

ARIZONA BOATING LAWS & REGULATIONS

Boating Safety Hotline: 928-783-4427 (24 hours a day)

Below is an abbreviated version of the Arizona Boating laws, which can be used as a quick reference to pertinent boating rules. In order to review the Arizona Boating & Water Sports Laws in their entirety, proceed to *Arizona Revised Statutes Title 5* and scroll down to chapter 3.

Definitions

Person: any individual or group of individuals.

Watercraft: any boat designed to be propelled on water by oars, paddles or wind acting upon a sail.

Waterway: any body of water on which a watercraft may be navigated.

Wakeless speed: a speed that does not create a wake, but in no case more than 5 mph.

Aids to navigation: buoys, beacons or other fixed objects designed to direct navigation.

Regulatory marker: any anchored or fixed marker on or near the water, other than aids to navigation, including markers to indicate swimming areas, speed zones, danger points, wakeless areas, keep-out areas, mooring buoys and general information.

Sound level: the noise level measured in decibels on the "A Scale" set forth by the U.S.A. Standards Institute for sound meters.

Application

These provisions apply on all waterways of the state, including those common to interstate boundaries.

Watercraft Numbers

Every watercraft, operated, moored or anchored on the waterways of Arizona must be numbered. The owner must file an application for number to the Arizona Game and Fish Department on forms provided. The number issued must be displayed on each side of the bow along with the current registration decal issued by the department.

Boat Liveries, Rentals

- A. Persons renting boats must keep records of the renters' names and addresses, identification, numbers of the boats rented, and dates and actual time of return for at least three months.
- B. No watercraft may be rented unless it is equipped as provided in these regulations.
- C. Certificates of number for watercraft under 26 feet long rented for less than 24 hours may be held on shore or place of departure, but numbers must be displayed on watercraft.
- D. Dealers or manufacturers may use numbers and decals attached to removable signs.



Personal Flotation Devices

All watercraft must be equipped with U.S. Coast Guard approved flotation devices as follows:

- A. A child twelve years of age or under on board a watercraft shall wear a United States Coast Guard approved type I, II, or III personal flotation device whenever the watercraft is underway.
- B. Boats under 16 feet and all canoes or kayaks must carry at least one device of any type for each person on board.
- C. Boats 16 feet and over must carry a wearable device (vest or jacket) for each person on board plus at least one throwing device (ring buoy or cushion).

Any person being towed behind a watercraft must wear a buoyant belt or personal flotation device.

No person shall operate a watercraft in such a manner as to show disregard for other persons or property.

Diver Flags

A red flag with white diagonal stripes running from staffhead to opposite lower corner shall be recognized as a diver flag, indicating there are divers below the surface.

Muffling Devices

All watercraft must be equipped with effective muffling equipment in good working condition and in constant operation to prevent excessive or unusual noise, unless the watercraft is competing in an approved race or has been issued a testing permit from the Department. Unless operating under such permit, no person shall operate a watercraft which emits a sound level in excess of 86 decibels on the "A" weighted scales, as measured 50 or more feet away from the watercraft.

Overloading

All watercraft 20 feet or less in length sold or manufactured in Arizona after January 1, 1971, must have a capacity plate attached and readily visible from the position normally occupied by the operator of the watercraft. No watercraft may be loaded beyond the safe carrying capacity indicated on this plate. Such plates are not required on canoes and sailboats.

Fire Extinguishers

All watercraft under 26 feet long and using as fuel any volatile liquid having a flashpoint of 110 degrees or less shall carry at least one Coast Guard approved Type B-I fire extinguisher if any of the following conditions exist:



- A. Inboard engine.
- B. Closed compartments under thwarts and seats where portable fuel tanks may be stored.
- C. Double bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not completely filled with flotation materials.
- D. Closed living spaces.
- E. Closed stowage compartments in which combustible or flammable materials are stored.
- F. Permanently installed red fuel tanks. Fuel tanks secured so they cannot be moved in case of fire or other emergency shall be considered permanently installed.

Watercraft from 26-40 feet shall carry:

- A. At least two Type B-I fire extinguishers, or;
- B. At least one Type B-II fire extinguisher.

When a fixed fire extinguisher system is installed in a machinery space there shall be aboard at least one B-I Type fire extinguisher.

All Watercraft 40-65 feet long must carry at least three Type B-I fire extinguishers, or at least one Type B-I and one B-II Type extinguisher, when there is no fixed fire extinguishing system installed in machinery spaces. When a fixed extinguisher system is installed in machinery spaces, there must be at least two B-I and at least one B-II extinguishers aboard.

Careless Operations

A person shall not operate a watercraft while allowing a person to ride on the gunwales, the transom, or the decked over bow of a watercraft propelled by machinery operating in excess of wakeless speed.

No person shall operate a watercraft in such a manner as to show willful or wanton disregard for other persons or property.

Operation Age

Except in case of emergency, no person under the age of twelve years may operate a watercraft propelled by a motor of greater than eight horsepower, unless the person's parent or legal guardian or at least one person who is eighteen years of age or older is present on the watercraft.

It is also unlawful for any person to allow another person under the age of twelve to operate a motor-powered watercraft.

NOTE: Jet powered "personal watercraft" (Jet skis) are over the eight horsepower limit.

Speed Restrictions

No person shall operate a watercraft at a greater speed than prudent under prevailing conditions. Speed shall be controlled as to avoid a collision or creating a dangerous wake.

Prohibited Operations By Incapacitated Persons

No person under the influence of liquor or drugs, or who is mentally or physically incapable of operating a water craft under prevailing circumstances, shall be in physical control of any watercraft. A person found guilty of this violation could receive a fine of up to \$2,500 and a jail sentence of up to six months.

Lights

Either Inland or International Rules for Lights must be observed between sunset and sunrise when underway or adrift.

Inland rules for lights on motorboats under 26 feet prescribe a red and green combination light forward, and a bright white light aft to show all around the horizon (360 degrees). Motorboats 26-60 feet shall display a 20-point light on the bow as close as is practical to the stem and a white 32-point light aft and higher than the bow light to show all around the horizon. Separate side lights showing red 10 points to port and green 10 points to starboard shall be used and fitted with screens to prevent them from being seen across the bow.

International Rules for Lights on motorboats under 40 feet prescribe a red and green combination light, or separate red and green lights forward, a white 20-point light forward and three feet higher than the colored lights, and a white 12-point light aft.

All sailboats without an auxiliary engine on board shall display separate red and green lights forward, and a white 12-point light aft.

Manually propelled watercraft shall carry a lantern or flashlight showing a light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to avert collision. Lights are not necessary on waters where power craft are prohibited.

A white 360 degree light must be displayed any time a watercraft is anchored in other than a special anchorage.

Interference with Navigation Prohibited

No person shall operate a watercraft or swim in a manner which unnecessarily or unreasonably interferes with other watercraft or with areas used for launching. Anchoring or swimming in heavily traveled channels or blocking launching areas shall constitute such interference.

Water-Skiing

No watercraft having in tow a person or persons on water skis, surf board or similar contrivance shall be operated unless the watercraft is occupied by a least two persons: an operator and an observer.

The observer shall display a bright or brilliant orange or red flag visible from all directions, no less than 12 x 12 inches on a side and mounted on a handle, at all times when a skier is down in the water and not actually skiing.

No person shall operate water skis or similar contrivances in a careless or reckless manner so as to endanger life or property, or in a manner contrary to that designated by regulatory markers. Water-skiing is prohibited between sunset and sunrise.

Blocking Launching Areas

No person shall camp or park on any boat-launching area or otherwise restrict or prevent free access to the launching area.

Dumping Refuse, Littering

It is illegal to dump refuse, rubbish, etc. on the waterways or shorelines of this state. Watercraft sewage systems which dump directly into the water must be sealed. Discharge of any sewage system into waterways or onto shorelines is illegal.

Accident: Duties of Operator

The operator of any watercraft involved in an accident which results in injury or property damage shall immediately stop such watercraft, give his name and address and the name and address of the owner to the injured party, render reasonable assistance and promptly report the incident to the nearest agency. A report must be filed directly with the Department's Phoenix office.

Enforcement

- A. All peace officers of the state, counties, and cities shall enforce the provisions of this title.
- B. In the enforcement of this article an officer may issue a citation and order the operator of the watercraft ashore to correct the violation or may issue a warning order.
- C. All watercraft operators are required to stop when hailed by a peace officer.

Violations: Penalty

Any person who violates this title is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000 and a jail sentence of six months.

Right of Way - Navigation Rules

- A. The operator of a watercraft under power shall yield the right of way to any craft not under power, unless the empowered craft is overtaking the powered craft.
- B. Operators of watercraft shall yield right of way to watercraft entering its "danger zone," which is a area from straight ahead to 112 degrees to starboard (right side), in cases where a collision might occur. (This is roughly the same angle as the green, or right side, running light.)
- C. Watercraft may pass on either side when overtaking another, but the operator of the passing watercraft shall be responsible for any collision and for his wake. Watercraft being overtaken shall maintain course and speed. Watercraft meeting head-on shall pass portside to portside (left side) when practical to do so.
- D. Normal traffic on waterways shall be counter-clockwise. Watercraft leaving the shoreline shall yield right of way to watercraft approaching the shoreline.

(Subsections A through D do not apply where motorboats are prohibited.)

Waterways Marking System

(Regulatory Markers and Aids to Navigation)

- A. No person shall operate a watercraft on the waters of the state contrary to the manner prescribed by lawful regulatory markers.
- B. No person shall moor or fasten a watercraft to any regulatory marker, or remove, obstruct, or interfere with any regulatory marker.
- C. All regulatory markers will be colored white and orange.
- D. Geometric shapes painted on regulatory markers shall indicate:
 - a. A diamond means danger.
 - b. A diamond with a cross inside means no boats allowed.
 - c. Circles mean boats are subject to restrictions indicated inside the circle.
 - d. A square or rectangular shape with directions inside gives specific directions, such as "marina," etc.
- E. On a well-defined channel, aids to navigation shall be solid colored buoys unless otherwise marked. A buoy marking the left side of a channel (looking upstream or uplake from the dam) shall be green. Buoys marking the right side of the channel shall be all red. Such buoys shall be in pairs, marking each side of the channel, except that on an irregularly defined channel they may be staggered on alternate sides of the channel. In all cases, watercraft should pass between the buoys.
- F. A buoy with alternate red and white stripes means the watercraft should not pass between the buoy and the shore.
- G. Navigational markers may be equipped with flashing lights.
- H. Mooring buoys shall be white with a horizontal blue band halfway between the top of the buoy and the waterline.

Staggered Registration

Staggered registration is similar to motor vehicle registration. Decals issued will be the color of the year of expiration and will display the month and year of expiration.

If ownership of a watercraft changes, the new owner must notify the Department within 15 days. The owner must notify the Department within 15 days if his address changes or if a watercraft is stolen.

No number other than the one issued by the Department may be displayed on the forward half of any watercraft.

The registration certificate must be aboard when a watercraft is in use.

If a certificate of number is lost or destroyed, a duplicate may be obtained for the Department for \$2.00.

Dealer Numbers

Dealers or manufacturers may use numbers and decals attached to removable signs.

Numbering: Exceptions

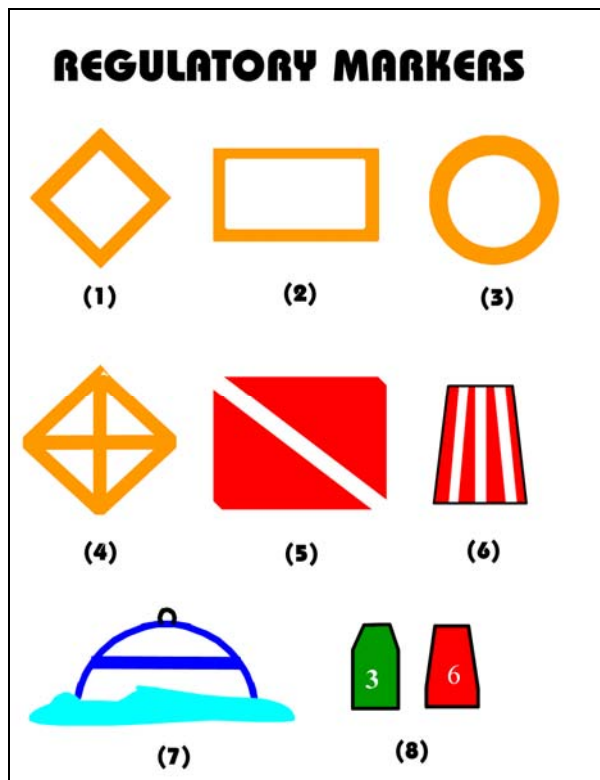
Makeshift contrivances constructed of inner tubes or floatable materials not propelled by machinery, personal flotation equipment worn or held in hand, and other objects used for floating or swimming aids and not for navigation are exempt from registration and numbering.

Reciprocity

Non-resident-owned watercraft currently registered in another state may be operated on the waters of Arizona for a period of 90 days.

Watercraft Tax and Registration Fee

An annual registration fee of \$4.00 for residents and \$10.00 for non-residents is required for each watercraft. Watercraft will also be taxed on the basis of length: 50 cents per foot up to and including 18 feet, and 75 cents per foot over 18 feet for residents. Non-residents will be charged 65 cents per foot up to and including 18 feet, and \$1.25 per foot over 18 feet.



1. DANGER! Nature of danger may be indicated inside the diamond shape--e.g. rocks, reef, dams, construction or snags.
2. INFORMATION. Tells directions, distances, places, food, repairs, supplies and other nonregulatory messages.
3. CAUTION. Controlled area as indicated in circle--e.g. speed limit, no fishing, no anchoring, ski only, slow/no wake, no ski and no prop boats.
4. BOATS KEEP OUT! Nature of danger may be placed outside crossed diamond--e.g. waterfalls, swim areas or rapids.
5. DIVER'S FLAG. Caution, diver below.
6. OBSTRUCTION MARKER. Cardinal system--do not pass between buoy and shore.
7. MOORING BUOY.
8. AIDS TO NAVIGATION. Green color and odd numbers are on port side when traveling upstream. Red color and even numbers are on starboard side when traveling upstream.



SMART BOATERS & JET SKIERS...



ALWAYS travel in a counter clockwise direction (the closest shoreline is to the right shoulder) even when a more direct route would be easier.

ALWAYS have a serviceable Coast Guard approved fire extinguisher (check it every day as per the instructions printed on the label) even when it's not their boat.

ALWAYS have a serviceable Coast Guard approved life jacket (personal flotation device) on board for each person in the proper size--adult sizes are not acceptable for children.

ALWAYS have children 12-years-old and younger wearing their life jackets while the boat is moving, even when it's hot and they're whining.

ALWAYS have a sober, knowledgeable driver even when there's nothing else to drink.

ALWAYS have an observer with an orange or red flag while water skiing.

ALWAYS display the flag when the skier is in the water.

ALWAYS stay 60 feet or more from other boats while moving above a wakeless speed even when they're friends and it appears to be funny.

ALWAYS obey regulatory buoys and know what they mean.

ALWAYS leave and return to the boat ramps at a very slow speed (no wake) so that they do not interfere with other boats as they launch.

ALWAYS operate the watercraft in a cautious manner as if their life depends on it...BECAUSE IT DOES!