

**Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Safety
Safety Standard Operating Procedure Number: SP 10-12
Date: March 11, 2013**

Status: FINAL

Title: Boating Safety

Purpose:

The purpose of this Safety Standard Operating Procedure (SSOP) is to outline the Agency procedures to ensure safe boating operations during the performance of any assigned duties which involve the operation of any type of watercraft.

Requirements:

1. In order to be considered as “qualified” to operate any type of watercraft:
 - a. The employee must be entered into the Agency Safety Management System (SMS) and assigned the “Technical-Field” or “Technical-Field-Supervisor” worker category. Employees who are also required to be on the respirator program should be coded “Respirator User”.
 - b. The employee’s SMS Assessment worksheet must specify that boat operation is part of the employee’s current duties.
 - c. The employee’s Safety Report on the SMS must show the date of the last “**Boating Safety**” training and the due date.
 - d. **Boating Safety Refresher training is required annually for all employees who will be operating any type of watercraft in order to remain qualified for operation.**
 - e. Documentation of all Boating Safety Refresher training should be provided to the Agency Safety Coordinator as soon as possible after completion. Upon receipt, the SMS Safety Reports will be updated with the new completion and due dates.
 - f. Annual Boating Safety Refresher training can be informal training provided on-the-job as part of other job training.
2. All divisions with employees who will be operating any type of watercraft must ensure that these employees have been identified in the Safety Management System (SMS) and that all boating safety training is current.

3. All operators of any type of watercraft used by the Ohio EPA must attend an approved National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Boating Education Course” (This course is required by Ohio law for all persons born after January 1, 1982, who operate a boat powered by greater than 10 horsepower engine.) The training should be completed before operating any watercraft. Information on where to obtain this course can be found on the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Watercraft’s website.

4. In addition to successfully completing the Boating Education Course, employees must annually demonstrate proficiency in boat operations with an operator with experience with the specific watercraft the new employee intends to operate. This should be a main part of the annual boating safety refresher training.

5. All operators, and/or crew leaders, of Agency watercraft must provide all passengers the following information: where to find safety equipment on the watercraft; instructions on properly don life jackets; how to disengage / power off the motors; emergency signaling; and, any other safety information relevant to the specific type of watercraft being used.

6. The operator of any watercraft must ensure that all passengers follow all safe boating practices at all times. Specifically, all operators and passengers must wear life jackets (with all buckles, etc., fastened) while working onboard watercraft or on/near the water including docks. The employee operating the watercraft is legally responsible for the vessel and passengers. As such, this employee’s instructions regarding safe boating practices shall be followed regardless of the employee’s status as a supervisor, environmental specialist, etc.

7. Each division that owns a watercraft shall define the list of required safety equipment for the vessel. A list of required safety equipment, by watercraft length and power source, may be found on the Ohio Department of Natural Resources website:

<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/watercraft/requiredequipment/tabid/2727/default.aspx>

8. The operator of each watercraft must ensure adequate safety equipment (i.e., life Jackets, vests, preservers, fire extinguishers, signaling equipment, etc.) is available for use by the operator and passengers. Sufficient quantities should be available to outfit the maximum number of passengers (based on the vessel rating, even if not on-board) on the particular watercraft. In smaller watercraft where space may be limited due to equipment required to perform field work, the amount of life jackets, vests, preservers may be reduced consistent with the number of persons in the watercraft.

9. When operating on larger bodies of water (*i.e.*, Lake Erie, Ohio River, etc.) Agency watercraft shall be equipped with a VHF marine radio in order to communicate with commercial vessels or to radio for emergency assistance. In addition, it is highly recommended that employees who will be operating watercraft in locations where there can be heavy boat traffic should also take the Navigation Rules mini-course available on-line from the ODNR Division of Watercraft.

www.boaterexam.com/navigationrules

10. All interns who will be operating any type of water craft must be under the direct supervision of a qualified full-time staff member, until they have demonstrated their proficiency in safe boat operations.

11. Prior to trailering a boat to a launch location or returning from a launch location, The vehicle operator must ensure: the boat is secured to the trailer; the hitches are installed correctly; safety chains are in place; trailer braking devices are functioning properly; all gear is stowed including the boat fuel tanks; and all vehicle lighting is functioning appropriately.

12. Employees should be encouraged to receive ongoing training in boat operation and boating safety. Training must be provided on the specific type(s) of watercraft (canoe, kayak, powerboat, etc.) that will be operated.

13. Accidents involving any type of watercraft must be immediately reported to the Agency Safety Coordinator. If injuries are involved the incident must also be reported on an Accident Report form.