

ALL ON BOARD!

When you are getting ready to get underway for a boating day you may bring friends and family onboard for the trip. Make sure you have the required safety equipment also. Recreational boating is another activity that requires of safety equipment. Just imagine a catcher in major league baseball going to the field without any equipment, not even the glove. So what about hockey? Football? What about safety belts in our cars? Most safety measures are lessons learned from accidents or situations that resulted in the loss of life or injuries.

As stated previously boating requires safety equipment. The carriage requirement will depend on size of boat, where you are located, number of people on board, and what type of activity are you involve. The federal and state regulations establish the **minimum** of items on board. A boater may choose to carry extra equipment as he/she see fits. Today there are plenty of choices on safety equipment marketed toward the boating activities. The difference lies within the certification of the equipment. Safety equipment required by State must either be certified or approved by the US Coast Guard in the majority of instances. This equipment must be labeled USCG Approved somewhere on the equipment. USCG certified apply to a lesser amount of equipment. The international distress flag (black circle and square with an orange background) is an example of a safety equipment certified vs. flares that are required to be USCG approved.

Additional safety equipment on board do not need to be approved or certified by the USCG as long as the boater carries the minimum amount required. In reality you may acquire a more sophisticated lifejacket or brighter flares or any other gear. Years ago during a boarding of a sailing vessel the master showed me his inflatable lifejacket. This equipment looked like it came out of a James Bond movie, everything on it but the martini! Still the master had an approved device on board so he was in compliance with federal regulations. In this case the master supplemented his safety equipment with what he thought was best for him.

CHECKLIST - ITEMS REQUIRED BY LAW

ITEM	VESSELS LESS THAN 16' LOA	VESSELS GREATER THAN 16', BUT LESS THAN 26' LOA	VESSELS GREATER THAN 26', BUT LESS THAN 40' LOA	VESSELS GREATER THAN 40', BUT LESS THAN 65' LOA
Audio device	✓	✓		
Audio device 39.4 (20m) hereinafter more of a bell whistle			✓	
Certificate of Documentation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Closed construction – 2 extinguishers B-1 (or 1 B2)			✓	
Closed construction – 3 extinguishers (combination)				✓
Closed construction – one extinguisher	✓	✓	✓	
Deployment of number and name	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency Signals (Night)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flotation Device – Type IV		✓	✓	✓
Garbage management plan on board				✓
Method for retaining oil contaminants on board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Navigation License	✓	✓	✓	✓
Navigation Lights (Night)	✓	✓	✓	✓
One lifejacket per person on board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Plaques for Garbage, Oil discharge			✓	✓
Valid Registration				✓
Whistle plus bell				✓