Boat Registration

Boat Registration: All boats with motors, including electric trolling motors, operating on the waters of the state, must be registered and numbered. Boat registration applications are available from most boat dealerships and on the LDWF web site, Wildlife and Fisheries District Offices or call 225-765-2898.

Upon receipt of your application and all other required documentation, the Department will issue a certificate of registration, stating the number assigned to the boat, two decals, and an expiration date of three years from the date of issuance. **Your boat registration certificate must be on board the vessel at all times**.

Display of Number and Decals: The number assigned and no other shall be painted on or attached to each side of the forward half of the vessel's hull. The letters and numbers must be a plain block design, not less than 3 inches high and a color that contrasts with the hull. The number and letters must be vertical and plain. Border, outline, or shadowing must be disregarded in determining height or color contrast. Between the prefix, the numerals, and the suffix, there must be a hyphen or space equal to the width of a number, except 1 or letter, except I. Examples of correct number display are: LA-4002-CS OR LA 4002 GS.

Placement of Decals: Decals received from the Department must be attached to each side of the vessel's bow within six inches of the numbers.

Expiration and Renewal: When your boat registration expires it must be renewed within 60 days of the expiration date. The expiration date is printed on the face of the registration certificate. Renewal notices are mailed to the last known address 15 days prior to the month in which the expiration expires.

Duplicate Certificates: If a certificate of registration is lost or destroyed, the boat owner must notify the Department in writing within 15 days, describing the circumstances of the loss. In addition, the owner must make application for a duplicate certificate.

HIN or Hull Identification Number: A hull identification number is located on the starboard outside of a boat's transom looking from behind the vessel. The HIN consists of 12 characters of letters and numbers. Boats built after November 1, 1972, must have HIN number permanently attached to the hull before it is sold.

Inspection: All owners of homemade boats will be assigned a hull identification number by the Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries before the vessel can be registered.

NOTE - It is a violation of law to possess a boat or motor from which the hull identification number or serial number has been removed.

Personal Flotation Device: Louisiana law requires that all children 16 years of age and younger wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD while underway on a vessel less than 26 feet long. The PFD must be fastened and of the proper size for the child.

Hand Tiller Motors: All persons on board a motorboat less than 16 feet which is being propelled by a hand tiller outboard motor are required to wear a USCG approved Type I, II, III or V PFD while the motorboat is underway.

A motorboat less than 26 feet with a hand tiller outboard motor in excess of 10 horsepower designed to have or having an engine cut-off switch must have the engine cut-off switch link attacked to the operator, the operator's clothing, or the operator's PFD, if worn, while the motor is running and the vessel is underway.

Classification of Vessels
Class A----Less than 16 feet
Class 1----16 feet to less than 26 feet
Class 2----26 feet to less than 40 feet
Class 3----40 feet to less than 65 feet

Fire Extinguishers: All mechanically propelled vessels less than 26 feet must carry one B-1 U.S. Coast Guard approved fire extinguisher if any one or more of the following conditions exist:

- Inboard engines.
- Closed compartments and compartments under seats where portable fuel tanks may be stored.
- Double bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not completely filled with flotation materials.
- Closed living spaces.
- Closed stowage compartments in which combustible or flammable materials are stored.
- Permanently installed fuel tanks. Fuel tanks secured so they cannot be moved in case of fire or other emergency are considered permanently installed. There are no gallon capacity limits to determine if the tank is portable. If the weight of a fuel tank is such that persons on board cannot move it, the Coast Guard considers it permanently installed.

Mechanically propelled vessels 26 feet to less than 40 feet must carry two B-1 U.S. Coast Guard approved fire extinguishers. Vessels over 65 feet must comply with Federal Standards.

Visual Distress Signals (VDAS): All recreational boats, when used on coastal waters and the territorial seas, up to a point where a body of water is less than two miles wide must be equipped with visual distress signals. Boats owned in the United States operating on the high seas must be equipped with visual distress signals. The following are excepted from the requirements for day signals and only need carry night signals when operating at night: - Recreational boats less than 16 feet in length. - Boats participating in organized events such as races, regattas, or marine parades. - Open sailboats less than 26 feet in length not equipped with propulsion machinery. - Manually propelled boats.

Pyrotechnic visual distress signals must be Coast Guard approved, in serviceable condition and stowed to be readily accessible. They are marked with a date showing the serviceable life and this date must not have passed. Launchers produced before January 1, 1981, intended for use with approved signals are not required to be Coast Guard approved.

Sound Signaling Devices: Every motorboat or vessel of Class 1, 2, or 3, shall be provided with an efficient whistle or other sound-producing mechanical appliance. Every motorboat or vessel of Class

2 or 3 shall be provided with an efficient bell.

Navigation Lights: Every motorboat or vessel when underway in all weather from sunset to sunrise shall carry and exhibit the following lights and during such time no other lights which may be mistaken for those prescribed shall be exhibited.

Every motorboat or vessel of Class A and 1 shall carry the following lights: - A bright white light aft to show all around the horizon. - A combined lantern in the fore part of the vessel and lower than the white aft showing green to starboard and red to port so fixed as to throw the light from right ahead to two points abaft the beam on their respective sides.

Every motorboat or vessel of Classes 2 and 3 shall carry the following lights: - A bright white light in the fore part of the vessel as near the stern as practicable so constructed as to show an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of twenty points of the compass and so fixed as to throw the light ten points on each side of the vessel, namely from right ahead to two points abaft the beam on either side. - A bright white light aft to show all around the horizon and higher than the white light forward.

On the starboard side, a green light so constructed as to show an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of ten points of the compass and so fixed as to throw the light from right ahead to two points abaft the beam on the starboard side. On the port side, a red light so constructed as to show an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of ten points of the compass so fixed as to throw the light from right ahead to two points abaft the beam on the port side. The side lights shall be fitted with inboard screens of sufficient height so set as to prevent these lights from being seen across the bow.

Motorboats and vessels of Classes A and 1 when propelled by sail alone shall carry the combined lanterns but not the white light aft prescribed by this Section. Motorboats and vessels of Classes 2 and 3 when so propelled shall carry the suitably screened colored side lights, but not the white light prescribed by this Section. Motorboats and vessels of all classes when underway shall carry ready at hand a lantern or flashlight showing a white light which shall be exhibited in

sufficient time to avert collision.

Anchor Lights: All motorboats anchored in navigable waterways of this state shall exhibit a white three hundred and sixty degree stern light between the hours of sunset to sunrise. This light shall be the highest such light to be exhibited.

Visibility of Lights: White lights shall be of such character as to be visible at a distance of at least two miles. Every colored light shall be of such character as to be visible at a distance of at least one mile. "Visible" means visible on a dark night with clear atmosphere.
NOTE: When propelled by sail and machinery any motorboat shall carry the same lights required for a motorboat propelled by machinery only.

This information is not an official copy of the laws in effect and should not be utilized or relied upon as such. Information may change from the time of posting. For this reason, the reader is cautioned that it is his/her responsibility to acquaint himself/herself of the laws in effect at any given time. This information is provided as a public service representing a partial summary of the laws in effect at time of posting.