



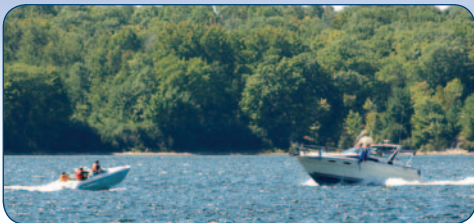
# THE BOATING ENVIRONMENT

## Sharing waterways

Recreational boaters should be prepared to share waterways with wildlife, swimmers, divers, other boaters and watercraft ranging from sailboats to float planes. As an operator, you must respect others on or near the water for them to respect your rights. Operators using courtesy and common sense will not create a hazard, threat, stress or be an irritant to others, to the environment or to wildlife.

## Rules of the road

Following the rules of the road is an important part of recreational boating. Everyone is entitled to a safe, fun time on the water so learn the rules and boat by them. Doing so is not just a matter of courtesy; it is the law, set out in the Collision Regulations. They apply to every vessel and operator on all navigable waters — from canoes to supertankers.



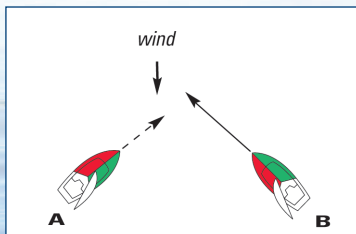
## Right-of-way rules

Right-of-way rules help vessels that are sharing waterways avoid colliding with each other.

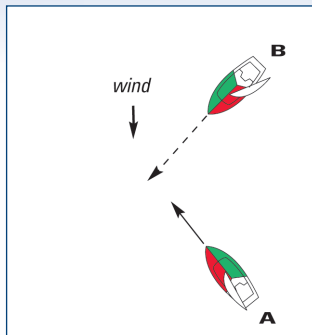
Some right-of-way rules for sailing vessels include:

- a) When each sailing vessel has the wind on a different side, the vessel that has the wind on its port (left) side must keep out of the way of the other. In the illustration below, A keeps clear of B.

If a sailing vessel has the wind on its port side and the sailor cannot determine with certainty whether the other vessel has the wind on its port or starboard side, the first vessel must keep out of the way of the other.



- b) When both sailing vessels have the wind on the same side, the vessel to windward\* shall keep out of the way of the vessel to leeward. B keeps clear of A.



\* The windward side is the side opposite to that on which the mainsail is carried or, in the case of a square-rigged vessel, the side opposite to that on which the largest fore-and-aft sail is carried.

See page 64 for right-of-way rules for power-driven vessels.

## Maintaining a proper lookout and avoiding a collision

Maintaining a constant lookout is common sense and the law. If you are sharing the water with large vessels remember they have limited visibility, manoeuvrability and take much longer to come to a stop. Be prepared to move out of the way of these vessels for these reasons.



## Be aware and be considerate

Never buzz, try to spray swimmers, cut in front of or try to jump the wake of other vessels. Some of the worst boating accidents happen when speed or distance is misjudged. It only adds to the tragedy when the two parties involved are friends or relatives.

Vessels less than 20 m (65'7") in length, including sailing vessels, must stay out of the way of larger vessels that can safely navigate only within the channel. A large vessel will remind you of the requirement to give way by giving five or more short blasts of its horn. This means the situation has escalated to an emergency and you must take all necessary steps to get out of the way.



### Reduce engine noise

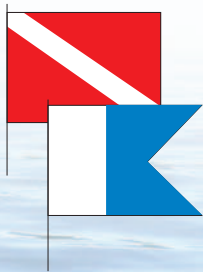
It is not only a matter of consideration; pleasure craft fitted with a motor must incorporate a means that will contribute to the reduction of the motor's noise level. This means must be in use at all times when operating within five nautical miles (9.26 km) of shore. Stock (unmodified) outboard engines are not affected by this provision.

Vessels built before January 1, 1960, or those engaged in an official competition, formal training or final preparation for an official competition are exempt.



### Keep your distance from divers below the surface

Diving is a popular water activity so keep an eye out for diving flags at all times. Keeping a vigilant lookout is especially important because vessel wake, weather and other factors make it even more difficult to spot surface bubbles from those underwater. Know what these diver down flags look like.



Vessels engaged in diving operations must display the international blue and white Code Flag Alpha. A red and white flag that may also be carried on a buoy marks the area where diving is in progress, although divers may stray from the boundaries of the marked areas.

When you see either flag, keep clear of the vessel and diving site and move ahead slowly and with caution.

### Steer clear of shipping lanes

Some operators do not realize the gamble they take when they cut across shipping lanes or in front of larger vessels. These vessels probably will not see you until it is too late, so apply these codes of conduct when boating.

- Always, but especially at crossing zones, maintain a vigilant lookout and be prepared to yield to large vessels. Use all available means adapted to the circumstance and conditions, including radar and radio (if so equipped).
- Small craft should navigate in groups so they are more visible.
- In fog or high winds, small craft operators should avoid taking to the water.
- Above all, keep clear of docked ferries, ferries in transit, or vessel in tow.



## Operate at a safe speed

You may have to stop or turn suddenly to avoid a collision, so operate at a safe speed. When choosing a safe speed consider:

- The visibility conditions (fog, mist, rain and darkness) and your ability to see ahead
- The wind, water conditions and currents
- The manoeuvrability of your boat
- The traffic density, types of vessels in the area and their proximity
- The proximity of any navigational hazards (rocks, and tree stumps)

Be especially careful when operating in areas of restricted visibility, such as entering or exiting a fog bank.

Consider the effects your boat's wake might create while choosing your speed. Your boat's wake can

damage other vessels, docks and the shoreline. Also, consider other users of the waterway such as swimmers, divers and people aboard small vessels that your wake could cause to capsize. You could be held liable for these damages.



## Waterskiing and other towing activities

The rules governing waterskiing include other towing activities such as barefoot skiing, tubing, kneeboarding and parasailing. The Small Vessel Regulations require a spotter to be onboard, as well as the following:

- There must be a seat available for each person being towed in case recovery is necessary.
- Only personal watercraft designed to carry three or more people can be used for towing waterskiers.
- Towing activities are not allowed in the period from one hour after sunset to sunrise.
- The towing vessel cannot be remotely controlled.



## Respect and protect the aquatic environment

Canada's lakes, rivers and coastal waters are ours to share so follow good environmental boating

practices. It is irresponsible, and an offence, to pollute the water with things like oil and garbage. If you have accidentally polluted the water, or see evidence of someone doing so, report it immediately to a Government of Canada pollution prevention officer or call one of the following telephone numbers:

Newfoundland and Labrador  
1-800-563-9089

Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick  
1-800-565-1633

Quebec  
1-800-363-4735

Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northwest Territories and Nunavut  
1-800-265-0237

British Columbia and Yukon  
1-800-889-8852

In some areas of Canada, vessels are prohibited from pumping sewage (also known as blackwater) overboard.

Areas in which pleasure craft are required to have holding tanks and cannot pump sewage overboard:

- Ontario: all waters
- Manitoba: the Assiniboine River in Winnipeg, the Red River and Shoal Lake
- British Columbia: there are several restricted areas – refer to the Schedule in the Pleasure Craft Sewage Pollution Prevention Regulations

Wherever you operate, it is a courtesy to others who use the same waterways to dispose of your blackwater at a pump-out facility. When planning your trip, check with local authorities for places where pump-out facilities are available.

### Green boating tips

- Keep your bilge clean and do not pump oily water overboard.
- Use bilge sorbents in place of detergents.
- Do not pump your sewage over the side. Use a holding tank.
- Observe provincial and federal sewage regulations.
- Bring your garbage home. Do not litter.
- Use detergents sparingly. Even biodegradable cleaners are hard on the aquatic environment.
- When fuelling, do not top off tanks. Clean up spilled fuel.
- Use only paints approved for marine use.
- Avoid shoreline erosion. Watch your wake and propeller wash.
- Report pollution when you see it.