

DEFENDER'S GUIDE TO USCG VESSEL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Equipment	USCG Minimum Equipment Requirements	<16	16<26	26<40	40<65	Links
Certificate of Registration Certificate obtained at your state's DMV or other boating authority	All non-USCG Documented vessels must have a certificate of registration. Some states require that all vessels (including documented ones) be registered with the state.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check with your state boating authority
State Numbering The numbers usually seen at the bow of vessels	The numbers must be at least 3 inches in height, and have the state validation sticker placed within 6 inches of the number. Check your state's regulations for specific requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Number Kits & Paints
Certificate of Documentation Registration certificate provided by the USCG	Optional for recreational vessels, required for many commercial vessels. The original document must be on board at all times, the vessel's name and hailing port must be displayed clearly readable in letters at least 4 inches high on the exterior of the vessel. The official number must be permanently displayed in 3 inch or larger numbers on an interior structure on the vessel.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	USCG Documentation Center
Life Jackets Wearable floatation jackets	All vessels must have at least one Type I, II, III, or V USCG approved wearable life jacket for each person on board.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Life Jackets
Throwable Floatation Devices Throwable floatation aid to aid in man overboard situations	May be round life rings, horseshoe shaped floats, or square "boat cushion" devices. Boats over 16ft in length must carry one Type IV throwable floatation device.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Throwable Floatation Devices
Visual Distress signals Flares, Flags, Smoke signals, SOS distress lights	Night signals: All vessels operating between sunset and sunrise must have one electric distress light, or 3 day/night red flares.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Visual Distress signals
	Day signals: Vessels under 16ft are not required to carry day signals, but larger boats must have either 3 day/night red flares, 3 orange smoke signals, or 1 orange distress flag.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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<p>Fire Extinguishers Classified by Type and Size. Class B extinguishes flaming liquids, larger numbers indicate more extinguishing agent. Regardless of boat age, extinguishers must not be more than 12 years old according to the date of manufacture stamped on the bottle. Regulations in effect April 20, 2022.</p> <p>For more information about US Coast Guard regulations regarding fire extinguishers on recreational boats, visit: https://uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/fire-extinguisher-faq.php</p>							
<p>If you own a boat that is model year 2018 or newer, you may need to replace your fire extinguishers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to meeting the carriage requirements for the correct number of extinguishers for the size of your boat, they must be labeled as 5-B, 10-B or 20-B, extinguishers labeled with B-I or B-II only are no longer acceptable. Extinguishers must not be more than 12 years old according to the date of manufacture stamped on the bottle. Extinguishers must be in good, serviceable condition, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the extinguisher has a pressure gauge reading or indicator it must be in the operable range or position The lock pin is firmly in place The discharge nozzle is clean and free of obstruction The extinguisher does not show visible signs of significant corrosion or damage. Check your fire extinguisher. It needs to have a date that is within the last 12 years and a classification of at least 5B. Remember, a fire extinguisher with more letters and numbers is OK, too. The minimum size and classification is 5-B. 	<p>With approved Fixed Systems: One 5-B or One 10-B</p>			<input type="checkbox"/>		Shop Fire Extinguishers	
	<p>With approved Fixed Systems: Two 5-B or Two 10-B or One 20-B</p>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<p>No Fixed System: One 5-B or One 10-B</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
	<p>No Fixed System: Two 5-B or Two 10-B or One 20-B</p>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<p>No Fixed System: Three 5-B or Three 10-B or One 20-B and One 5-B or One 10-B</p>						<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>If you own a boat that is 2017 model year or older (between 1953-2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may keep using extinguishers labeled B-I and B-II as long as they are still serviceable. If there is a date stamped on the bottle, extinguishers must not be more than 12 years old according to that date. When extinguishers are replaced, follow the guidelines above for 2018 and newer boats. 							

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Ventilation used on gasoline powered boats to prevent dangerous fumes from accumulating in engine and fuel compartments	Boats built after April 25, 1940 with enclosed engine and/or fuel compartment must have natural ventilation (at least 2 ducts fitted with cowls).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Cowl Vents
	Boats built after July 31, 1980 must be equipped with a powered exhaust blower.					Shop Blowers
Sound Producing devices Bells, Horns, and Whistles	All vessels less than 39.4 ft must have some means of making a loudly audible signal like a horn or whistle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Shop Sound Signals
	All vessels over 39.4 ft must have the means of making a signal audible for 1/2 mile for 4-6 seconds. Typically powered or compressed air horns.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Backfire Flame Arrestor device that prevents engine backfires from igniting gasoline vapors	All boats with gasoline engines installed after April 25, 1940 must have a flame arrestor installed (outboard motors excluded).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Navigation Lights Red, Green, and White lights that can help other boaters identify your location and course direction	Appropriate navigation lights are required for all vessels operating between sunset and sunlight or at times of reduced visibility (fog, rain, haze, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Navigation Lights
Oil Pollution Placard Notifies all on board about the restrictions on handling oil or oily waste	Vessels over 26 ft must display a placard at least 5"x8" placed in the machinery space (engine room, etc.) or at the bilge pump control station.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Regulation Placards
Garbage Placard Notifies all on board about restrictions of discharging different types of garbage when on the water	Vessels over 26 ft in length must display a placard 4"x9" or larger in an area where all on board are likely to see it.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marine Sanitation Devices treats or stores waste from on-board toilets. May be a flow through system (Type I, II) or holding tank (Type III)	All vessels with installed toilets must have a Type I, II, or III device.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Toilets & Head Parts
Navigation Rules Handbook published by USCG containing rules and regulations	Vessels over 39.4 ft (12 meters) operating in inland waterways must have a copy of book on board. Not required for coastal and offshore boaters.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Navigation Books Shop Navigation Aids & Quick Reference

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		<16	16<26	26<40	40<65	
VHF Radio	Easy to use 2-way radio for communicating with other vessels, rescue agencies, or coastal marine businesses. These can be more useful than cell phones, especially in emergency situations, as they contact multiple nearby boaters and rescue services without needing to know phone numbers. The USCG Rescue 21 system extends VHF radio coverage to a minimum of 20 miles from the coastline.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop VHF Radios
First Aid Kit	Be prepared for emergency situations. Look to larger and more complete kits for vessels carrying many passengers or long distance travel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop First Aid Kits
Anchor and line	Anchors can be deployed to prevent your vessel from drifting into hazardous waters when your propulsion systems fail.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Anchors
Manual Bilge Pump	Manual bilge pumps improve your ability to remove water from the boat and don't require electricity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Bilge Pumps
Compass	A compass is an easy to use navigational tool, that can be especially helpful when not in sight of land.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Compasses
Paper Charts	Paper charts and chartbooks are affordable, stowable, and are not subject to electrical issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Paper Charts
Battery Powered Flashlight	Dead batteries and other electrical issues can make handling emergencies at night a difficult task.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Flashlights
SPF Protection	Sunscreen, hats, and extra clothing can help prevent sunburn and dehydration during extended time on the water.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Clothing & Foul Weather Gear
Radar Reflector	These simple devices can increase the strength of your vessel's presence on other vessel's radar screens. This increases the likelihood and the range at which those other vessels will see you and avoid collision.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Radar Reflectors
Emergency Beacon	EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) and PLBs (Personal Location Beacon) are GPS enabled satellite communication devices that can alert emergency authorities from almost any location. These are considered essential safety items by many offshore boaters.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Emergency Beacons

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Electronic Navigation	Electronic chart plotters can be a fast and convenient way for users to confidently navigate in unfamiliar waters. Low cost models are available that make these devices an option for just about any boater.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Chart Plotters and Radars
Radar	Radars are devices that can help identify physical hazards around the boat during times of low visibility like night, fog, and rain. Modern radars continue to improve in performance and ease of use, making them a great tool for many boaters.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Carbon Monoxide Detector	Burning fuels commonly found on boats like gasoline and propane release carbon monoxide that can collect inside the boat. Carbon monoxide is colorless and odorless but can be deadly. A detector is your best chance to alert you of danger.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Detectors
Life Raft	Offshore emergencies can take even the quickest rescue agencies a long time to reach you. If forced to abandon ship, a life raft can greatly increase your chance of survival.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Life Rafts
Food and Water	Emergency food and water rations can be a life saver in severe emergencies.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Emergency Gear
Harness/Tether/Jacklines	Equipment that keeps you connected to the boat can be essential when operating offshore or in rough conditions.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop Tethers, Harnesses, and Jacklines