

# Boating Emergency Equipment

## Mandatory Gear By Watercraft Type

Your boat may require specialized equipment not included on this list.

Make sure to check that your vessel has registration numbers, a backfire flame arrestor, or muffler if required.



**Armed Inflatable  
Personal Flotation  
Device (PFD)**



**Deployed Inflatable  
Personal Flotation  
Device (PFD)**

### Which Personal Flotation Device (PFD) should I choose?

The best PFD is the PFD that you will wear. There is no “best” PFD but there are things you should consider when picking your PFD. The type of PFD you should use is based on what you will be doing out on the water. Type I and Type II may turn users over to a face up position, but are not as comfortable as a Type III PFD that lacks the ability to turn a wearer face up. Many PFDs are designed with a particular activity in mind such as fishing or waterskiing. You should pick the PFD designed for your activity and your ability.

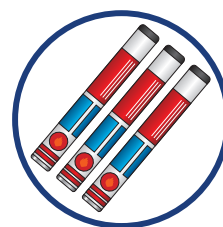
**ALL WATERCRAFT:** One PFD per person is required. Inflatable PFDs must be worn while on the water.

### Visual Distress Signals (VDS): Pyrotechnic and Alternatives

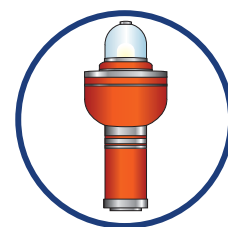
No matter which option you choose, make sure that the VDS is USCG approved. Road flares and multifunction flashlights with a strobe function are not USCG compliant. These signals are only to be used during an emergency situation.

Marine flares are the most common pyrotechnic visual distress signal. These single use signal flares are available as daytime, nighttime, or day/night signals. When carrying these flares, make sure that you have 3 USCG approved day/night flares that are in serviceable condition and have not expired. These flares should only be used during an emergency when you are reasonably sure someone can see the burning signal flare. All pyrotechnic flares have a 42 month lifespan from date of manufacture, so make sure to check the expiration date when purchasing. Proper end of life flare disposal varies by locality.

Non-pyrotechnic visual distress signals include an orange distress flag for daytime use, and USCG approved electronic visual distress signals (eVDS) for nighttime. The eVDSs are battery powered and have a minimum run time of 6 hours, with some exceeding 60 hours of run time. These units are able to be turned on and off to test functionality while still being able to use the device in an emergency situation. While the units have no expiration date, they do require users to change out batteries per manufacturer’s recommendations. Batteries used in these devices are able to be used in other household devices or taken in for recycling.



**Marine  
Flares**



**Electronic Visual  
Distress Signal (eVDS)**

### RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

These items are not required but are recommended that you carry on board your vessel:

First Aid kit	Bilge pump/bailer
Sunscreen	Compass
Tool kit with spare parts	Marine radio
Paddle	Charged cell phone

### IMPORTANT FACTS

- **All boaters under the age of 12** are required to wear a PFD while underway on pleasure boats less than 65’, this includes paddle craft.
- **Anyone onboard a Personal Watercraft (PWC) and anyone being towed behind a vessel** must wear a PFD.
- **Seasonally all boaters** on vessels less than 21’ must wear a PFD between November 1st and May 1st.
- **Inflatable PFDs must be worn while on the water** and users must be over 16 years old to meet PFD requirements.



# Boating Emergency Equipment

## IMPORTANT INFO

### ABOUT SAILBOATS:

Sailboats under motorized power must follow requirements for motorized watercraft.

### ABOUT PWC:

No nighttime operation allowed.



**NON-MOTORIZED PADDLE CRAFT**



**NON-MOTORIZED SAILBOAT**



**PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (PWC)**



**WATERCRAFT UNDER 16'**



**WATERCRAFT BETWEEN 16' - 26'**



Sound signaling device (whistle)



Personal Flotation Device (PFD)  
One per person is required.



Navigation Lights



No nighttime operation allowed



Flashlight Acceptable



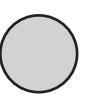
Type IV PFD Throwable Flotation Aid



Required if over 16'



Nighttime Visual Distress Signal



No nighttime operation allowed



Daytime Visual Distress Signal



Required if over 16'



Not required by state law but highly recommended



Fire Extinguisher (USCG Approved)



Required if a motorized sailboat

Required on waters under USCG jurisdiction, recommended everywhere



Engine Cut-Off Switch (if equipped)



Required if a motorized sailboat



Boat Anchor



Required if a motorized sailboat



## IMPORTANT INFO-REMINDER

*All operators of motorized vessels, including PWC, must have their Boater Education Card with them. You must be 10 years old to operate a watercraft or 14 years old to operate a PWC.*