce a reaction time similar to having a blood alcohol content of .10. Rest frequently on land to reduce the effects of these stressors.

### IS THERE A SPEED LIMIT ON THE WATER?

**Yes!** A wakeless or idle speed is required when operating a boat in a designated slow, wakeless speed area and within 150 feet of another boat, person in the water, a water skier (except those you are towing), shore angler, launch ramp, dock or designated swimming area. You are responsible for any injury or damage caused by your boat's wake. Be courteous and give others plenty of room.

### HOW OLD MUST A PERSON BE TO OPERATE A MOTORBOAT OR SAILBOAT?

Persons under 16 years of age may operate a motorboat or sailboat when accompanied on board and under the direct supervision of a responsible person who is at least 18 years of age.

### HOW OLD MUST A PERSON BE TO OPERATE A PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (PWC)?

Children ages 12 through 17 may operate a PWC (*Jet Ski, Wave Runner, Sea Doo, etc.*), upon completion of a Utah State Parks approved boating education course. In addition to the education course, those between 12 and 15 years must operate under direct supervision of a responsible adult who is at least 18 years of age. A person less than 18 years of age who has not met the above requirements may not operate a PWC unless accompanied on board by a responsible adult.

Education courses are available at: [boating.utah.gov](http://boating.utah.gov).

### WHAT IS MEANT BY DIRECT SUPERVISION?

Direct supervision means supervision within sight at a distance in which visual contact can be maintained by the adult responsible for the young boat operator.



## SAFETY AWARENESS



**Carbon Monoxide** - Known as the silent killer, this gas is odorless and tasteless and can deplete your oxygen to the point of death. Do not allow anyone to spend time around the back of the boat while the engine is running. Early symptoms of poisoning include headache and nausea.



**Propeller Injury** - Avoid serious and potentially deadly injuries by always turning your engine off when people are in the water near the boat's propeller. If your boat is equipped with an engine cut-off switch lanyard, attach it to the operator.

**Weather** - Check the forecast before heading out and pay attention to changing conditions while on the water. Weather can change rapidly in Utah.

**File a Float Plan** - Let a responsible person know where you are going and when you plan to return. Many lives have been saved by following this simple step.

## TOWING PEOPLE BEHIND THE BOAT?

Boat operators must maintain a safe course with a proper lookout when towing a person on water skis, wakeboards or other towed devices. In addition to the operator, an observer, at least eight years old, must be on board to watch and communicate

with the skier. The observer must display an international orange flag; at least 12 inches by 12 inches square and mounted on a handle, when the person(s) is being towed is in the water, either preparing to be towed or finishing a tow.

**Towing people behind a boat is allowed only between sunrise and sunset.** All persons being towed must wear a properly sized life jacket approved for the activity in which it is going to be used. It is prohibited to tow a person(s) in a non-standing position within 20 feet of the back of the towing boat.

You must have room on board your boat, within the boat's maximum person capacity, for any person(s) being towed behind the boat. When operating your boat within the designated slow, wakeless speed area of a launch ramp or developed marina, you are prohibited from towing a person(s) on towed devices.

## MAY PASSENGERS RIDE ON THE BOW OR OTHER EXTERIOR PARTS OF A BOAT?

No one may operate a motorboat faster than a wakeless speed with passengers sitting on front, sides, back, seat backs or motor cover, unless there are adequate rails preventing a person from falling overboard.

Operating a motorboat or having the engine of a motorboat idling while a person is occupying or holding onto the swim platform, swim deck, swim step or swim ladder is prohibited due to risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. This restriction does not apply when the person is assisting with the docking or departure of the motorboat or while the person is entering or exiting the motorboat.

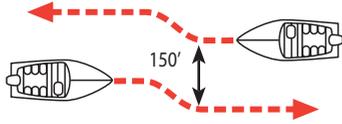
For boats less than 16 feet in length, passengers may not ride on the front of the boat when operated faster than a wakeless speed. For boats 16 feet or longer, passengers may ride on the front if they straddle an upright support on the bow rail without blocking the operator's view.

## WHO HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY?

A boat operator is required to keep a proper lookout by sight and hearing at all times. The operator of a boat is required to operate at a safe speed and distance so as to have adequate time and distance to avoid a collision with another boat or object.

### Meeting Head to Head

When meeting another boat head-on, each boat should change its course to the right.



Both Motorboats Must Alter Course and Speed if Necessary

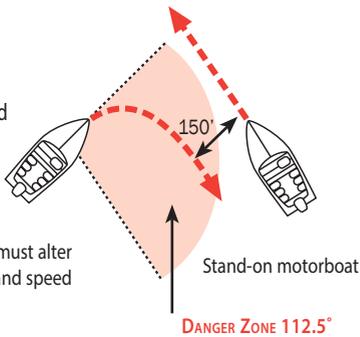
### Crossing

When two boats are crossing paths, the boat on the left must slow down and alter its course to allow the other boat to pass.

Stand-on Motorboat  
Maintains Course & Speed

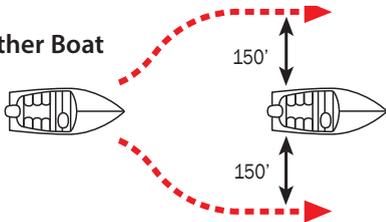
Give-way motorboat

Give-way motorboat must alter  
course and speed



In overtaking situations (*passing from the rear*), the boat being passed has the right of way. The passing boat is required to alter its course if necessary and stay clear of the other boat at least 150 feet away.

### Overtaking Another Boat



In narrow channels, boats underway must stay as far to the right of the middle of the channel as is safely navigable. Motorboats must slow to a wakeless speed if they cannot stay at least 150 feet from other boats.



Motorboats should stay clear of sailboats and manually powered boats and should not create a wake that may cause them trouble. Sailboats and manually powered boats must yield right of way when overtaking motorboats and when a motorboat is adrift or at anchor.

On rivers, boats going downstream usually have the right of way over boats going upstream.

## HELP... THERE'S AN ACCIDENT!

If you are involved in a boating accident, stay calm and do the following:

- ▶ Help other people involved in the accident to the extent you are able.
- ▶ Exchange contact information with any injured person or owner of property damaged
- ▶ Notify local law enforcement officers immediately if anyone dies, disappears, requires treatment beyond simple first aid or if combined property damage exceeds \$2,000.
- ▶ Do not leave the scene prior to rendering aid, exchanging information and notifying local law enforcement. This is illegal.
- ▶ Submit a completed and signed boat owner/operator accident report form to Utah State Parks within 10 days. Forms are available from a park ranger or at: [boating.utah.gov](http://boating.utah.gov).



# AIDS TO NAVIGATION

## WHAT DO WATERWAY MARKERS MEAN?

Waterway markers provide important information to make boating experiences safe and enjoyable by identifying restricted or dangerous waters. Familiarize yourself with these markers:



### CONTROLLED AREA

Designations such as a speed limit, slow no wake, no skiing or no motorboats may be indicated within the orange circle.



### DANGER!

Use extreme caution! Hazards including rocks, sand or rock bars, construction and snags may be indicated inside the orange diamond.



### BOATS KEEP OUT!

Restrictions include waterfalls, swim areas, dams and spillways and are indicated outside the orange crossed diamond.



### INFORMATION

This marker provides non-regulatory information such as directions, distances, and locations.



### CHANNEL MARKER - Center

White buoy with vertical red stripes marks the center of a channel or “safe water.”



### CHANNEL MARKER - Left

Green “can” buoy marks the left side of a channel when proceeding upstream or returning to harbor. This marker will usually be odd numbered.



### CHANNEL MARKER - Right

Red “nun” buoy marks the right side of a channel when proceeding upstream or returning to harbor. This marker will usually be even numbered.



### MOORING BUOY

White buoy with a horizontal blue band that may have a white light or reflector.



### ALPHA FLAG

Blue and white flag identifies a boat involved in diving activities. All other boats must stay at least 150 feet away.



### DIVERS FLAG

Red flag with a diagonal white stripe indicates that one or more diver(s) are diving in the immediate area. All boats must remain 150 feet from the flag, unless in the diving party.

## MORE SAFETY AND COURTESY TIPS

### Swimming

Swimming near a launch ramp, around boat docks, in a mooring area or inside a marina or harbor is prohibited. “Swimming” and “No Swimming” areas are designated for your protection.

Unless one person remains on board to operate the boat, swimming from an unanchored boat can create a dangerous situation. Wind can cause the boat to drift, leaving swimmers stranded in the water. It is a safe practice to wear your life jacket while swimming from your boat in open water.

### Courtesy Docks

Courtesy docks are placed for your convenience. Be courteous by leaving your boat tied to a courtesy dock no longer than 15 minutes. Fishing from or within 75 feet of a courtesy dock is prohibited.

### Launch Ramp Etiquette

Boat ramps are for launching and retrieving only. Vehicles should be parked in designated parking areas and never left unattended on a launch ramp. Be ready to launch your boat before moving onto the ramp. Complete your launch quickly. When retrieving your boat, pull it away from the ramp before wiping it down and securing it for extended travel.



## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Think about possible emergency situations. Determine what to do if someone falls overboard, if there is a fire, breakdown or collision.

Practice putting on your life jacket while you are in the water. Practice throwing a Type IV PFD.

If your boat capsizes, it will usually float. Put on a life jacket and stay with the boat so you can be more easily seen by rescuers.

## OTHER GOVERNING AGENCIES

There are federal, state and local governing agencies that may establish boating safety requirements, which may be more restrictive than Utah's boating laws and rules. Be sure to learn their restrictions before you go boating.

## WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE

Contact the Utah State Parks Boating Program at [boating.utah.gov](http://boating.utah.gov) or call Utah's Boating Hotline at (801) 538- BOAT (2628).



Other boating safety courses are available through:

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary: [www.cgaux.org](http://www.cgaux.org)

# CONTACTS

For a complete copy of Utah's Boating Laws and Rules contact: [Utah State Parks Boating Program](http://Utah State Parks Boating Program), [boating.utah.gov](http://boating.utah.gov):

## Utah State Parks and Recreation

[stateparks.utah.gov](http://stateparks.utah.gov)

1594 West North Temple, Suite 116

P.O. Box 146001

Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6001

Utah's Boating Hotline: 801-538-BOAT (2628)



For boat registration information, contact:

## Utah Division of Motor Vehicles

[dmv.utah.gov](http://dmv.utah.gov)

210 North 1950 West

Salt Lake City, UT 84134

(800) 368-8824 | (801) 297-7780 Salt Lake calling area

For Aquatic Invasive Species information, contact:

## Division of Wildlife Resources

[wildlife.utah.gov/mussels](http://wildlife.utah.gov/mussels)

1594 West North Temple, Suite 2110

P.O. Box 146301 | Salt Lake City, UT 84114

To report possible Aquatic Invasive Species call:

(800) 662-3337 | (801) 538-4700

*The Utah Department of Natural Resources receives federal aid and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin or disability. For information or complaints regarding discrimination, contact: Executive Director, Utah Department of Natural Resources, PO Box 145610, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-5610 or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1801 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20507-0001.*

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