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TP 511E

SAFE BOATING GUIDE

Safety Tips and Requirements for Pleasure Craft



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SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

You **must** have the right equipment on board. If something goes wrong on the water, you will be much better prepared to deal with it if you have the right equipment on board, if it is in good working order and if everyone can find it and use it. Remember that the best protection you can give yourself on the water is to always wear your lifejacket or your PFD.

All safety equipment on board must be:

- in good working order;
- always easy to reach (so that it can be used in an emergency); and
- maintained and replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or recommendations.

In Canada, the safety equipment required on board depends on the type and length of your boat. You can find the length of your boat:

- by reading the manufacturer's product information; or
- by measuring it yourself (from the front outside surface of the hull shell to the back outside surface of the hull shell – bow to stern).

REMEMBER: These equipment requirements **apply only to pleasure craft** and are the same whether you own, rent or borrow the boat. This includes typical boats like power boats, sail boats and personal watercraft, as well as less common boats like airboats, air cushion vehicles (hovercraft) and wing in ground effect vessels that are used only for recreation. They also apply when using kiteboards.

These requirements **do not apply to inflatable self-propelled water toys**. These toys are not designed for use in open water. If you do choose to operate these toys in open water, enforcement officers will treat them as pleasure craft that are subject to the same strict rules.

Operating a remote-controlled vessel and a propeller-driven surfboard is against the law in Canada.

Minimum Safety Equipment Requirements

The following list names the minimum safety equipment required on board a pleasure craft. You may want to bring more equipment based on your type of boat, your activity and the current and forecasted weather and water conditions. Once you know the equipment you must carry on board your boat, read the following sections so you can get specific information about each piece.

REMEMBER: If you want information on workboats or commercial vessels' (non-pleasure craft) mandatory equipment, visit [Transport Canada's website](#).

MINIMUM SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS BY BOAT TYPE AND LENGTH

NOTE: See page 19 for notes.

BOAT TYPE AND LENGTH	PERSONAL LIFESAVING APPLIANCES	VISUAL SIGNALS	VESSEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT	NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT	FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paddleboats • Watercycles • Sealed-Hull and Sit-on-Top Kayaks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board* 2. One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) 3. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long 	<p>If boat is over 6 m</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. One (1) watertight flashlight 5. Six (6) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. One (1) bailer OR One manual bilge pump (See Note 3) OR Bilge-pumping arrangements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance 8. Navigation lights (See Note 4) 9. One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) 10. One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) 	None
<p>*If everyone on board is wearing a lifejacket or a PFD of appropriate size, you are only required to carry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1) a sound-signalling device; and • 2) a watertight flashlight if the boat is used after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canoes • Kayaks • Rowboats • Rowing Shells • Other Human-Powered Boats 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board 2. One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) 3. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long 	<p>If boat is over 6 m</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. One (1) watertight flashlight 5. Six (6) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. One (1) bailer OR One manual bilge pump (See Note 3) OR Bilge-pumping arrangements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance 8. Navigation lights (See Note 4) 9. One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) 10. One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) 	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sailboards • Kiteboards 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board* 2. One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) 3. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long 	None	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. One (1) manual propelling device OR One (1) anchor and at least 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination 6. One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump (See Note 3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance 8. Navigation lights (See Note 4) 9. One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) 10. One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) 	None
<p>*If everyone on board is wearing a lifejacket or a PFD of appropriate size, you are only required to carry :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1) a sound-signalling device; and • 2) a watertight flashlight if the boat is used after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility. <p>NOTE: Kiteboarders and sailboarders should not wear a lifejacket or PFD that is fitted with an automatic inflator.</p>					

BOAT TYPE AND LENGTH	PERSONAL LIFESAVING APPLIANCES	VISUAL SIGNALS	VESSEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT	NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT	FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Watercraft (PWC) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board* One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) watertight flashlight OR Three (3) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) manual propelling device OR One (1) anchor and at least 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump (See Note 3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance Navigation lights (See Note 4) One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) 5BC fire extinguisher
<p>*If every person on board a personal watercraft is wearing a lifejacket or a PFD of an appropriate size, you are only required to carry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a sound-signalling device; 2) a watertight flashlight or three pyrotechnic distress signals other than smoke signals; 3) a magnetic compass if the personal watercraft is navigated out of sight of navigation marks; and 4) navigation lights if the personal watercraft is used after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility. <p>NOTE: Lifejacket or PFD must be inherently buoyant.</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sail and Power Boats up to 6 m (19'8") 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long 	<p>If boat is equipped with a motor</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) watertight flashlight OR Three (3) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) manual propelling device OR One (1) anchor and at least 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump (See Note 3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance Navigation lights (See Note 4) One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) 5BC fire extinguisher if equipped with an inboard engine, a fixed fuel tank of any size, or a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sail and Power Boats over 6 m and up to 9 m (19'8" - 29'6") 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long OR One (1) lifebuoy attached to a buoyant line at least 15 m (49'3") long 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) watertight flashlight Six (6) flares of type A, B or C (See Note 2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) manual propelling device OR One (1) anchor and at least 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump (See Note 3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance Navigation lights (See Note 4) One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) 5BC fire extinguisher if equipped with a motor One (1) 5BC fire extinguisher if equipped with a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance

BOAT TYPE AND LENGTH	PERSONAL LIFESAVING APPLIANCES	VISUAL SIGNALS	VESSEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT	NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT	FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sail and Power Boats over 9 m and up to 12 m (29'6" – 39'4") 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long One (1) lifebuoy attached to a buoyant line at least 15 m (49'3") long 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) watertight flashlight Twelve (12) flares of type A, B, C or D, not more than six (6) of which are of type D (See Note 2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) anchor and at least 30 m (98'5") of cable, rope or chain in any combination One (1) manual bilge pump (See Note 3) OR Bilge-pumping arrangements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance Navigation lights (See Note 4) One (1) magnetic compass (See Note 5) One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) 10BC fire extinguisher if equipped with a motor One (1) 10BC fire extinguisher if equipped with a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sail and Power Boats over 12 m and up to 24 m (39'4" – 78'9") 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long One (1) lifebuoy equipped with a self-igniting light or attached to a buoyant line at least 15 m (49'3") long 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) watertight flashlight Twelve (12) flares of type A, B, C or D, not more than six (6) of which are of type D (See Note 2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) anchor and at least 50 m (164'1") of cable, rope or chain in any combination Bilge-pumping arrangements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) sound-signalling appliance. Two required if the boat is 20 m and over that meets the applicable standards set out in the <i>Collision Regulations</i> Navigation lights (See Note 4) One (1) magnetic compass that meets the requirements set out in the <i>Navigation Safety Regulations</i> (See Note 5) One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) 10BC fire extinguisher at all of the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at each access to any space where a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance is fitted; at the entrance to any accommodation space; and at the entrance to the machinery space. One (1) axe Two (2) buckets of at least 10 L each
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sail and Power Boats over 24 m (78'9") 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board One (1) reboarding device (See Note 1) One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 30 m (98'5") long Two (2) SOLAS lifebuoys, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one (1) is attached to a buoyant line at least 30 m (98'5") long; and one (1) is equipped with a self-igniting light. Lifting harness with appropriate rigging 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) watertight flashlight Twelve (12) flares of type A, B, C or D, not more than six (6) of which are of type D (See Note 2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) anchor and at least 50 m (164'1") of cable, rope or chain in any combination Bilge-pumping arrangements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Two (2) sound-signalling appliances that meets the applicable standards set out in the <i>Collision Regulations</i> Navigation lights (See Note 4) One (1) magnetic compass that meets the requirements set out in the <i>Navigation Safety Regulations</i> (See Note 5) One (1) radar reflector (See Note 6) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) 10BC fire extinguisher at all of the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at each access to any space where a fuel-burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance is fitted; at the entrance to any accommodation space; and at the entrance to the machinery space. One (1) power-driven fire pump located outside the machinery space, with one fire hose and nozzle that can direct water into any part of the boat Two (2) axes Four (4) buckets of at least 10 L each

Note 1 – Reboarding Device

A reboarding device is only required if the vertical height that a person must climb to reboard the boat from the water (freeboard) is over 0.5 m (1'8").

Note 2 – Flares

Flares are not required for a boat that:

- is operating on a river, canal or lake in which it can never be more than one (1) nautical mile (1.852 km) from shore; or
- has no sleeping quarters and is engaged in an official competition or in final preparation for an official competition.

Note 3 – Bailer and Manual Bilge Pump

A bailer or manual bilge pump is not required for a boat that cannot hold enough water to make it capsize or a boat that has watertight compartments that are sealed and not readily accessible.

Note 4 – Navigation Lights

Navigation lights are only required if you operate the boat after sunset, before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility (fog, falling snow, etc.).

Note 5 – Magnetic Compass

A magnetic compass is not required if the boat is 8 m (26'3") or less and you operate it within sight of navigation marks.

Note 6 – Radar Reflector

Radar reflectors are required for boats under 20 m (65'7") and boats built of mostly non-metallic materials. A radar reflector is not required if:

- the boat is used in limited traffic conditions, daylight and favourable environmental conditions, and where having a radar reflector is not essential to the boat's safety; or
- the small size of the boat or its operation away from radar navigation makes it impossible to install or use a radar reflector.

REMEMBER: Boating laws change from time to time, so make sure you have the most current information. If the *SAFE BOATING GUIDE* differs from the regulations, remember that it is always the current regulatory text that applies. To learn more about regulations, use the direct links in the CONTACT INFORMATION AND REFERENCES section of this guide.

Alternative Requirements for Boats Involved in Competition

Do you use your boat for racing?

If yes, you **may** be allowed to carry alternative safety equipment during:

- formal training;
- an official competition; or
- final preparations for an official competition.

USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Formal training

Practice for an official competition under the supervision of a coach or official certified by a governing body.

Official competition

Competition or regatta organized by a governing body or by a club or an organization that is affiliated with a governing body.

Final preparation for an official competition

Activities scheduled by the event organizer to prepare for the competitions at the competition venue.

Governing body

National water sport governing body that publishes rules and criteria related to the conduct and safety requirements for skill demonstrations, formal training or official competitions and that:

- certifies coaches and coaching programs;
- certifies officials and programs for officials; or
- recommends training and safety guidelines for certified coaches or officials.

Safety craft

Vessel, aircraft or other means of transport with a crew on board for watch and rescue activities during formal training, final preparation or official competitions.

Racing canoes, racing kayaks and rowing shells involved in competition

Racing canoes, racing kayaks and rowing shells do not have to carry the equipment listed in this guide if they (and their crews) are in formal training, in an official competition or in final preparation for an official competition and:

- are attended by a safety craft that, in addition to its own safety equipment, carries a lifejacket or PFD that fits, for each crew member of the racing boat with the biggest crew;
- OR
- if they carry:
 - a lifejacket or PFD that fits, for each crew member;
 - a sound-signalling device; and
 - a watertight flashlight if operated after sunset, before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility.

In addition to the alternatives outlined above, **rowing shells** do not have to carry the equipment listed in this guide if they are competing in an official provincial, national or international regatta or competition, or are engaged in training at the event's venue.

Racing pleasure craft (other than canoes, kayaks and rowing shells) involved in competition

Racing-type boats do not have to carry the equipment listed in this guide if they:

- are engaged in formal training, in an official competition or in final preparation for an official competition;
- are operated under conditions of clear visibility;
- are attended by a safety craft; and
- carry the safety equipment required by the rules of their sport's governing body.

Sailboards or kiteboards involved in competition

Sailboards or kiteboards do not have to carry the equipment listed in this guide if they are engaged in an official competition where an attending safety craft carries lifejackets or PFDs that fit the sail/kite boarders and that can be put on in the water (It is not recommended that lifejackets or PFDs be fitted with an automatic inflator).