

Before Going Out on Your Vessel



All operators are required to obey laws that regulate your vessel's registration and operation.

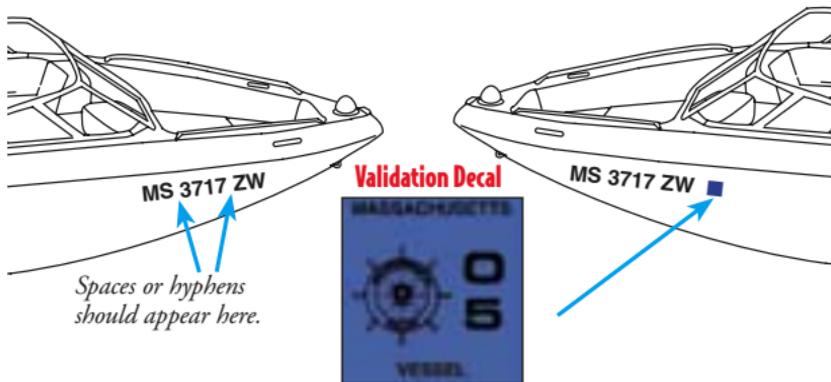
Registering Your Motorboat

- ◆ You must have a Massachusetts Certificate of Number (boat registration) to legally operate a motorboat on Massachusetts' waters. Exceptions to registration are:
 - Vessels without any kind of motor (unpowered canoes, sailboats, or kayaks)
 - Vessels properly registered in another state and using Massachusetts' waters for 60 or fewer consecutive days
 - Vessels documented with the U.S. Coast Guard

- ◆ *The Certificate of Number (pocket-sized card) must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is operated.*



- ◆ The registration number and validation decal must be displayed as follows:
 - Number must be painted, decaled or otherwise attached on the forward half of each side of the vessel, placed to be clearly visible.
 - Number must read from left to right on both sides of the vessel.
 - Number must be in bold, **BLOCK** letters, at least 3 inches high.
 - Number's color must contrast with its background.
 - No other numbers may be displayed on either side of the bow.



- Letters must be separated from the numbers by 2-inch spaces or hyphens: “MS 3717 ZW” or “MS-3717-ZW”.
- The validation decal should be placed in line with and within 6 inches following the registration number on the port (left) side of the vessel.
- ◆ If your vessel requires registration, it is illegal to operate or allow others to operate your vessel unless it is registered and numbered as described above.

Where to Register You can submit your registration or title applications and fees to:

- Massachusetts Environmental Police Registration and Titling Bureau
251 Causeway St., Suite 101
Boston, MA 02114 or...
- Any of our satellite offices listed on the inside back cover or...
- Renew your registration online at:
www.mass.gov/massoutdoors

Registration Questions? Contact the Registration and Titling Bureau by calling 1-617-626-1610, or sending a fax to 1-617-626-1630. You may also find the answers to registration questions on the Internet by visiting www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dle/



How to Apply for Registration

To register a vessel, you need to provide:

- Bill of Sale (name and address of seller)
- Sales tax form (ST-6) or (ST-6E) (you can pay sales tax online at www.dor.state.ma.us)
- Pencil tracing of Hull ID number (serial number)*
- Required fees (see fee schedule on next page)
- Properly completed and signed registration application

** If your vessel was built prior to 1972, or does not have a proper 12-character Hull Identification Number (HIN), a vessel inspection may be required. See page 36 for more information on HINs.*

If the vessel is 14 ft. in length or more, in addition to the documents above you also need to provide:

- The title** or, if vessel is documented with the U.S. Coast Guard, Termination of Documentation (“Deletion Letter”) from the U.S. Coast Guard.

*** If the vessel is purchased new from a registered boat dealer or department store, an original “Manufacturer’s Certificate of Origin” is required in lieu of title. When a boat is purchased from a private party from a non-titled state, the previous owner’s registration is required in lieu of title.*

When in doubt, please call one of our registration offices prior to submitting an application.

Titling Your Motorboat

All vessels 14 feet or greater in length that require registration, must also be titled.

- ◆ The title application must be made to Massachusetts Environmental Police within 20 days of purchasing a vessel.
- ◆ The title certificate is valid for the life of the vessel, or until the vessel is sold or otherwise transferred, at which time the new owner must transfer the title.

Fees to Register and Title Your Vessel

Registration of a Motorboat (2 years)

Length of vessel	Fee
Under 16 ft.	\$40
16 to < 26 ft.	\$60
26 to < 40 ft.	\$80
40 ft. plus	\$100

Other Fees

Title	\$25
Duplicate Title.....	\$15
Transfer of Registration	\$15
Duplicate Registration	\$10

If visiting any registration office, please bring a check or money order made out to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

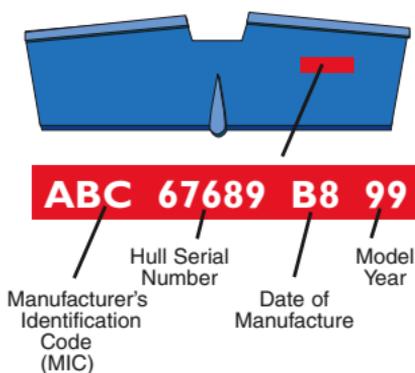
Other Facts About Registering and Titling

- ◆ A Certificate of Number is valid for two years from the date of issuance. Owners of vessels that have already been registered will be sent a renewal notice to their residence at least one month prior to the expiration of their current registration.
- ◆ Massachusetts Environmental Police must be notified within 15 days of any of these events:
 - The sale, trade or transfer of ownership of a registered vessel
 - The abandonment, destruction, loss or theft of a registered vessel
 - The change of address of the owner of a registered vessel
 - The destruction or loss of a Certificate of Number or validation decal

- ◆ Boat trailers are registered and titled under the same requirements as passenger cars. Application is made through the Registry of Motor Vehicles.
- ◆ Larger recreational vessels, owned by U.S. citizens, may (at the option of the owner) be documented by the U.S. Coast Guard. Call the USCG at 1-800-799-8362 for more information. Documented vessels are exempt from registration and titling requirements.

Hull Identification Number

- ◆ The Hull Identification Number (HIN) is a unique, 12-character number, assigned by the manufacturer, to vessels built after 1972.
- ◆ Hull Identification Numbers:
 - Distinguish one vessel from another—the same as serial numbers distinguish one car from another
 - Are engraved in the fiberglass or on a metal plate attached to the transom
 - Should be recorded by the owner and put in a place other than the vessel in case warranty problems arise or the vessel is lost or stolen
- ◆ It is illegal to remove or in any way falsify a Hull Identification Number.
- ◆ If your vessel is homemade or built before 1972, or does not have a proper HIN, contact Massachusetts Environmental Police, 800-632-8075, to inspect the vessel. The inspecting officer will affix a State-assigned Hull Identification Number (HIN) to the vessel.
- ◆ HIN is needed to title and register your vessel.



Who May Operate a Vessel

- ◆ **Who May Operate a Motorboat:** The restrictions below apply to boats propelled by any type of motor, whether or not the motor is the principal source of propulsion.
 - Persons under 12 years of age may operate a motorboat on Massachusetts' waters *only if* accompanied on board and directly supervised by a competent person 18 years of age or older.
 - Persons 12 through 15 years of age may operate a motorboat on Massachusetts' waters *only if* they:
 - Have passed an approved boating safety course *or...*
 - Are accompanied on board and directly supervised by a competent person 18 years of age or older
 - Persons 16 years of age or older may operate a motorboat on Massachusetts' waters without restrictions.
- ◆ **Who May Operate a Personal Watercraft (PWC):**
 - Persons under 16 years of age may not operate a PWC on Massachusetts' waters under any circumstances.
 - Persons 16 or 17 years of age may operate a PWC on Massachusetts' waters *only if* they have passed an approved boating safety course.
 - Persons 18 years of age or older may operate a PWC on Massachusetts' waters without age restrictions.
 - It is illegal to lease, or rent a personal watercraft to any person under 16 years of age. It is illegal to lease, hire, or rent a PWC to any person 16 or 17 years of age who does not have in his or her possession the required boating safety certificate.
- ◆ A person must be at least 12 years of age to be issued a Boating Safety Certificate. A person at least 10 years of age may complete an approved boating safety course, but will not be issued a Boating Safety Certificate until age 12.
- ◆ Persons required to have passed a boating safety course, must have the boating safety certificate on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever operating a vessel.

Required Equipment for Your Vessel



When preparing to go out on a vessel, first check that the legally required equipment is on board.

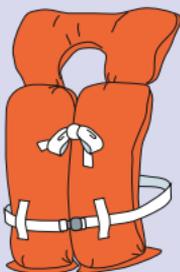
Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

- ◆ All vessels must have at least one USCG-approved Type I, II, III or V PFD (life jacket) for each person on board.
- ◆ One Type IV (throwable) USCG-approved PFD must be on board vessels 16 feet or longer, in addition to the above requirement.
- ◆ Children under 12 years old must wear a USCG-approved Type I, II, III, or V PFD whenever above deck on any vessel underway.
- ◆ All persons on board a personal watercraft (PWC) must wear a USCG-approved Type I, II, III, or V PFD at all times.
- ◆ All persons water-skiing or being towed in any manner must wear a USCG-approved Type I, II, or III PFD at all times.
- ◆ All persons on board a canoe or kayak from September 15 to May 15 must wear a USCG-approved Type I, II, or III PFD at all times.
- ◆ All life jackets (PFDs) must be:
 - *U.S. Coast Guard–approved*, which means clearly marked with the USCG approval number
 - *In good and serviceable condition*
 - *Readily accessible*, which means you are able to put the life jacket on quickly in an emergency
 - *Of the proper size for the intended wearer*; sizing for life jackets is based on body weight and chest size.



TYPE I: Offshore Life Jacket

These vests are geared for rough or remote waters where rescue may take awhile. They are excellent for flotation and will turn most unconscious persons face up in the water.



TYPE II: Near-Shore Vest

These vests are good for calm waters and fast rescues. Type II vests may lack the capacity to turn unconscious wearers face up.



TYPE III: Flotation Aid

These vests or full-sleeved jackets are good for calm waters and fast rescues. They are not for rough waters since they will not turn a person face up.



TYPE IV: Throwable Device

These cushions or ring buoys are designed to be thrown to someone in trouble. They are not for long hours in rough waters, non-swimmers or the unconscious.



TYPE V: Special Use Device

These windsurfing vests, deck suits, hybrid life jackets and others are designed for specific activities, such as kayaking or water-skiing. *To be acceptable, Type V life jackets must be used in accordance with their label.*

Boat Smart—Wear Your PFD

Approximately 90% of all boating fatalities involve drownings caused by boating accidents. Most drowning victims are not wearing a PFD or are wearing an inadequate one. That is why it is critical that you have a U.S. Coast Guard–approved PFD for each person on board.

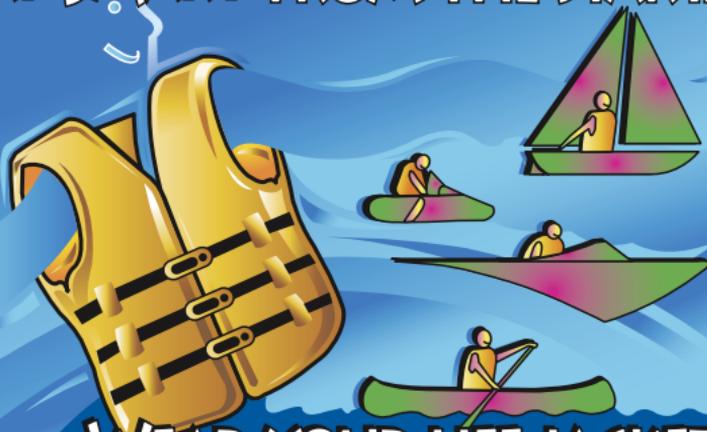


- ◆ PFDs must be readily accessible. Better yet, each person should wear a PFD because PFDs are difficult to put on once you are in the water. In most fatal accidents, the proper PFDs are on board but are not in use or are not easily within reach. If you are in the water without a PFD, retrieve a floating PFD and hold it to your chest by wrapping your arms around it.
- ◆ PFDs must be of the proper size for the intended wearer. Always read the label of the PFD to make sure it is the right size based on the person's weight and chest size. It's especially important to check that a child's PFD fits snugly. Test the fit by picking the child up by the shoulders of the PFD and checking that his or her chin and ears do not slip through.
- ◆ PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition. Regularly test a PFD's buoyancy in shallow water or a swimming pool. Remember that over time, the ultraviolet radiation from the sun will break down the synthetic materials used to make your PFD.

- Frequently inspect personal flotation devices for rips or tears, discolored or weakened material, insecure straps or zippers or labels that are no longer readable. Discard and replace any PFD that has a problem.
- If using an inflatable PFD, before each outing check the status of the inflator and that the CO₂ cylinder has not been used, has no leaks and is tightly screwed in. Also check that the PFD itself has no leaks by removing the CO₂ cylinder and orally inflating the PFD. The PFD should still be firm after several hours. After an inflatable PFD has been inflated using the CO₂ cylinder, replace the spent cylinder and re-arm it. Because an inflatable PFD is a mechanical device, it requires regular maintenance. Inspect and maintain

In Massachusetts over the last ten years 85% of the victims who died in boating accidents did not use life jackets. The majority of these victims fell overboard or capsized and then drowned. Many of these deaths undoubtedly would have been prevented if a life jacket had been worn.

BOAT SMART FROM THE START.



WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET.

Navigation Lights

The required navigation lights must be displayed between sunset and sunrise and in periods of restricted visibility such as fog or heavy rain.

Power-driven Vessels When Underway

If less than 65.6 ft. (20 meters) long, these vessels must exhibit the lights as shown in figure 1. Power-driven vessels include sailboats operating under engine power. The required lights are:

- ◆ Red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least two miles (or if less than 39.4 ft. (12 meters) long, at least one mile)
- ◆ An all-round white light or both a masthead light and a sternlight visible from a distance of at least two miles. The all-round white light (or the masthead light) must be at least 3.3 ft. (one meter) higher than the sidelights.

Unpowered Vessels When Underway

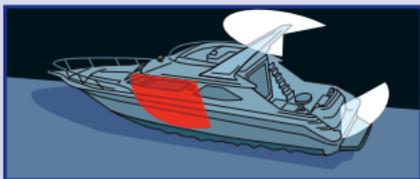
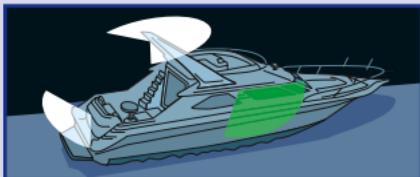
Unpowered vessels are sailboats or those vessels that are paddled, poled or rowed.

- ◆ **If less than 65.6 ft.** (20 meters) long, these vessels must exhibit the lights as shown in figure 2:
 - Red and green sidelights visible from at least two miles (or if less than 39.4 ft. long, at least one mile)
 - A sternlight visible from at least two miles.
- ◆ **If less than 23.0 ft.** (7 meters) long, these vessels:
 - If practical, must exhibit the same lights as required for unpowered vessels listed above
 - If not practical, must have on hand at least one lantern or flashlight shining a white light as shown in figure 3.

All Vessels When Not Underway

- ◆ **All vessels** are required to display a white light visible from all directions whenever they are anchored away from dock or moored in an area other than a designated mooring area between sunset and sunrise.

1. Power-driven Vessels Less Than 65.6 Ft.



Combination red and green lights allowed only on vessels less than 39.4 ft.



2. Unpowered Vessels Less Than 65.6 Ft.



An alternative to the sidelights and sternlight is a combination red, green and white light, which must be exhibited near the top of the mast.

3. Non-motorized Vessels Less Than 23.0 Ft.



Vessel operators should never leave shore without a flashlight. Even if you plan to return before dark, unforeseen developments might delay your return past nightfall.

Fire Extinguishers

- ◆ All vessels with a motor of any type are required to have a Type B fire extinguisher(s) on board. The only exception is a vessel of open construction, less than 26 feet in length and with an outboard engine, and not carrying passengers for hire.
- ◆ Approved types of fire extinguishers are identified by the following marking on the label—“Marine Type USCG Approved”—followed by the size and type symbols (B-I or B-II) and the approval number. The “II” in the symbol B-II indicates that this type of fire extinguisher has twice the extinguishing agent as those labeled B-I.

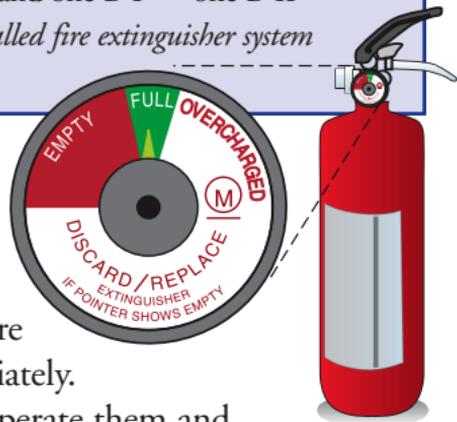
Fire Extinguisher Requirements

Classification type & size	Foam minimum gallons	Carbon Dioxide minimum pounds	Dry Chemical minimum pounds
B-I	1 1/4	4	2
B-II	2 1/2	15	10

Length Class	Without Fixed System	With Fixed System*
Less than 26 ft.	one B-I	None
26 ft. to less than 40 ft.	two B-I <i>or</i> one B-II	one B-I
40 ft. to less than 65 ft.	three B-I <i>or</i> one B-II and one B-I	two B-I <i>or</i> one B-II

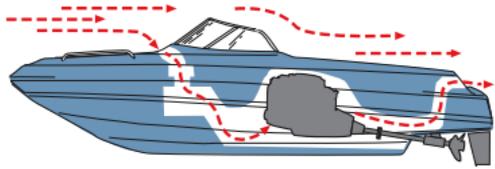
* refers to a permanently installed fire extinguisher system

- ◆ Extinguishers should be placed in an accessible area—not near the engine or in a compartment, but where they can be reached immediately. Be sure you know how to operate them and check all extinguishers regularly to make sure they are fully charged.



Ventilation Systems

The purpose of ventilation systems is to remove flammable gases, greatly reducing the chance of a dangerous explosion.



- ◆ All gasoline-powered powerboats, constructed in a way that would entrap fumes, must have at least two ventilation ducts fitted with cowls to remove the fumes.
 - At least one exhaust duct must extend from the open atmosphere to the lower bilge.
 - At least one intake duct must extend from a point at least midway to the bilge or below the level of the carburetor air intake.

Backfire Flame Arrestors

Backfire flame arrestors are designed to prevent the ignition of gasoline vapors in case the engine backfires.

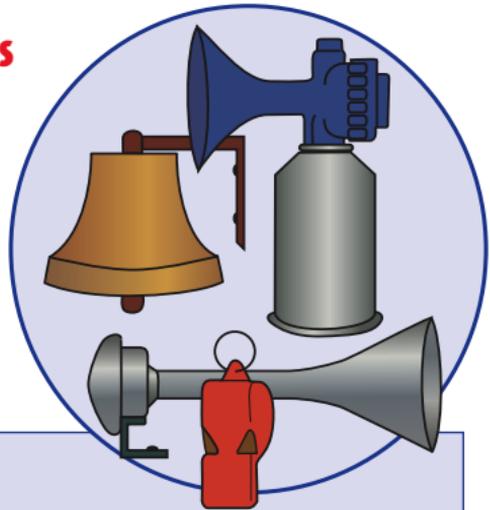
- ◆ All gasoline-powered motorboats, except outboards, must have a backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor that is U.S. Coast Guard–approved or stamped in compliance with SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 standards.

Mufflers and Noise Level Limits

- ◆ The exhaust of every internal combustion engine on any vessel must be effectively muffled by a muffler or underwater exhaust. That is, the engine's exhaust must be muffled or suppressed at all times so as not to create excessive noise.
- ◆ The use of cutouts is prohibited.
- ◆ It is illegal to remove or modify the exhaust or muffler system of a vessel.
- ◆ Vessels involved in a marine event authorized by the Massachusetts Environmental Police are exempt from the requirements above.

Sound Producing Devices

A sound producing device is required on all waters. It is essential during periods of reduced visibility. It must be audible for at least one-half mile.



If on State Waters

*Less than 26 feet long
(includes PWC)*

Mouth, hand or power operated whistle or horn, or some other means to make an efficient sound signal

26 feet long or longer

Whistle or horn, *and* a bell

If on Federally Controlled Waters

*Less than 65.6 feet long
(includes PWC)*

Mouth, hand or power operated whistle or horn, or some other means to make an efficient sound signal

65.6 feet long or longer

Whistle or horn, *and* a bell

Sound Signals

Some common sound signals that you should be familiar with as a recreational boater are:

Changing Direction

- One short blast tells other boaters “I intend to pass you on my port (left) side.”
- Two short blasts tell other boaters “I intend to pass you on my starboard (right) side.”
- Three short blasts tell other boaters “My engines are in reverse.”
- If the sound signals discussed in this section are directed at your vessel and you are in agreement with the proposed action then you are required to respond with the same signal.

Warning

- Five (or more) short, rapid blasts are used to signal danger or to signal that you do not understand or agree with the other boater’s intentions.
- One prolonged blast is a warning signal (for example, used when coming around a blind bend or exiting a slip)

Restricted Visibility

- One prolonged blast at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by powerboats when underway.
- One prolonged plus two short blasts at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by sailboats under sail alone.

Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

Visual Distress Signals (VDSs) allow vessel operators to signal for help in the event of an emergency.

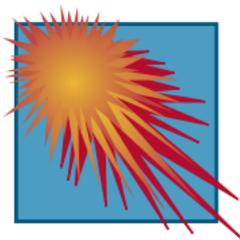
- ◆ Vessels on federally controlled waters or on Massachusetts coastal waters must be equipped with U.S. Coast Guard–approved visual distress signals.
- ◆ All vessels, regardless of length or type, are required to carry night signals when operating between sunset and sunrise. Most vessels must also carry day signals; exceptions to the requirement for day signals are:
 - Recreational vessels that are less than 16 feet in length
 - Non-motorized open sailboats that are less than 26 feet in length
 - Manually propelled vessels
- ◆ All VDSs must be in serviceable condition, readily accessible, and certified as complying with U.S. Coast Guard requirements.
- ◆ If pyrotechnic VDSs are used, a minimum of three must be onboard.
- ◆ The following combinations of signals are examples of VDSs that could be carried onboard to satisfy U.S. Coast Guard requirements:
 - Three hand-held red flares (day and night) *or...*
 - Three orange smoke signals (day only) and one electric light (night only).
- ◆ It is prohibited to display visual distress signals on the water except when assistance is required to prevent immediate or potential danger to persons onboard a vessel.

VDSs are classified as day signals (visible in bright sunlight), night signals (visible at night) or both day and night signals. VDSs are either pyrotechnic (smoke and flames) or non-pyrotechnic (non-combustible).



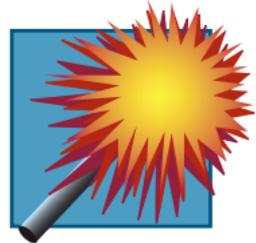
Orange Smoke

Day Signal



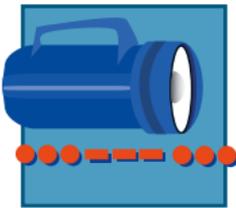
Red Meteor

Day and Night Signal



Red Flare

Day and Night Signal



Electric Light

Night Signal



Orange Flag

Day Signal



Arm Signal

Although not a USCG-approved VDS, use this arm action to indicate you need help if you do not have other visual distress signals available.

Non-Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals

Federally Controlled Waters

Vessels must observe federal requirements when on these waters:

- Coastal waters
- The Great Lakes
- Territorial seas
- Waters that are two miles wide or wider and are directly connected to one of the above

Massachusetts Coastal Waters

Any Massachusetts waters that are subject to the rise and fall of the tide

Other Equipment

Diver Down Flag

- ◆ Persons scuba diving, skin diving or snorkeling must display a red and white divers flag. Divers or snorkelers must remain within 100 feet of the divers flag.
- ◆ If possible, vessel operators not engaged in the diving operation should stay at least 100 feet from a displayed flag. If not possible, vessel operators must reduce speed to no more than 3 miles per hour. The “diver down” flags are:



A rectangular red flag with a white diagonal stripe, at least 12 x 15 inches in size and constructed of rigidly supported material. This flag must be displayed on a vessel or surface float and must extend a minimum distance of three feet from the surface of the water..



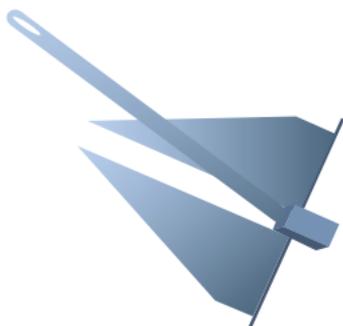
A blue and white International Code Flag A (or Alfa flag), flown from a vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver. This flag indicates that a vessel is involved in a diving activity. The Alfa flag may be displayed in addition to the divers flag, but does not replace the divers flag.

- ◆ Divers engaged in recreational marine fisheries activities (ie: lobsters, fin fish) are subject to special regulations. Refer to www.mass.gov/dfwele/dmf

The following are Massachusetts requirements and will not be found in federal law.

Anchor and Bailer

All vessels propelled by a motor of any kind must have an anchor and sufficient line (rope) to anchor in the vessel's normal operating area, and a manual bailer. (PWCs are exempt from these requirements.)



Paddle or Oar

All vessels less than 16 feet in length and propelled by a motor of any kind must carry a paddle or oar on board. (PWCs are exempt from this requirement.)

Ladder

All vessels towing a person on water-skis or similar devices must be equipped with a ladder, steps, platform, or similar device that can be used to pull the person being towed from the water.

In addition to the laws mentioned previously, here are other Massachusetts regulations that apply when vessel operators are on the water.

Unlawful and Dangerous Operation

Massachusetts law states that these dangerous operating practices are also illegal:

- ◆ **Reckless or Negligent Operation** of a vessel is the failure to exercise the degree of care necessary to prevent the endangering of life, limb, or property of any person. Examples of reckless or negligent operation may include:
 - Operating at high speed or erratically in congested waterway traffic
 - Operating such that your vessel or another vessel must abruptly swerve or abruptly cut speed in order to avoid collision
 - Operating near or through areas being used by swimmers or divers
 - Operating such that your vessel collides with another vessel, object or person
 - Operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Cutting through a regatta or marine parade in progress
 - Operating between sunset and sunrise without displaying navigation lights
 - Chasing or harassing wildlife with your vessel

- ◆ **Improper Speed or Distance** is not maintaining a proper speed and/or distance while operating a vessel. Specifically, it is illegal to operate any vessel:
 - At a distance from other vessels or at a speed that exceeds safe and reasonable limits given: the waterway traffic; marked speed limits; visibility, wind, water, and current conditions; and the proximity of navigational hazards.
 - At greater than 45 miles per hour on any inland waters of Massachusetts, except on areas posted otherwise
 - At any speed within:
 - 150 feet of shorelines used as swimming areas
 - 75 feet of floats or markers that designate swimming areas
 - At a rate of speed that creates a wake that causes damage, injury or excessive rocking to other vessels, rafts or floats.

“Headway Speed” is the minimum speed at which a vessel may be operated and maintain steering, but not to exceed 6 miles per hour.

- At more than headway speed if:
 - Within 150 to 300 feet of shorelines used as swimming areas
 - Within 150 feet of marinas, ramps, rafts or floats
 - Within 150 feet of swimmers
 - Vision is obscured by bridges, bends in the waterway, or by any other reason
 - Operating in a channel, unless channel markers state that higher speeds are allowed

- ◆ **Riding on the Bow or Gunwales** without adequate guardrail is a dangerous practice. It increases the risk of falls overboard and may obstruct the operator's view.



- ◆ **Failure to Follow Navigational Rules** is considered a violation of Massachusetts's regulation 323 CMR 2.07(13).
- ◆ **Overloading or Overpowering** is loading or powering the vessel beyond the safe load and power limits taking into consideration weather and other operating conditions. The safe load and power limits for most vessels are shown on the capacity plate installed by the vessel manufacturer (see page 5).
- ◆ **Unsafe Condition** is operating a vessel in a condition that causes danger to the occupants or others on the waterways. Law enforcement officers may instruct the operator to take immediate corrective action or terminate the voyage if any of the following “unsafe conditions” exist:
 - Inadequate number of life jackets or fire extinguishers
 - Overloading (check capacity plate information)
 - Failure to display navigation lights after sunset
 - Fuel leakage or excessive fuel accumulation in bilges or engine compartment
 - Lack of proper ventilation of engine spaces
 - Failure to meet carburetor backfire flame arrestor requirements
 - Excessive leakage or accumulation of water in the bilge

Alcohol and Drugs

Massachusetts has one of the strongest Boating Under the Influence (BUI) laws in the nation. Massachusetts law prohibits anyone from operating any vessel while under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance.

- ◆ Massachusetts law states that a person is considered to be boating under the influence (BUI) if he or she has a blood or breath alcohol concentration of 0.08% or greater.
- ◆ Massachusetts law establishes the following penalties for BUI:
 - Those convicted for the first time of BUI may be imprisoned for up to 30 months, and fined up to \$1,000 or imprisoned and fined. Offenders may also have his or her motor vehicle license and vessel's registration revoked for up to one year.
 - Repeat offenders will receive more severe penalties.
 - Offenders convicted of BUI and causing serious bodily injury to another person may be imprisoned for up to 10 years and fined up to \$5,000.

Why drinking and boating can be lethal...

- ◆ The effect of alcohol is increased by the natural stressors (wind, sun, vibration) placed on your body while boating. Also, the dehydration of your body caused by the natural stressors causes alcohol to be absorbed more quickly into your system.
- ◆ Alcohol depresses the central nervous system and affects judgment and slows reaction time. Most people become slightly intoxicated after only one drink.

Just remember this simple rule:

Don't drink and boat!



- ◆ By operating a vessel on Massachusetts' waters, you have given "implied" consent to alcohol testing if arrested for boating under the influence. Anyone who refuses to submit to a blood alcohol level test is subject to having their motor vehicle license and vessel's registration revoked for 180 days.
- ◆ It is illegal for the owner or operator of a vessel to knowingly permit it to be operated by someone under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance.

Obstructing Navigation

- ◆ It is illegal to operate any vessel in such a way that it will unnecessarily interfere with the safe navigation of other vessels on the waterway.
- ◆ You must not anchor a vessel in the traveled portion of a river or channel that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.
- ◆ It is illegal to moor or attach a vessel to a buoy (except for a mooring buoy), beacon, light or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities. Also, it is illegal to move, displace, tamper with, damage or destroy any navigational aid.

Marine Events

- ◆ Permits for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments or exhibitions to be held on state controlled waters must apply for authorization from Massachusetts Environmental Police in advance of the event.
- ◆ If the event is being held on federally controlled waters, a permit from the U.S. Coast Guard is required.



Homeland Security Restrictions

Recreational boaters have a role in keeping our waterways safe and secure.

- ◆ Violators of the restrictions below can expect a quick and severe response.
 - Do not approach within 100 yards, and slow to minimum speed within 500 yards of any U.S. Naval vessel. If you need to pass within 100 yards of a U.S. Naval vessel for safe passage, you must contact the U.S. Naval vessel or the Coast Guard escort vessel on VHF-FM channel 16.
 - Observe and avoid all security zones. Avoid commercial port areas, especially those that involve military, cruise-line or petroleum facilities. Observe and avoid other restricted areas near dams, power plants, etc.
 - Do not stop or anchor beneath bridges or in channels.
- ◆ Keep a sharp eye out for anything that looks peculiar or out of the ordinary. Report all suspicious activities to the local law enforcement or USCG.



Boating Accidents

- ◆ An operator involved in a boating accident must stop his or her vessel *immediately* at the scene of the accident to:
 - Assist anyone injured or in danger from the accident, unless doing so would seriously endanger his or her own vessel or passengers
 - Give, in writing, his or her name, address and vessel identification to anyone injured and to the owner of any property damaged by the accident
- ◆ The operator of a vessel is required to submit a written report to the Massachusetts Environmental Police whenever an accident results in:
 - The death of a person
 - The disappearance of a person under circumstances that suggest any possibility of death or injury
 - Any injury requiring medical attention
 - Property damage exceeding \$500
- ◆ Accidents resulting in death or serious injury must be reported to the Massachusetts Environmental Police within 48 hours. All other accident reports must be submitted within five days.
- ◆ Accidents should be reported on a Boating Accident Report form available from Massachusetts Environmental Police.

Local Regulations

Many Massachusetts waterways have additional equipment and operational restrictions besides those covered in this handbook. Be sure to check with the harbormaster's office or local police department for local regulations before you go out.

Enforcement

- ◆ Massachusetts Environmental Police officers, harbormasters, police officers assigned to harbor patrol, fish and game wardens, and state police officers enforce the boating laws of Massachusetts. Town police and harbormasters may also enforce local recreational boating laws. The U.S. Coast Guard patrols and has enforcement authority on federally controlled waters.
- ◆ Officers have the authority to stop and board any recreational vessel at any time to check equipment, registration, and positively identify the vessel operator.
- ◆ It is illegal to refuse to follow the directive of a person with law enforcement authority. An operator who has received a visual or audible signal from a law enforcement officer must bring his or her vessel to a stop.



- ◆ Officers may arrest, without warrant, anyone in violation, or believed to be in violation of, the boating laws of Massachusetts.
- ◆ Officers empowered to enforce state boating law and Coast Guard officers enforcing federal law may terminate the use of vessels if they find an “unsafe condition” (see page 54).

Especially for PWCs

There are additional legal requirements that apply specifically to the operation of PWCs on Massachusetts waters.

Requirements Specific to PWCs

- ◆ Every person on board a PWC must wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved Type I, II, III or V personal flotation device that is in good and serviceable condition.
- ◆ If the PWC is equipped with an ignition safety switch, the lanyard must be attached to the person, clothing or PFD of the operator.
- ◆ PWCs may be operated only between the hours of sunrise to sunset.
- ◆ There are age and boater education requirements for operators of personal watercraft (see page 37).
- ◆ PWCs may not be operated within 150 feet of a shore, swimmer or moored vessel, except at headway speed.



Remember—PWC owners are responsible ...

As an owner of a PWC, you are legally responsible if you allow the PWC to be operated in violation of Massachusetts law.

- ◆ PWCs may not be operated on any Massachusetts' waters that are less than 75 acres in size.
- ◆ It is illegal to tow a water-skier or a person in any other manner behind a PWC.

- ◆ PWCs must be operated in a safe and responsible manner. For example, it is illegal to:
 - Jump the wake of another vessel
 - Speed in restricted areas
 - Follow within 150 feet of a water-skier
 - Cross unreasonably close to another vessel
 - Weave through congested waterway traffic
 - Operate in such a manner that it endangers the life, limb or property of any person
 - Chase or harass wildlife with your PWC
- ◆ As with other vessels, PWCs are not allowed within 150 feet of public and private swimming beaches

Sharing Your PWC ... Safely!

Before allowing anyone to operate your PWC, you should:

- ◆ Make sure they meet the minimum age and education requirements for PWC operation.
- ◆ Make sure they know basic boating safety information and “rules of the road.”
- ◆ Let beginners take their first rides in a quiet area. While still on shore, show them the proper procedures for deep water starting and reboarding.
- ◆ Explain the basic operating features of the PWC. Be sure to give instruction on how to steer and control the PWC. Remind the operator that power is required for steering control!
- ◆ Make sure the operator understands how to use the lanyard with the ignition safety switch.
- ◆ Explain the importance of slow-no wake restrictions.
- ◆ Emphasize the need for staying alert. Beginning riders may concentrate on riding and not on paying attention to the surrounding traffic in the area.
- ◆ Read more about safe operation of a PWC on pages 26-29.

Especially for Skiers and Those Towing Them

Vessel operators towing a person(s) on water-skis, aquaplane, kneeboard, tube, or a similar device have additional laws they must follow.

Towing Skiers

- ◆ It is illegal to tow a person on water-skis or similar devices behind a PWC.
- ◆ Every vessel towing a person(s) on water-skis or similar devices must have on board, in addition to the operator, an observer at least 12 years of age constantly observing the person being towed.
- ◆ Each person being towed behind a vessel on water-skis or similar devices must wear a USCG-approved Type I, II or III PFD.
- ◆ It is illegal for vessels to tow a person(s) on water-skis or similar devices between the hours from sunset to sunrise.
- ◆ All vessels towing a person on water-skis or similar devices must be equipped with a ladder, steps, platform, or similar device that can be used to pull the person being towed from the water.
- ◆ Everyone engaged in water-skiing—the operator and the towed person(s)—must conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner:
 - Water-skiers must ski at a safe distance to prevent their wash from being thrown into or causing excessive rocking to other vessels, rafts or floats.
 - The towing vessel must not be operated within 150 feet of shorelines being used as swimming areas, or



within 75 feet of floats or markers that designate swimming areas.

- It is illegal for the vessel operator or the towed person to do so while under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance.
- ◆ Water-skiing is not permitted on some Massachusetts waterways. Check before you go out.

Hand Signals for Skiers

Knowing proper hand signals will help the skier(s) communicate with their boat operator or the observer.



Skier OK



Back to dock



Skier down-watch!



Speed up



Slow down



Speed OK



Turn left



Turn right



Stop

The Environment and Your Vessel

As a boater, it's your legal responsibility to help protect Massachusetts' aquatic environment.

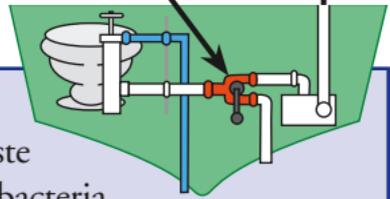
Discharge of Sewage and Waste

- ◆ Massachusetts law states that it is unlawful to discharge raw sewage or other refuse into Massachusetts' waters. If you have a recreational vessel with installed toilet facilities, it must have on board an operable marine sanitation device (MSD) that is self-contained and incapable of discharging directly into the water.
- ◆ All installed MSDs must be U.S. Coast Guard-certified.



"Y" valve must be sealed so waste cannot be discharged into the water

Drainage to pump-out station



Types of MSDs

- ◆ Types I and II MSD treat waste with special chemicals to kill bacteria before the waste is discharged. Types I and II MSDs with "Y" valves that direct the waste overboard must be secured so that the valve cannot be opened. This can be done by placing a lock or non-reusable seal on the "Y" valve or by taking the handle off the "Y" valve.
- ◆ Type III MSDs provide no treatment and are either holding tanks or portable toilets. Collected waste is discharged on shore into a local sewage treatment facility or at a sewage pump-out station.

No Discharge Areas (NDAs) in Massachusetts

In these NDAs, it is illegal to dump both treated and untreated sewage.

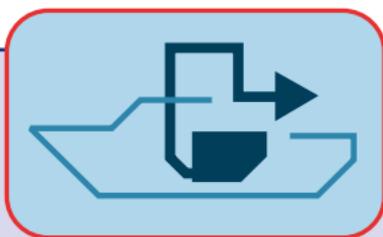
- ◆ The coastal waters of Wareham
- ◆ Nantucket coastal waters that lie between the island and a line between Great Point and Tuckernuck Island
- ◆ Waquoit Bay and its tributaries and salt ponds
- ◆ Westport Harbor and east and west branches of the Westport River
- ◆ Wellfleet Harbor
- ◆ Stage Harbor Complex in Chatham
- ◆ Harwich coastal waters

Locations of No Discharge Areas and Pumpout Stations are subject to change. Please check online at www.mass.gov/czm/whatsnew.htm

or call: 617-626-1200

Please Pump Out

- ◆ Boaters can help reduce water pollution by pumping out. Pump-outs are wet vacuums that draw sewage out of boat holding tanks for proper disposal. With the assistance of federal funding, the number of pump-out facilities (and pump-out boats) has increased significantly. Boaters have responded by using them, which has already improved coastal water quality.
- ◆ Pump-out facilities allow boaters to comply with the federal Clean Water Act, which prohibits the discharge of untreated sewage in coastal waters within three miles of shore. Pump-outs are also available in the seven No Discharge Areas (NDAs) in Massachusetts (see above).
- ◆ Use the pump-outs and keep sewage out of our fishing and swimming areas.



Discharge of Trash

- ◆ It is illegal to dump garbage and plastics into state or federally controlled waters.
- ◆ You must store trash in a container on board, and place it in a proper receptacle after returning to shore.
- ◆ You must display, in a prominent location, a durable placard (sign) at least 4 x 9 inches on any vessel 26 ft. or longer. It must notify passengers and crew about discharge restrictions of the Marine Pollution Act (MARPOL).

It is illegal for any vessel to dump plastic trash anywhere in the ocean or navigable waters of the United States. Annex V of the MARPOL TREATY is a new International Law for a cleaner, safer marine environment. Each violation of these requirements may result in civil penalty up to \$25,000, a fine up to \$50,000, and imprisonment up to 5 years.

U.S. lakes, rivers, bays, sounds, and 3 miles from shore

ILLEGAL TO DUMP:

Plastic	Garbage
Paper	Metal
Rags	Crockery
Glass	Dunnage
Food	

3 to 12 miles

ILLEGAL TO DUMP:

Plastic
Dunnage (lining & packing materials that float)

Also, if not ground to less than one inch:

Garbage	Metal
Paper	Crockery
Rags	Food
Glass	

12 to 25 miles

ILLEGAL TO DUMP:

Plastic
Dunnage (lining & packing materials that float)

Outside 25 miles

ILLEGAL TO DUMP:
Plastic

State and local regulations may further restrict the disposal of garbage

Working together we can all make a difference!

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW

Chapter 270

CRIMES AGAINST PUBLIC HEALTH

(Selected Section)

Whoever places, throws, deposits or discharges upon Massachusetts coastal or inland waters trash, bottles or cans, refuse, rubbish, garbage, debris, scrap, waste or other material, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$5,500 for the first offense and a fine not to exceed \$15,000 for each subsequent offense.

Help Keep Massachusetts Waters Clean

Boaters in Massachusetts have a role to play in preserving the aquatic environment.

- ◆ To help keep our waters clean:
 - Make it a policy on your vessel that nothing goes overboard. If you had room to bring it, there's room to take it back!
 - Take reusable containers and recycle your paper, cans and bottles whenever possible.
 - Encourage your marina to establish recycling facilities and pump-out stations.
 - Avoid products that remove stains or make your boat shine—they can be very toxic.
 - Use or request that your boatyard uses the least damaging bottom paints available.
- ◆ For more information, contact Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management at (617) 626-1212.

Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

- ◆ It is illegal to discharge oil or hazardous substances.
- ◆ You are not allowed to dump oil into the bilge of the vessel without means for proper disposal.
- ◆ You must discharge oil waste to a reception facility.
On recreational vessels, a bucket or bailer is adequate.
- ◆ On federally controlled waters (see page 49), vessels 26 feet or longer must display a 5 x 8 inch placard near the bilge pump switch stating the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.



If your vessel discharges oil or hazardous substances in the water:



- ◆ Immediately call the U.S. Coast Guard at 1-800-424-8802.
- ◆ Also notify the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection at 1-800-633-7585.

For information on where to recycle oil:

- ◆ Call Department of Ecology, Recycling Hotline at 1-800-732-9253

Hazardous Substances and the Boater

No paint or varnish product is environmentally safe, and all are toxic to both humans and marine life. When cleaning or painting your vessel, it's important to protect the water.

- ◆ Minimize your use of toxic materials while the vessel is in the water. Use biodegradable and low-phosphate products whenever possible.
- ◆ Use an absorbent sponge in your bilge to soak up oil. Have oil absorbent pads or rags on hand in case of a spill. When changing engine oil, wipe up any spills so the oil isn't pumped overboard with the bilge water.
- ◆ Use a suspended tarp to catch spills, paint scrapings or debris that would end up in the water.
- ◆ Inspect your fuel lines periodically. Replace bad ones with USCG-approved Type A alcohol-resistant, fuel line hose.
- ◆ Dispose of old antifreeze and oil on shore in a recycling container.
- ◆ Anti-fouling paint is used to prevent the growth of organisms on vessel bottoms. Some antifouling paints use tributyltin, which has been found to cause abnormal development and reduced reproduction in marine life. Instead use a "non-fouling" paint (silicon or teflon based) or non-abative (copper based) anti-fouling paint.

Protect Marine Mammals

All whales, dolphins, and porpoises in the northeast region are federally protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act and most large whales in the area are further



protected under the Endangered Species Act. Under these laws, it is illegal to “harass, hunt, capture, or kill” any marine mammal. Prohibited conduct includes any “negligent or intentional act that results in the disturbing or molesting of marine mammals.” Violations of these laws may result in fines up to \$50,000, imprisonment, and/or seizure of one’s vessel.



Boating Near Whales

Various species of whales, including the Humpback, Finback, Right, and Minke, may be encountered in our state’s coastal waters. The Northern Right whale is

the most endangered marine mammal, with no more than 500 remaining in the world. Boaters improperly maneuvering around whales risk the safety of all passengers aboard, as well as potential injury to the whales.

To protect whales in their habitat, the following operation guidelines are recommended:

- ◆ Avoid excessive speed or course change within 500 yards of whales.
- ◆ Boat operators are prohibited from approaching within 500 yards of Northern Right whales.
- ◆ Approach with extreme caution within 100 yards of any other species of whales.
- ◆ Approach whales from the side, not head-on and don't box them in.
- ◆ Don't cut off their path. Don't separate mothers from offspring.
- ◆ If a whale approaches within 100 feet, put your engine in neutral. Do not reengage your engine until the whale is observed on the surface, clear of the 100-foot zone.
- ◆ If you sight one whale, expect to see more whales in the immediate vicinity.



Whale Disentanglement

- ◆ If you observe a whale entangled in fish gear or other man-made material, do not attempt to disentangle it. Contact the U.S. Coast Guard or the Massachusetts Environmental Police on VHF radio, Channel 16 or call the Large Whale Disentanglement Network at (800) 900-3622.
- ◆ For further information on the protection of marine mammals, visit the websites of the Center for Coastal Studies at www.coastalstudies.org or the National Marine Fisheries Service at www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

Invasive Species

Invasive species are plants or animals, either indigenous to this region (native) or from other regions (non-native or exotic), that have the ability to dominate or alter an ecosystem. Most exotic species originally arrived in ballast water or were intentionally or accidentally released from aquariums.

Invasive species often are spread by remaining on boat trailers, props, fishing gear or in bait bucket, cooling and live well water.



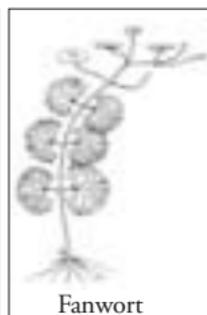
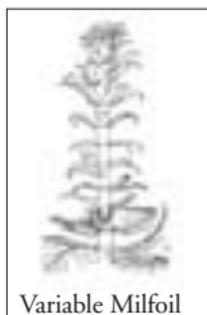
Why are they harmful?

- ◆ Prevention of boating/fishing: Many invasive plants grow rapidly in our lakes. The dense mats of vegetation they form can restrict or entirely prevent boating and fishing and may make the waterway entirely impassable.
- ◆ Loss of native plants and animals: Non-native plants often do not provide ideal habitat or food for fish and other aquatic animals. These plants crowd out native vegetation, and the animals that depend on native vegetation must relocate or perish.
- ◆ Loss of biodiversity: The spread of invasive species often reduces the biological diversity of the area and can disrupt the balance of the ecosystem.

- ◆ Loss of property value: The aesthetic appeal, recreational value and surrounding property values of a lake may quickly decline as the invasive species takes over.
- ◆ Expensive: Once exotic plants are established, they are almost impossible to eradicate and expensive to control. The United States invests millions of dollars annually to manage these plants and repair the damage.

How can you prevent their spread?

- ◆ Remove all plant parts from your boat motor, trailer, anchors, fishing gear and dive gear. Dispose of plant matter above the waterline on dry land or in a trash can.
- ◆ Dispose of live well, bait and cooling water away from the shore after each use.
- ◆ Never release a plant or animal into a body of water unless it came out of that body of water.
- ◆ Wash your boat, preferably with hot water, and allow it to completely dry before entering another body of water.
- ◆ Familiarize yourself with invasive species by requesting one of our free color guides to invasive aquatic plants and



spread the word to others about invasive species.

- ◆ Get involved. Request a free “Stop the Spread” sign for your boat ramp or join a weed monitoring group to identify and eradicate new infestations in your lake before they become permanently established.
- ◆ Be alert for zebra mussels. They have not yet been reported in MA, but are established in NY, VT, and CT. Zebra mussels can destroy dive gear, boat motors and other engines. Please report any possible infestation.



Invasive species create problems for boaters. Zebra mussels can attach in clusters on motors and hydrilla can tangle in props.

**For more information on invasive species
or to report an infestation, contact the:**

**MA Department of Conservation & Recreation
Lakes & Ponds Program
www.mass.gov/lakesandponds
or phone 617-626-1382**