



February 19, 2013

# VIRGINIA

## 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	<b>RED</b> <sup>3</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>3</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>3</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>3</sup>
Life Preservers (PFDs)	<b>RED</b> <sup>4, 8</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>4, 8</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>4, 8</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>4, 8</sup>
Type IV PFD	N/R	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>	<b>RED</b> <sup>13</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>22, 21</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>22, 21</sup>	<b>RED</b> <sup>22, 21</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 RECommendation
- N/R Not Required
- RED** Review **E**xpanded **D**etails (Review footnotes & below-listed website(s):

[www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/regulations/2013-fishing-regulations.pdf](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/regulations/2013-fishing-regulations.pdf)  
[www.uscgboating.org/fedreqs/default.html](http://www.uscgboating.org/fedreqs/default.html)

*Note: Enforcement vessels of the VDGIF and the USCG may display a rotating or flashing blue light. When such a light is observed, you should stop immediately and lay to, or maneuver in such a way as to permit the boarding officer to come aboard.*

**Reference: Virginia Watercraft Owner's Guide ("VWOG")** [Published 2013]

Website: [www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/regulations/2013-fishing-regulations.pdf](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/regulations/2013-fishing-regulations.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. In addition to a Certificate of Title (title), a Certificate of Number (**vessel registration**) is required for all watercraft propelled by machinery (i.e. excepted are non-motorized vessels), including but not limited to gasoline, diesel, and electric motors. The 3-Year Registration.....must be carried aboard the watercraft when in use (VWOG p.55, Registration...).
2. Each vessel's 3-Year Registration comes with a pair of **registration decals** showing the month and year of expiration, and the registration number assigned to your watercraft. A decal is to be affixed within 6 inches of the registration number appearing on each side of the vessel. Expired decals must be removed if they are in plain view (VWOG p.55, Validation...).
3. Vessel operators are required to have their **Boater Safety Education certificate** on board when operating a vessel with a 10 hp or greater motor (Not specifically so stated in 2012 VWOG p.61).  
NOTE: For vessels with motors of 10 hp or greater, on July 1st, 2013, operators who are age 40 or younger must have successfully completed a Boater Safety Education course. Until then, operators who were 30 years of age or younger on July 1st, 2012, must already have completed such a course. Older motorboat operators will continue to "stage in" under the Boater Safety Education requirements on a yearly basis until July 1st, 2016, when all Virginia motorboat operators must finally be in compliance. (VWOG p.61, Virginia...).
4. There must be one wearable (Type I, II, III, or V) USCG-approved, readily accessible, **life preserver** of the appropriate size for each person on a vessel (including life vests allotted for each individual being towed by a vessel). Each must also be in good and serviceable condition. Type V life jackets need to be worn according to the manufacturer's label to meet requirements. On inflatable life jackets, all mechanisms (air chamber, inflation mechanism and cartridge, oral inflation tubes, inflation status indicators) should be checked before each trip (VWOG p.55, Required...).
5. There must be at least one (1) USCG-approved, immediately available, **Type IV throwable** (ring buoy or seat cushion) on vessels of 16 feet or greater (VWOG p.55-56, In addition...).
6. Purposely left blank.
7. Purposely left blank.
8. **Inflatable PFDs** are not approved for persons under 16 years of age (VWOG p.56, A Special Note...).
9. Purposely left blank.
10. **Federal Life Jacket Rule for Children:** No person may operate a recreational vessel on federal waters with any child under age 13 on the vessel unless each child is wearing an appropriate USCG-approved life jacket or else is either below deck or in an enclosed cabin. On Virginia waters, this rule (though not enforced by Virginia's Conservation Police) is enforced by the U.S. Coast Guard and applies on waters (Lake Gaston, etc.) over which they have enforcement jurisdiction (VWOG p.56, Federal...).
11. All motorboats under 26 feet that have one or more of five specified conditions (specified in the VWOG) must carry USCG-approved, readily accessible, efficiently charged, **fire extinguishers** in good and serviceable condition (VWOG p.56, Fire..., reference p.57 table).
12. All vessels over 26 feet must have USCG-approved, readily accessible, adequately charged, **fire extinguishers** aboard (VWOG p.56, Fire..., reference p.57 table).

13. Regulations do not specifically require vessels less than 39.4 feet (i.e. <40'). in length to carry a whistle, horn, or bell. However, Navigation Rules require sound signals to be made under certain circumstances. Therefore, having some means of making an efficient **sound signal** capable of a 4-second blast which is audible for 1 mile is required. A whistle or air horn is acceptable if your vessel is not equipped with a horn. (VWOG p.57, Sound...).

14. Purposely left blank.

15. Inboard gasoline engines must have USCG-approved **backfire flame arrestors** (i.e. conforming to SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 Standards) securely attached to their carburetors (VWOG p.57, Backfire...). **This topic is "N/A" for outboards and electric motors.**

16. No person may operate a vessel built after July 31, 1980 that has an inboard gasoline engine (for whatever use) unless it is equipped with an operable **ventilation** system that meets USCG standards (VWOG p.57, Ventilation...). **This topic is "N/A" for outboards and electric motors.**

17. Vessel engine exhausts must have effective **mufflers** which either exhaust at or below the water line, or are equipped with mechanical baffles. The use of cut-outs is prohibited. (VWOG p.57, Muffling...).

18. While underway, you are required to display **navigation lights** between sunset and sunrise and during periods of restricted visibility (VWOG p.58, Navigation...). There are multiple categories of lighting requirements [International (i.e. Atlantic Ocean waters off the Virginia coast), Inland, power-driven vessels (with sub-categories by vessel age), sailing vessels, and vessels under oars]. Particulars about your specific vessel may be found in the Virginia Watercraft Operators Guide [available from many marine dealers, offices of the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), some DMV Service Centers, and from agents who sell fishing and hunting licenses].

19. RECOMMENDED (i.e. not mandatory for vessels other than PWCs): For vessels equipped with a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch, the operator should attach the **lanyard** to his person, clothing, or life vest (*this topic is not addressed in the VWOG publication*).

20. Recreational vessels less than 16 feet are not required to carry daytime visual distress signals (VDS) on coastal waters. However, they are required to carry night visual distress signals (VDS) when operated on coastal waters at night (VWOG p.57, Visual..., par. 2). Prudent Class "A" vessel operators should consider carrying some type of daytime VDS when on coastal waters despite not being so required.

21. Virginia's "coastal waters" defined (VWOG p.58, The following...).

22. All recreational vessels 16 feet or greater in length shall be equipped with **visual distress signals** at all times when operating on coastal waters and beyond (i.e. Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Ocean, etc.). (VWOG p.57, Visual..., par. 1). VDSs 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.

23. Excluding PWCs, all vessels with **towed persons** on devices (water skis, wakeboards, and similar devices) **MUST have ONE of the following:**

- a. Persons being towed must be wearing a USCG-approved life jacket, **or**
- b. There **must be an observer** on the towing vessel (in addition to the operator) who is in a position to observe the progress of the skier (VWOG p.68, Enjoying..., Water..., par. 1).

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. (VWOG p.56, A Special Note...).

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 VWOG 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 VWOG publication*).

27. Scuba divers or snorkelers must display the red (w/white diagonal) "**Diver Down**" flag that marks their area and vessels must maintain a distance of 25 yards or more from any displayed "Diver Down" flag (VWOG p.62, bottom right view).

Another flag associated with diving operations is the white w/blue swallowtail flag. If your vessel is engaged in diving activities during the day, then on your vessel must prominently be displayed a rigid replica (i.e. not a cloth flag) of the international code flag "Alpha" not less than 3.3 feet (1 meter) in height. If the diving activities are at night, then your vessel must display a specified array of masthead navigation lights (red over white over red) showing 360° of visibility. The "A" flag is an international signal which indicates your vessel's restricted maneuverability and does not pertain to the diver. This requirement does not affect the use of a red and white divers flag, which may be required by state or local law to mark a diver's location. (Reference: "Vessels Restricted in their Ability to Maneuver" on p.31 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).

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 Regulations" 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: "Discharge of Garbage" 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 bottom of p.34 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).

31. Vessels without installed toilets or without installed **marine sanitation devices** shall not directly or indirectly discharge sewage into state waters but shall be pumped out at pump-out facilities or carried ashore for treatment in facilities approved by Virginia Department of Health (VWOG p.57, Marine...).

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 (VWOG p.63, Navigation...).