

BOATING

All Boats

In South Carolina, vessels may not be operated in excess of idle speed within 50 feet of an anchored vessel, wharf, pier, dock, or a person in the water. Vessels may not operate in excess of idle speed within 100 yards of the Atlantic coastline (Sec. 50-21-870).

Equipment

Personal Flotation

Devices (PFDs)

All boats must have a US Coast Guard approved wearable type PFD for each person on board or being towed. Each PFD must be in good condition, readily available and the proper size for the intended wearer. In addition, boats 16 feet in length or longer must carry a Type IV throwable device. In South Carolina, any person under twelve years of age must wear a US Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III, or V PFD when on board a class "A" (less than 16 ft. long) boat.

Fire Extinguisher

One Coast Guard approved hand-held portable fire extinguisher must be aboard each boat less than 26 feet if the boat is carrying passengers for hire or if the construction permits the entrapment of flammable vapors or if it has a permanently installed gas tank, including gas tanks that use any type of fastener that would hamper the immediate removal of the tank from the boat. Additional extinguishers are required in boats larger than 26 feet. Contact the SCDNR for complete regulations.

Navigation Lights

Navigation Lights must be on between official sunset and sunrise.

Flares

Flares are required for vessels in coastal waters.

Bells, Whistle

All boats less than 39.4 feet must carry an efficient sound producing device. Every vessel from 39.4 to 65.6 feet must carry a whistle and a bell.

Personal Watercraft

In South Carolina, each person on a personal watercraft must wear a US Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III or V PFD.

A personal watercraft may not be operated between sunset and sunrise and must be equipped with a self-circling or lanyard-type engine cutoff switch.

When operating a personal watercraft, one may not operate in a manner so as to leave the water completely while crossing (jumping) the wake of another vessel within 200 feet of the vessel creating the wake.

Marine Events

A permit is required for any marine event with more than 20 boats. For permits or information on these and other marine events, contact Marine Law Enforcement, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422, 843-953-9302.

Minimum Age of Operators

In South Carolina, boat operators under age 16 must complete a boating course approved by the SCDNR to operate a boat or personal watercraft with a 15 h.p. motor or greater, unless accompanied by an adult age 18 years or older.

Reporting Boating Accidents

The operator of every vessel involved in a boating accident shall report to the SCDNR whenever the accident results in loss of life, loss of consciousness, medical treatment or disability in excess of 24 hours, or property damage. For more information, call 843-953-9302.

Restrictions

Airboats are prohibited on public waters of this state from the freshwater-saltwater dividing line seaward, and on that portion of Lake Marion and Santee Swamp west of the I-95 bridge upstream to the confluence of the Congaree and Wateree rivers during the season for hunting waterfowl.

Titling & Registration

Titling

The seller of a used watercraft or outboard motor in South Carolina must produce a South Carolina Certificate of Title in his/her name at the time of sale. Titles are valid until the watercraft or outboard motor is sold, traded or exchanged. A title with erasures, white out or information marked through is not valid. The owner must request a duplicate title. Titles are required for all sailboats, all outboard motors 5 horsepower and greater, and all other watercraft except: documented vessels, windsurfers, and those propelled by human power with oars, paddles or similar devices.

Registration

Watercraft propelled by any mechanized means must be registered in addition to being titled in the owner's name.

Stolen Watercraft/ Outboard Motors

The owner of a watercraft or outboard motor which has been stolen should immediately contact local law enforcement to file a report, and then the SCDNR Marine Investigations at 803-734-3856 to receive a Theft Report form. Forms can also be found at www.dnr.sc.gov/boating in the Forms section.

Mailing Address

SCDNR Watercraft Section, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202-0167, or call 803-734-3857 M-F 8:30 AM-4:45 PM

For more information on boating, please refer to our Boating Handbook, visit www.dnr.sc.gov/education/boated.html or call 1-800-277-4301.

PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES

The bill of sale or title to any watercraft or outboard motor requires certification that personal property taxes have been paid by the named owner as of the date of sale. Selling a watercraft or outboard motor with taxes due is a violation of the law. An owner must notify the SCDNR Watercraft Section within 30 days of selling a watercraft or outboard motor. Remember, personal property tax assessments issued during 2018 are based on the owner of record as of Dec. 31, 2017. Check the status of watercraft and outboard motor titles at www.dnr.sc.gov/boating and select "SC Boat Facts" before you buy.

VESSEL SEWAGE REGULATIONS

It is Illegal:

- To have a toilet installed aboard your boat without a marine sanitation device.
- For any boat used for habitation moored at a private dock to discharge raw or treated sewage.
- For houseboats to discharge treated or raw sewage in freshwater.
- For any vessel to discharge treated or untreated sewage in a **No Discharge Zone**.

Designated No Discharge Zones

- Broad Creek (Hilton Head Island)
- Lake Murray
- Lake Hartwell
- Lake Thurmond
- Lake Keowee
- Lake Wylie

What Can You Do?

To prevent the possible dangers that sewage can cause to humans and the environment, boaters should: use portable toilets, utilize onshore or floating restrooms, and have a Marine Sanitation Device installed on board and use a pumpout at a local marina.

For more information about vessel sewage regulations, contact SC-CVA@dnr.sc.gov, or visit www.dnr.sc.gov/cleanvessel.

