



# NORTH CAROLINA

## Equipment

(Required and Otherwise)

(This checklist does not address PWC requirements)

Vessel Type >>>>	Class "A"	Class "1"	Class "2"	Class "3"
Vessel Length >>>	Under 16'	16' to Under 26'	26' to Under 40'	40' to Under 65'
Vessel Registration	Req'd <sup>1</sup>	Req'd <sup>1</sup>	Req'd <sup>1</sup>	Req'd <sup>1</sup>
Registration Decal	Req'd <sup>2</sup>	Req'd <sup>2</sup>	Req'd <sup>2</sup>	Req'd <sup>2</sup>
Boater Education Certificate	Req'd <sup>3</sup>	Req'd <sup>3</sup>	Req'd <sup>3</sup>	Req'd <sup>3</sup>
Life Preservers (PFDs)	<b>RED</b> <sup>4, 7, 8</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>5, 7, 8</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>5, 7, 8</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>5, 7, 8</sup>
Type IV PFD	N/R <sup>6</sup>	Req'd <sup>5</sup>	Req'd <sup>5</sup>	Req'd <sup>5</sup>
PFDs for Children Under 13	Req'd <sup>10, 8</sup>	Req'd <sup>10, 8</sup>	Req'd <sup>10, 8</sup>	Req'd <sup>10, 8</sup>
Fire Extinguishers	<b>RED</b> <sup>11</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>11</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>12</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>12</sup>
Sound Signals	<b>RED</b> <sup>13</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>13</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>13</sup>	Req'd <sup>14</sup>
Backfire Flame Arrestors	Req'd <sup>15</sup>	Req'd <sup>15</sup>	Req'd <sup>15</sup>	Req'd <sup>15</sup>
Ventilation	<b>RED</b> <sup>16</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>16</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>16</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>16</sup>
Mufflers	<b>RED</b> <sup>17</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>17</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>17</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>17</sup>
Navigation Lights	<b>RED</b> <sup>18</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>18</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>18</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>18</sup>
Safety Lanyard	REC <sup>19</sup>	REC <sup>19</sup>	REC <sup>19</sup>	REC <sup>19</sup>
Visual Distress Signals	<b>RED</b> <sup>20, 21</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>20, 22</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>20, 22</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>20, 22</sup>
Observing Towed Persons	<b>RED</b> <sup>23</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>23</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>23</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>23</sup>
PFDs for Towed Persons	<b>RED</b> <sup>24, 25</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>24, 25</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>24, 25</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>24, 25</sup>
"Impact-rated" PFDs	REC <sup>26</sup>	REC <sup>26</sup>	REC <sup>26</sup>	REC <sup>26</sup>
"Diver-Down" Flag	<b>RED</b> <sup>27</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>27</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>27</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>27</sup>
Oil Discharge Placard 5"x 8"	N/R	N/R	Req'd <sup>28</sup>	Req'd <sup>28</sup>
MARPOL Placard 4"x 9"	N/R	N/R	Req'd <sup>29</sup>	Req'd <sup>29</sup>
Waste Management Plan	N/R	N/R	N/R	Req'd <sup>30</sup>
Marine Sanitation Devices	<b>RED</b> <sup>31</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>31</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>31</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>31</sup>
Book of "Navigation Rules"	N/R	N/R	N/R	Req'd <sup>32</sup>

### Legend:

Req'd **Required** unconditionally

REC Not required but there is a **RE**commendation

N/R Not **Required**

**RED** **Review Expanded Details** (Review footnotes & below-listed website(s):

[www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Boating/documents/VOG.pdf](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Boating/documents/VOG.pdf)

[www.uscgboating.org/fedreqs/default.html](http://www.uscgboating.org/fedreqs/default.html)

*Note - Vessels operated on the waters of North Carolina shall slow to a no-wake speed when passing within 100 feet of a law enforcement vessel that is displaying a flashing blue light unless the vessel is in a narrow channel, in which case slow to a no-wake speed when passing within 50 feet of the enforcement vessel; violation is subject to citation and fines.*

**Reference: North Carolina Vessel Operator's Guide** ("NCVOG") [up to date through January 1, 2010]

Website: [www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Boating/documents/VOG.pdf](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Boating/documents/VOG.pdf)

**Reference: USCG booklet "Federal Requirements"** by USCG Office of Boating Safety (2012)

Website: [www.uscgboating.org/fedreqs/default.html](http://www.uscgboating.org/fedreqs/default.html)

1. The **Certificate of Vessel Number** must be onboard when the vessel is in use.  
Common sense dictates that the registration must be aboard (*this topic is not addressed in the NCVOG publication*).
2. Affix **decals** forward of and within 6 inches of your North Carolina Registration Number on the starboard bow of the vessel for which it was issued (NCVOG p.4, Display..., Affixing Vessel Decal).
3. ID and **boater safety certification** must be produced upon request of an officer [The preceding statement only displayed in NCVOG information concerning PWCs but reason insists that the statement applies equally to all vessels] (NCVOG p.13, Personal..., Minimum...).  
NOTE: On or after May 1, 2010, any person under the age of 26 must successfully complete a NASBLA approved boating education course before operating any vessel propelled by a motor of 10 horsepower or greater.
4. All recreational vessels must have one Type I, II, or III **PFD** of a suitable size for each person aboard and each person being towed (NCVOG p.6, Personal..., Recreational..., para. 1).
5. All recreational vessels sixteen (16) feet in length and over must have one Type I, II, or III **PFD** of suitable size for each person aboard and each person being towed, and in addition, one throwable Type IV PFD (NCVOG p.6, Personal..., Recreational..., para. 2).
6. A requirement to carry a USCG-approved **Type IV PFD** does not apply to recreational vessels under 16 feet in length. Type IVs are purposely omitted from mention and are, therefore, not required. [NCVOG p.6, Personal..., Recreational..., para. 1 omits mention of any Type IV requirement while para. 2 requires Type IVs only for all vessels 16 feet and over].
7. NOTE: For both "4" and "5" above, **Type V PFDs** are not specified by the NCVOG. A Type V PFD is a restricted device that must be USCG-approved and is acceptable only when the wearer is engaged in the activity for which the device is intended. The manufacturers label will show the activities for which the PFD is authorized and the label will list all other restrictions (NCVOG p.7, Types..., Type V).
8. **Inflatable PFDs** are not approved for persons under 16 years of age. *Restricting inflatable PFD usage to those 16 years of age or older is not addressed in the NCVOG publication. However, it is specifically addressed on p.10 under "Inflatable Life Jackets" in the USCG's "Federal Requirements" booklet*.
9. Purposely left blank.
10. **Life Jacket Rule for Children:** No person may operate a recreational vessel unless each child under 13 years old on board is wearing an appropriate USCG-approved PFD unless:
  - (a) each child not wearing such a PFD is below decks or in an enclosed cabin, or
  - (b) the vessel is not underway (vessels that are anchored or are tied to shore or that are aground are not underway).(NCVOG p.6, Personal..., Recreational..., para. 3).
11. A vessel of Classes A or I (less than 26 feet) must carry at least one USCG-approved, readily accessible, "B-I" type (or "AB-I" or "ABC-I" or "BC-I") **fire extinguisher** in good and serviceable condition unless:
  - (a) it has an approved built-in fire extinguishing system in the engine compartment, or
  - (b) it is an outboard vessel of open construction

Outboards less than 26' are of closed construction if they have one or more of five specified conditions (specified in the NCVOG) and must carry a USCG-approved, readily accessible, efficiently charged, fire extinguisher in good and serviceable condition (NCVOG p.8, Fire...).

12. A vessel of Classes 2 or 3 (26 feet and over) must carry appropriate quantities and/or sizes of USCG-approved, readily accessible, efficiently charged, **fire extinguishers** in good and serviceable condition (NCVOG p.8, Fire..., reference p.9 table).
13. Vessels less than 39.4 feet (i.e. <40') in length, while not required to have a horn or whistles and bells, shall be provided with some means of making an efficient **sound signal** (NCVOG p.9, Sound...).
14. For making **sound signals**, a vessel greater than 40 feet but less than 65 feet must carry a horn or whistle that can be heard for one-half mile. It must also carry a bell that has a diameter of at least 200 mm (7.87 inches) across the mouth (NCVOG p.9, Sound...).
15. The carburetors on inboard gasoline engines must be equipped with Coast Guard approved **backfire flame arrestors**. (NCVOG p.9, Flame...). **This topic is "N/A" for outboards and electric motors.**
16. Inboard vessels...and certain outboard vessels must have each engine and fuel tank compartment equipped with two or more cowled **ventilators**...for efficiently evacuating fuel vapors (NCVOG p.9, Ventilation...). **This topic is "N/A" for electric motors.**
17. Vessel engine exhausts...must have effective **mufflers** on each exhaust. (NCVOG p.9, Exhaust...).
18. Vessels operating at night are required to display **navigation lights** between sunset and sunrise (NCVOG p.10-11, Inland...). There are multiple categories of lighting requirements with particulars about your specific vessel to be found in the North Carolina Vessel Operators Guide [available from some marine dealers, offices of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), and from some agents who sell fishing and hunting licenses].
19. RECOMMENDED (though not required for vessels other than PWCs): On vessels equipped with a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch, the **lanyard** should be attached to the person operating.
20. *The topic "Visual Distress Signals (VDS)" is not addressed in the North Carolina Vessel Operator's Guide. Reference: "Visual Distress Signals" on p.17-20 in the USCG's "Federal Requirements" booklet:*  
Vessels operating on U.S. coastal waters, the Great Lakes, territorial seas, and those waters connected directly to them, up to a point where the waterway is less than two nautical miles wide, must be equipped with USCG-approved visual distress signals (VDS). Vessels owned in the United States and operating on the high seas must also be equipped with USCG-approved visual distress signals.
- On the waters defined above, recreational vessels less than 16 feet (i.e. Class "A" vessels) are not required to carry daytime visual distress signals (VDS) but must carry night signals when operating between sunset and sunrise (Reference: "Visual..." on p.17 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).
- Prudent Class "A" vessel operators should consider carrying some type of daytime VDS when on coastal waters, etc., despite not being required to do so.
21. **Visual distress signals** are not required on non-coastal waters which is the first point upstream from a river's mouth where a river narrows to less than 2 nautical miles in width. Prudent vessel operators should consider carrying VDS devices even on these "non-coastal" waters. (Reference: "Visual..." on p.17 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).
22. All recreational vessels 16 feet or greater in length (i.e. Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3) shall be equipped with **visual distress signals** at all times when operating on coastal waters, the Great Lakes, territorial seas, and those waters connected directly to them as well as on the high seas. (Reference: "Visual..." on p.17 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).
23. Regulations relating to **observing towed persons** on devices (water skis, kneeboards, wakeboards, tubes or floats, and similar devices) prohibit the operation of such devices unless:
- a. the towing vessel is equipped with a rear-view mirror, *or*
  - b. there is an observer on the towing vessel in addition to the operator, *or*
  - c. the person being towed is wearing a USCG-approved life preserver [NCVOG p.15, Water...].

24. **Inflatable PFDs** do not satisfy the PFD requirement for persons being towed. Inflatables are excluded from use on PWCs, from "whitewater sports" use (kayaking in rapids), and from "water sports" activities (skiing, wakeboarding, kneeboarding, tubing, ski-jumping, etc.). *For vessels other than PWCs, the "inflatable PFD" subject is not addressed in the NCVOG publication.*

25. When **persons being towed** (on skis, kneeboards, wakeboards, tubes or floats, etc.) elect to not wear a life vest, then one USCG-approved, life vest of the appropriate size must be carried aboard the towing vessel for each such individual (*this topic is not addressed in the NCVOG publication*).

26. RECOMMENDED: For persons being towed (on skis, kneeboards, wakeboards, tubes or floats, etc.), it is recommended that each person's allotted life vest be of the type which carries an "impact rating" even though this is not required by regulations (*this topic is not addressed in the NCVOG publication*).

27. Skin divers or scuba divers must display the red (w/white diagonal) "**Diver Down**" flag from vessel or float at the place of diving. Vessels may not approach closer than 50 feet to any structure from which a diver's flag is displayed. (NCVOG p.16, Skin...; also NCVOG p.19, bottom pictorial).

28. Federal Water Pollution Control Act requires that vessels with propulsion machinery must have a capacity to retain **oily waste** mixtures on board. A bucket, oil absorbent pads and heavy duty plastic bag, bailer or portable pump are some suitable means for retention on board until transferring the oily mixture to a reception facility. Vessels 26 feet or longer must display a 5"x 8" warning placard (Reference: "Pollution..." on p.32 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).

29. The **MARPOL Act** places limitations on the discharge of garbage from vessels. Vessels 26 feet or longer must display a 4"x 9" placard which defines the discharge restrictions (Reference: "Pollution..." on p.33-34 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).

30. Vessels 40 feet or longer equipped with a galley and berthing must have a written **Waste Management Plan** describing the procedures for collecting, processing, storing, and discharging garbage and designating the person who is in charge of carrying out the plan (Reference: Last paragraph on p.34 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).

31. To place, throw, deposit, or discharge into the public waters of North Carolina any litter, raw sewage, bottles, cans, papers, or other liquid or solid material...is a misdemeanor (NCVOG p.17, Littering...)

All recreational vessels 65 feet and under with installed toilet facilities must have an operable, USCG-certified **marine sanitation device** (MSD) on board. When operating a vessel on a body of water where the discharge of treated or untreated sewage is prohibited, the operator must secure the device in a manner which prevents any discharge (Reference: "Marine..." on p.35 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).

32. Vessels 40 feet or longer are required to have aboard a current copy of the U.S. Coast Guard publication "**Navigation Rules**". Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 [Phone: (202) 512-1800] and specify stock number 050-012-00192-8 (Reference: "Operating..." on p.36 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).