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New Boating Regulations

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The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Law Enforcement Division (LDWF/LED) is advising boaters to be aware of new boating regulations.

- **PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES**

Every person **16** years or younger on board a Class A (less than 16 feet) or Class 1 (16 to less than 26 feet) motorboat or vessel shall wear a coast guard approved life jacket or life preserver while such outboard motorboat or vessel is underway. The regulation becomes effective August 15, 2009. This law previously stated that children 12 and under were required to wear PFD's.

- **BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION REQUIRED**

No person born after January 1, 1984, shall operate a motorboat powered by a motor in excess of ten horsepower unless he has successfully completed a boating safety class approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). A person who has completed an approved boating safety class shall be in possession of evidence of such completion when operating such a boat.

This law is effective July 1, 2010

- **PENALTIES FOR DWI**

Penalties for DWI's now include the suspension or revocation of boating privileges when a person loses driving privileges due to suspension or revocation of their license due to a D.W.I. or D.W.I. refusal whether the offense took place in a vehicle or a watercraft.

- All persons onboard a Class A motorboat which is being propelled by a hand tiller outboard motor shall be required to wear a USCG approved Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device while the motorboat is underway. A **handtiller outboard** is described as an outboard motor that has a tiller or steering arm attached to the outboard motor to facilitate steering and does not have any mechanical assist device which is rigidly attached to the boat and used in steering the vessel, including but not limited to mechanical, hydraulic, or electronic control systems. Hand tiller outboard motor shall not mean any type of electronic trolling motor.

- No person shall operate a Class A or Class One motorboat with a hand tiller outboard motor in excess of ten horsepower designed to have or having an engine cut-off switch, while the engine is running and the motorboat is underway, unless:

- a. The engine cut-off switch is fully functional and in operable condition; and
- b. The engine cut-off switch link is attached to the operator, the operator's clothing, or if worn, the operator's personal flotation device.

The provisions of this Section shall not apply to licensed commercial fishermen operating a motorboat while engaged in commercial fishing activities. The provisions of this Section shall not apply to sailboats **Engine cut-off switch** - an operable emergency cut-off engine stop switch installed on a motorboat and that attaches to the motorboat operator by an engine cut-off switch link. **Engine cut-off switch link** the lanyard and/or cut-off device used to attach the motorboat operator to the engine cut-off switch installed on the motorboat.

- Persons engaged in watersports, which includes but is not limited to waterskiing, towing a tube, wake boarding, wake surfing, etc... must wear a Type I, II, III or V PFD. An inflatable PFD does not meet the requirement. Vessel operators can not tow a watersports participant who is not wearing a pfd. Exceptions to the requirements of this subsection are allowed during Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and/or United States Coast Guard permitted marine events under the following conditions:
 - a. A skier engaged in barefoot water-skiing who wears a barefoot wetsuit designed specifically for such activity.
 - b. A skier engaged in trick water-skiing whose movements would be restricted or impeded by the bulk of a PFD. A **trick water-skier** is a person whose equipment and activities have all of the following characteristics:
 - i. Type of Skis: For standard double trick skis, a length of no more than 46 inches and width of at least 8 inches, with no keels on the bottom; for single trick boards, a length of no more than 56 inches and width of at least 22 inches, with no keel on bottom; and
 - ii. Tow rope no longer than 50 feet.
 - c. The operator of a vessel towing a trick water-skier or barefoot water-skier shall make a PFD readily available aboard the tow vessel for each such skier who elects not to wear such a device while skiing.

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