

excursion, have a way to contact your loved ones to let them know your plans. This is especially important if you have filed a sail plan (see page 15) and are expected home at a certain time.

- Don't cruise with booze.

Construction Standards for Small Vessels

Small vessels (whether pleasure or non-pleasure craft) that operate in Canada must be built according to the Construction Standards for Small Vessels. Pleasure craft built to these standards are issued Canadian compliance labels. If you are selling, building or importing a pleasure craft, you must ensure it meets the appropriate requirements.

Canadian compliance labels

Labels or plates issued in another country, or by any body other than the Government of Canada, are not valid in Canada.

Serially produced pleasure craft sold and operated in Canada up to 6 m (19'8") in length and capable of being fitted with an engine(s) of 10 hp (7.5 kW) or more must carry a capacity plate or capacity label. Pleasure craft not serially produced require a Single Vessel Plate (or label). Although requirements for capacity labels changed from 5 to 6 m (16'5" to 19'8") on April 1, 1999, plates issued before that date are still valid.

A capacity label states:

- The recommended maximum safe limit of an outboard engine power
- The recommended maximum safe limit of number of occupants the pleasure craft may carry
- The recommended maximum load capacity for the pleasure craft

A capacity label also confirms the vessel was built according to the Construction Standards for Small Vessels.

Remember, these are maximum recommendations for fair weather operation. The number of people who can be carried safely depends on the type of pleasure craft, distribution of occupants, equipment carried and weather and water conditions. Operators must know and respect the limitations of their boat.

Your boat's seaworthiness can depend on the load you put in it and where you put it. Too much weight can overload your boat and cause it to become unstable or allow small waves to come aboard. It will also reduce the amount your boat can roll before its sides dip under. Weight that is carried too high will reduce stability, making your boat more apt to roll and less inclined to return to an upright position.

Other pleasure craft fitted or capable of being fitted with an engine sold and operated in Canada must display a conformity label, stating the pleasure craft meets the requirements of the Construction Standards for Small Vessels, issued by Transport Canada.

A single vessel label is issued only to homebuilt pleasure craft or those pleasure craft built by a builder who is not longer able to provide a label.

A Canadian compliance label (capacity or conformity) on your boat confirms it met the appropriate construction standards for small vessels when it was built. If the pleasure craft does not have a Canadian compliance label, contact a Transport Canada Centre for information on how to obtain a label and the associated fees.



For more information on compliance plates or labels visit www.boatingsafety.gc.ca.

Hull identification number (HIN)

Pleasure craft made in Canada, or imported to Canada, after August 1, 1981, must have a HIN marking. The HIN must be on the outside of the transom on the starboard side, or as close to that area as possible if marking on the transom is not practical.

If you can no longer obtain a HIN from the manufacturer, or if the vessel is home-built, request an application package from a Transport Canada Centre to obtain one.



Overloading your boat

Overloading your boat with people or equipment is incredibly dangerous and can have fatal consequences. The number of people who can be carried safely depends on the type of vessel and the distribution of weight. Poor distribution of weight on board will affect your boat's stability for the worse.

As the operator of your vessel, you must follow the limits on the capacity plate as the recommended gross load capacity or the equivalent number of adult persons. When following these limits, keep in mind the maximum load is calculated for fair weather conditions and evenly distributed weight. Keep the load as low as possible on board and secure equipment to prevent it from shifting and affecting the stability of your pleasure craft.

Minimum required equipment

Safe and responsible operation of your pleasure craft is a key ingredient for a good time. The right equipment provides peace of mind and if something goes wrong, it may save your life.

The Small Vessel Regulations identify the minimum equipment required on board your pleasure craft according to vessel length. In some examples over the next few pages, in addition to vessel length, the minimum equipment displayed is by vessel type to assist you.

You may want to bring along additional items depending on your type of vessel, activity and environment. Go prepared. Make sure equipment is easily accessible and can be properly used by everyone on board.