

United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

WS Directive

2.630 06/17/09

WATERCRAFT USE

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for the safe use of watercraft.

2. BACKGROUND

Watercraft may be necessary for WS personnel to carry out their mission. Uses of watercraft by WS personnel include, but are not limited to, transportation of personnel and equipment, bridge assessments, night-time harassment and lethal control activities, and running trap lines.

3. POLICY

Watercraft is defined collectively as any boat, ship, or other craft that is propelled by hand, wind, or machinery on water. Seaplanes are not considered watercraft under this directive

Each watercraft operator will comply with applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations and will operate watercraft in a safe manner. WS State programs may develop more specific and stringent policies for their particular needs and for the particular watercraft that they utilize.

WS employees must complete a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, or similar approved boater safety course and be signed off by their supervisor to use and operate watercraft.

Government-owned watercraft will be used for official purposes only and WS employees must obtain authorization from their supervisor prior to using privately-owned (hired) watercraft.

Each operator will review and follow all instructions in the watercraft owner/operator's manual provided by the manufacturer, including USCG weight placards and passenger occupancy restrictions. Watercraft will be maintained in good operating condition in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and adhere to all Federal, State,

Federal, State, and local laws pertaining to the type and class of boat. Loads that have the potential to destabilize the boat must be securely fastened and not exceed the recommended weight limit.

All required safety equipment appropriate for the vessel according to Federal, State and local laws will be available on the watercraft at all times during operation. Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) for all passengers must be USCG Approved PFD Type I, II, III, or environmental (work or survival) suit, appropriate size for the intended user, and worn at all times while on any watercraft. All watercraft and safety equipment will be inspected annually by the State Director, Project Leader, Director, or his/her designee.

Prior to watercraft use, the operator will notify the district supervisor or other designee of general location of travel and expected return times, unless the operator is: 1) carrying a cell phone (and the full day's travel will remain within cell range/coverage) or a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or equivalent location/tracking device, or 2) alternatively the watercraft operator contacts his/her first-line supervisor or designee prior to leaving to conduct the day's work tasks and provides the following information: the: 1) route, location or vicinity where boating will take place, 2) location of operator's parked truck and/or trailer, and 3) approximate time the operator expects to return to duty station or enters cellular phone or VHF radio range.

All on the job watercraft accidents will be reported promptly to the immediate supervisor. All on the job accidents involving motorized boats will be reported promptly in accordance with the Marketing and Regulatory Programs Motor Vehicle Manual (November 2007).

This policy applies to all cooperators and volunteers accompanying WS employees on projects. WS personnel on official duty in a boat operated by another agency will continue to adhere to WS Directives and to the safety regulations of the other agency.

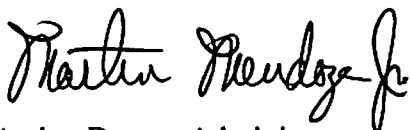
4. REFERENCE

Marketing and Regulatory Programs Motor Vehicle Manual (November 2007)

U.S. Coast Guard (www.uscgboating.org)

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (www.nasbla.org)

WS Directive 2.601, Safety (10/07/05)



Acting Deputy Administrator