

## BEFORE YOU GO

### Lifejackets

80% of boating fatality statistics report that the victim was not wearing a lifejacket or PFD. No matter your favourite activity or style choice, there's a flotation device ideally suited for you. Don't be caught unprepared should the unforeseen occur. Lifejackets and PFDs only work when you wear them.



For more information on lifejackets, visit [www.weathertoboat.ca](http://www.weathertoboat.ca) and click on Boating Notes.

### Navigation Lights

Navigation lights and signals tell other vessels not only where you are, but what you are doing. Using these lights and signals properly is an important part of safe navigation.

The Collision Regulations mandate that boats operating between dusk and dawn, and during periods of reduced visibility, must display navigation lights in a colour and configuration that meets established technical standards. The most common configuration on power and sail boats is red and green (*port and starboard*) sidelights with either a single all around white light or combination masthead light and stern light giving 360 degree visibility.

Many human-powered boats (*canoes, kayaks, rowboats, etc.*) are not designed with navigation lights. To be compliant when boating at night, you must display a light or lantern that can be seen in an arc of 360°.

Personal Watercraft and other small outboard-powered boats are often not equipped with navigation lights as part of their design. To be compliant, red and green sidelights and an all-around white light can be retro-fitted.

Those sharing the water with larger, commercial vessels, barges or other towed objects should consult [www.weathertoboat.ca](http://www.weathertoboat.ca) and click on **Boating Notes** to become familiar with other specific application lighting configurations.

### In Case of Emergency

In case of an emergency, remain calm, account for all people on board, put on your lifejackets if not already worn, **call \*16 on cell or radio VHF Channel 16** for help. Be prepared to provide a complete description of your boat, the number of people on board, your location and the nature of the emergency.

### Navigational Aids

As on our roadways, a series of signs and signals exist to help keep us safe. Likewise, a variety of navigational aids are used on the water to indicate areas of the safest water, alert us to hazards and advise of areas where speed is restricted. The most commonly seen of these are the lateral buoys and day beacons as shown below:

#### Lateral Buoys

**1. Bifurcation (red and green bands)** - You may pass this buoy on either side when moving upstream. The colour of the top band shows which is the main or preferred channel. For example: keep this buoy on your starboard (right) side.

**2. Port (green can)**  
Keep this buoy on your port (left) side when going upstream.

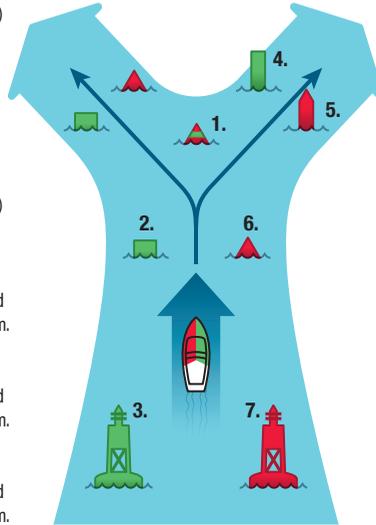
**3. Port (green pillar)**  
Keep this buoy on your port (left) side when going upstream.

**4. Port (green spar)**  
Keep this buoy on your port (left) side when going upstream.

**5. Starboard (red spar)**  
Keep this buoy on your starboard (right) side when going upstream.

**6. Starboard (red conical)**  
Keep this buoy on your starboard (right) side when going upstream.

**7. Starboard (red pillar)**  
Keep this buoy on your starboard (right) side when going upstream.



#### Standard Daybeacons

 **Port Hand**  
When going upstream, keep a port hand day beacon on your port (left) side.

 **Junction**  
(Preferred channel to right)  
This day beacon marks a point where the channel divides and may be passed on either side. If you want to take the channel to your right, keep this day beacon on your port (left) side.

 **Starboard Hand**  
When going upstream, keep a starboard hand day beacon on your starboard (right) side.

 **Junction**  
(Preferred channel to left)  
This day beacon marks a point where the channel divides and may be passed on either side. If you want to take the channel to your left, keep this day beacon on your starboard (right) side.

*Buoys and daybeacons may also be lighted at night.*

### Monitor the Weather

Weather and water conditions play a big role in your safety on the water. Before heading out, make sure you get the latest (marine) forecast for your area and that you understand what it means.

Thunderstorms can strike without warning so, while you're out, remember to keep your eye on the sky. If a storm is brewing, quickly head for shore. Check your nautical charts in advance so you'll know where to seek shelter.

When high winds are forecast, Environment Canada may issue a warning. The most common of these is a **Strong Wind Warning** when winds are blowing between 20-33 knots / 37-61 km/h. Other, more severe, classes of warnings are issued as wind speeds increase further.

### Pre-Departure Checklist

A pre-departure checklist provides a foolproof way to ensure that you have taken into account all the things you can to ensure that your time on the water will go as planned. It's also a good idea to ensure that your passengers know the location of all safety equipment prior to departing the dock should you become incapacitated in an emergency.

### Sail/Trip Plan

#### Long Voyages vs Short Trips

A sail/trip plan includes your planned travel route and describes your boat. Also called float plans, they're intended to provide Search & Rescue with details to be used in a search should you not return as planned. They're especially important on overnight and longer cruises but, even when out for an hour or two, be sure to let a responsible person know where you're going, when you're expecting to return and the number to call should you be overdue.

To learn more, visit [www.weathertoboat.ca](http://www.weathertoboat.ca) and click on Boating Notes, and **download the Weather to Boat App** for up to date weather forecasts, user-friendly pre-departure and required safety equipment checklists, quick and easy electronic Trip Plans with emergency contact alerting, and so much more.

### Boat Sober

Mixing alcohol, cannabis or prescription drugs with boating is far more dangerous than you might think. You are legally responsible for the safety of your vessel and passengers and for not putting other waterway users in danger. You must always be prepared and alert.

Provinces and territories have their own rules when it comes to impaired boating. Contact your local law enforcement authorities for more information.

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# Weather to Boat 'Notes'

## Your Guide to Boating Safety



Public Safety / Sécurité publique  
Canada / Canada  
Funded through the Search and Rescue  
New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF)

[weathertoboat.ca](http://weathertoboat.ca)



Weather to Boat is **MORE** than just a weather app. It provides lots of information that will help make your boating experience safer and more enjoyable. Download for **FREE**, available now in the app stores.

- Up to date marine and local weather forecasts for your boating area
- Personalized pre-departure and safety equipment checklists specific to your boat
- Interactive trip planner with emergency contact alerting
- Geo-referenced marinas and boat launches
- Boating tips, videos and much more

## Pleasure Craft Operator Card

Every operator of a motorized recreational vessel must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC), or other approved proof of competency aboard along with proof of identity. Other acceptable examples of competency include a marine safety certificate, a completed rental boat safety checklist or a Canadian boating safety course certificate issued before April 1st, 1999.

A course to earn a PCOC can be obtained from a variety of providers across Canada. The list of providers can be found by visiting [www.weathertoboat.ca](http://www.weathertoboat.ca) and clicking on **Boating Notes**.

## Operational restrictions on youth under 16 years of age.

AGE	HORSEPOWER RESTRICTIONS
Under 12 <i>No direct supervision</i>	→ Up to 7.5 kW (10 hp)
12 to under 16 <i>No direct supervision</i>	→ Up to 30kW (40 hp)
Under 16 <i>Regardless of supervision</i>	→ May not operate a PWC

## Rules of the Road

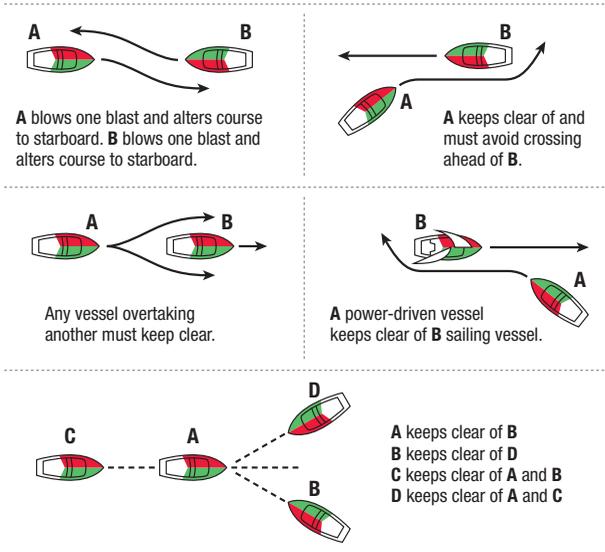
The "rules of the road" for Canada's waterways help everyone avoid collisions on the water by setting out what every boater should do to avoid hitting or being hit by another vessel.

### Some basic rules:

1. Power boats give way to sailboats and paddle craft
2. Sailboats give way to paddle craft
3. Sailboats under power are considered power boats and give way accordingly.



- 1. Port**  
If a power-driven vessel approaches within this sector, maintain your course and speed with caution.
- 2. Starboard**  
If a power-driven vessel approaches within this sector, take early and substantial action to avoid a collision by passing behind the approaching boat.
- 3. Stern**  
If any vessel approaches this sector, maintain your course and speed with caution.



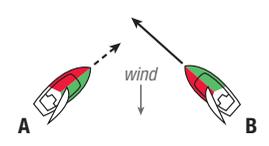
## Keep Watch to Avoid Collisions

Keeping constant watch for others on the water is common sense and the law. If you are sharing the water with large vessels, remember that it is harder for them to see you or change their route to avoid you. It also takes them longer to stop. These are all good reasons to be ready to move out of their way. **The safest practice is to always be mindful when operating in shipping lanes and steer clear of tugs, vessels under tow, actively fishing, adrift or at anchor.**

## When Sail Meets Sail

Sailboats under power are considered power boats and give way accordingly.

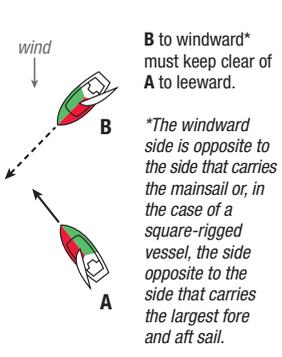
When each sailing vessel has the wind on a different side.



A has the wind on its port (left) side and must keep clear of B.

If a sailing vessel has the wind on its port side and the operator is not sure if the other vessel has the wind on its port or starboard (right) side, the first boat must keep out of the way of the other.

When both sailing vessels have the wind on the same side.



## Loading Your Boat

Overloading your boat is dangerous. Too much weight will make the boat unstable and sit too low in the water, making it easy for water to enter and swamp your boat.

Transport Canada mandates that boats up to 6 m (19'8") carry a Capacity Label specifying the maximum weight the boat can safely hold (people & equipment), the maximum number of people on board and maximum outboard power rating.



These limits apply only in good weather and assume the weight is evenly distributed on board. Use judgment when conditions are less than perfect. Also, keep the load as low and close to the centerline of the boat as possible. Secure equipment to keep from shifting and making your boat unstable.

For boats over 6 m (19'8") refer to your boat's manufacturer for load capacity information and use your judgement when loading and operating the boat.

## Province Wide Speed Restrictions

In most provinces, there is a speed limit of 10 km/h (6 mph) within 30 m (100') from shore. Certain exceptions apply in rivers, canals, channels and when pulling up or dropping off a water skier perpendicular to the shoreline. For more details, visit [www.weathertoboat.ca](http://www.weathertoboat.ca) and click on **Boating Notes**.

## Safety Equipment Checklist

### MANDATORY

- Properly Fitting and Transport Canada Approved Lifejacket or PFD in good condition for each person on board
- Buoyant Heaving Line and / or Lifebuoy with Rope At least 15 m / 49' 3" in length for boats under 24 m
- 1 Reboarding Device If freeboard is greater than 0.5 m
- Sound Signalling Device or Appliance

### MANDATORY

Based on Boat Type / Length / Power / Conditions

- Radar Reflector
- Navigation Lights
- Magnetic Compass
- Current Navigational Charts
- Paddles / Oars
- Fire Extinguisher(s) of mandated type and size
- Axe / Buckets
- Manual Pump / Bailing Bucket
- Anchor - Sized for boat with min. rode (line) length
- Visual Signalling Device (eg. flashlight / flares)

For specifics on mandatory equipment for your boat (type and length), visit [www.weathertoboat.ca](http://www.weathertoboat.ca) and click on **Boating Notes**.

### HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

- Marine Radio, Cell Phone and GPS
- First-Aid Kit
- Basic Tools and Spare Parts