

Stay Safe on the Water: RCMP

Local RCMP want the public to be as safe as possible out on the water this summer. Virtually every recreational activity has some element of risk, including boating. Fortunately, in boating there are some simple ways that you and your family can mitigate those risks. For a start: get your Pleasure Craft Operator Card, it is required. The Lac du Bonnet RCMP hope to be on our waterways patrolling with greater frequency this year.

LIFE JACKETS

Your chances of survival in the event of an unexpected fall overboard or swamping increases exponentially if you are wearing a life jacket. \$300 fine for operating pleasure craft without a life jacket for each person on board.

ALCOHOL

Historically boating and having a few cold ones have gone hand in hand. But like driving, we are all becoming aware of the risks of drinking and boating. Not only is it socially unacceptable, the criminal consequences are becoming just as severe.

PREPARATION

Boating is a great family activity and can be even more fun with a little bit of advanced preparation. It's important to make sure that we have the water toys, fishing gear and snacks aboard, but even more important to take a little extra time to make sure you and your boat are prepared. That includes having the right safety gear, checking the weather, filing a float plan and having a contingency plan in place in case something goes wrong.

IT'S THE LAW

Who Needs the Pleasure Craft Operator Card? In Canada, all persons who operate a pleasure craft must carry proof of competency on board if the pleasure craft has any type of motor, including an electric trolling motor, and is used for recreational purposes. (The only exception is persons operating a pleasure craft in the Northwest Territories or Nunavut). The RCMP will be stopping boats to check for proper licensing. (\$150 fine)

LICENSING

Operators must be 12 years of age or older if not supervised by a person 16 years old or older, for all vessels over 10 horsepower. Unsupervised operators age 12 to 15 are restricted to boats with 40-horsepower motors. Proof of age document must accompany the operator on the water. As of September 15, 2009, proof of competency is required for all individuals operating a motorized pleasure craft in Manitoba. This restriction applies to all residents and to non-residents after 45 consecutive days. There are three ways to obtain proof of competency:

1. Proof of completion of a boating safety course prior to April 1, 1999
2. A pleasure craft operator card from a Canadian Coast Guard accredited course
3. A completed rental-boat safety checklist

The operator card is good for life and requires passing a test. It is possible to take the test without completing the course.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

The following safety equipment is required for all pleasure craft up to eight metres:

Personal flotation device/life jacket that fits each occupant heaving line

Manual propelling device or anchor

Bailer or manual water pump

Class 5BC fire extinguisher if vessel is equipped with an inboard engine, fixed fuel tank or fuel-burning appliance

Watertight flashlight or three flares

Re-boarding device

Sound signalling equipment

Navigation lights

There are additional requirements for larger recreational water vessels, including items such as axes, additional flares and power pumps.

CARELESS OPERATION

· Boat operators considering to be operating in a careless manner may be charged under Criminal Code or ticketed for operating craft in a way that could adversely affect the safety of others, considering the weather, visibility, amount of traffic, or number of other boats or people nearby, manoeuvrability, navigation conditions and hazard.

· When towing or skiing, spare seating must be provided on-board the vessel for every individual under tow, and you must have a spotter who is not the operator of the water craft. Towing is not permitted from one hour after sunset to sunrise. Boats may not be operated within five miles of shore without a noise abatement mechanism in use. There are several restrictions pertaining to engine starting, fueling, and fuel-burning systems, and regarding operation of a boat while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. For more information contact the Lac du Bonnet RCMP at 204-345-6311