

## PROHIBITED OPERATION

Operating any vessel, water skis or similar devices in a reckless or negligent manner that endangers life, limb or property is prohibited. This includes weaving through congested traffic, operating within 100 feet of an underway towboat, jumping the wake of another vessel too close to that vessel or when visibility is obstructed, and swerving at the last possible moment to avoid a collision.

Negligent operation of a vessel includes inattentive operation, failure to keep a proper lookout, failure to observe the Coast Guard's inland navigation Rules of the Road and operation that results in a collision with another vessel.



No one under 12 may operate a boat powered by a motor greater than 10 horsepower, except under direct and audible supervision of a parent, guardian or other person older than 17.

Personal watercraft operators must be at least 14 and carry proof of boating education certification (if born since Jan. 1, 1986). If an operator is younger than 12, a person at least 21 must be aboard and in a position to immediately take control of the craft. If the operator is 12 or 13, a person at least 18 must be aboard.

Speeding, which creates hazardous washes and wakes for approaching or passing vessels, is prohibited.

Vessels may not exceed 5 mph within 100 feet of a recreation area, dock, pier, raft, float, anchored boat, intake structure or other obstruction unless a contrary speed limit is posted.

Operators of vessels 26 feet or less in length may not allow anyone to ride or sit on the gunwales or the decking over the bow, unless the boat has guards or railing to keep passengers from falling overboard.

It is prohibited to load a vessel beyond its safe capacity or to use a motor that exceeds the maximum safe horsepower capacity (capacities are listed on the manufacturer's capacity plate).

Lanyards attached to motor kill switches must be attached to the vessel's operator, the operator's clothing or the operator's PFD. If the vessel is a houseboat or a pontoon boat traveling less than 5 mph, the lanyard does not have to be attached to the operator.

Sirens are prohibited (except on law enforcement vessels).

## BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

It is unlawful for anyone while under the influence of alcohol or drugs to operate a motorboat. An operator may be arrested when the blood-alcohol level reaches .08 percent or .02 percent if under 21 years of age. Any operator of a motorboat is subject to a blood-alcohol test, according to the Arkansas Implied Consent Law.

## REPORTING ACCIDENTS

Arkansas law requires operators of vessels involved in a collision or accident to:

1. Assist anyone harmed by the incident, as much as he can, without danger to his vessel, crew or passengers;
2. Supply his name, address and identification of his vessel (in writing) to anyone injured and to the owners of property damaged in the incident;
3. Notify the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission or local sheriff's department about the incident.

All accidents that involve death, injury or property damage of \$500 or more must be reported.

*Arkansas Game and Fish Commission wildlife officers and other certified law enforcement officers in Arkansas enforce boating laws. According to Arkansas law (Title 27-101-105), officers have authority to stop or board any vessel.*

*Boating education courses are offered statewide, free of charge. To register for a class, call the Commission's boating education section, (501) 223-6378.*



This brochure is a summary of Arkansas boating law (Title 27, Subtitle 7) and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission regulations; it is not comprehensive. Some waters are under special regulations, which are posted at access areas. For more information, contact a local wildlife officer or the Commission's boating law administrator at the number listed below.



Arkansas Game & Fish Commission  
Boating Enforcement Section  
2 Natural Resources Drive • Little Rock, AR 72205  
501-223-6379 • [www.agfc.com](http://www.agfc.com)

# Guide to Arkansas Boating Law 2007



**Arkansas Game and  
Fish Commission**



## 🚢 PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs)

All vessels must have at least one Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III or V PFD in working condition and of proper size for each person aboard. If a Type V PFD is used, it must be worn at all times.

In addition to these requirements, one Type IV (throwable) Coast Guard-approved PFD must be aboard vessels 16 feet or longer.

Boaters under 13 must wear a well-fitting PFD at all times when they are aboard. The exceptions are when they are within an enclosed area of a houseboat or cruiser, or within the railing of a party barge when the boat is not underway.

Riders of personal watercraft (Jet Ski, Sea-Doo, WaveRunner, etc.) are required to wear a PFD. Inflatable PFDs are not approved for personal watercraft use.

## 🚢 TYPES OF PFD

### **Type I: Offshore life vest**

Provides the most buoyancy, effective for all waters. Designed to turn most unconscious users to a face-up position in the water.

### **Type II: Near-shore life vest**

Intended for calm, inland waters. May lack the capacity to turn users to face-up position.

### **Type III: Flotation aid**

Also for calm, inland waters. Examples include float coats, fishing vests and vests designed with features for various sports.

### **Type IV: Throwable device**

These cushions or ring buoys are to be thrown to anyone in need.

### **Type V: Special-use device**

Intended for specific activities and must be used according to conditions on the label. Examples are deck suits, work vests, board sailing vests and inflatable PFDs.

## 🚢 WATER SKIING

Anyone being towed in a watersport activity must wear a Type I, II, III or V PFD. Water skiing (or any similar activity) is prohibited at night (half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise).

Boats towing water skiers or anyone on a similar device must include an observer (besides the driver) at least 12 years old, or have a wide-angle marine mirror so the person towed can be seen by the operator.

Mirrors for towing purposes are not allowed on personal watercraft. Personal watercraft that seat three or more people only are allowed for towing.

## 🚢 BOATING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Anyone born since Jan. 1, 1986 who's of legal age to operate a motorboat must complete the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission safe boating course or a certified boating education course from another state to operate a motorboat in Arkansas. Proof that such a course has been passed must be carried while boating.

Shown to the right is a sample of the color-coded validation sticker that is issued with your boat registration.



## 🚢 REGISTRATION

Arkansas law requires that vessels propelled by sail or machinery must be registered.

Exceptions:

1. Vessels documented by the Coast Guard.
2. Vessels owned by the United States, a state or any subdivision.
3. A ship's lifeboat.

Arkansas boat owners may register at the county revenue office where they live or where the boat is used.

All registered boats must be assessed for taxes.

Registration is valid for three years.

### **Registration Fees**

- Vessels less than 16 feet long . . . . . \$7.50
- Vessels 16 feet to less than 26 feet. . . . . \$15.00
- Vessels 26 feet to less than 40 feet. . . . . \$51.00
- Vessels 40 feet or longer. . . . . \$105.00

Anyone who buys a new boat has 20 working days to register the boat. Anyone who buys a used boat has 10 days to transfer the certificate of ownership. Boats may be operated during these grace periods, as long as the new owner carries a bill of sale with the date of purchase. Boats registered in other states may be operated in Arkansas up to 90 days without Arkansas registration.

Military personnel stationed in Arkansas do not have to exchange their out-of-state registrations for Arkansas registrations

County revenue offices offer permits for dealers or manufacturers who wish to operate unregistered motorboats during testing or demonstration. An identifying number from the revenue office must be attached or displayed on both sides of the bow. This does not apply to rental boats.



## 🚢 REGISTRATION NUMBER DISPLAY

The identification number assigned to each registered vessel shall be:

1. Painted, attached or otherwise permanently displayed on both sides of the forward half or bow of the vessel;
2. In BLOCK characters not less than three inches high;
3. Of a color that contrasts with the background, and is clearly visible and legible.

A pair of color-coded validation stickers, issued with boat registration, indicates the expiration date. One sticker must be placed on each side of the bow, three inches behind and on the same level as the identifying number. No other numbers may be displayed on the bow.

## 🚢 INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Vessels powered by motors greater than 50 hp and personal watercraft are required to carry proof of liability insurance on board.

## 🚢 MUFFLER EQUIPMENT

Arkansas law prohibits the use of motorboats without exhaust muffling systems, which ensure quiet operation, except during an authorized regatta.

## 🚢 LIGHTS

Vessels must be equipped with prescribed lights during darkness. Vessels on nonfederal waters and vessels without power (rowboats, canoes and sailboats) must have light sources readily available to be used to prevent collisions. Motorboats on federally controlled waters must have a red and green light on the bow and a white horizon light on the stern, visible from 360 degrees.

