Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Laws and Requirements:
Before leaving the water access or shoreline property, you MUST:
- Clean off ALL aquatic plants and animals
- Drain all water including bilge, live-wells, loosewells, bait buckets, motor and ballast tanks
- Pull the plug and leave it out

Get into the habit of taking these three simple steps, and it will soon become part of your routine. Pull away from the boat ramp area. Check for plants while strapping the boat down. Pull the plug when adjusting the motor. If you have other people (especially kids) with you, have them help! Adding a few minutes will help safeguard our waters.

Cleaning water-related equipment is just as important as cleaning fish while you’re cleaning your boat, please remember to:
- Clean anchors, ropes, fishing tackle, and other objects that were in the water. Many species can be horned in the mud or in fishing lines and ropes
- Dump water out of canoes, kayaks, and other watercraft before leaving

These are YOUR waters and it is YOUR responsibility to inspect, clean, and drain your boat!

AIS Bait Laws
It is illegal to transport lake and river water. To save your bait (minnows or leeches), the DNR recommends bringing bottled or tap water from home and keeping it in your vehicle or cooler. Bringing ice can be a good idea on warm days to cool down the water.

DO NOT dump unwanted bait into water bodies or on the shoreline! Unwanted bait belongs in the trash or a designated compost bin. Unwanted waste must be disposed of in the trash.

Working Together to Protect the Waters
Watercraft Inspectors are here to ensure watercraft and equipment are “clean in, clean out.” If you’re unsure about specific laws that apply to you, ask the inspector before you hit the water.

Ways you can help the Watercraft Inspectors:
- Please clean your boat and pull your plug as soon as you are safely able to. That way when the inspector comes, the inspection process will move quickly
- If there is a Decontamination Unit present, please follow all the instructions given by the inspectors for your safety and theirs. There will be plenty of time to ask questions and watch them work from a safe distance

Ways the Watercraft Inspectors can help you:
- The inspectors have tools, wrenches and pliers, so if you are having trouble with your plug, ask! If there are weeds that are hard to reach, inspectors can also help pull weeds off boats or other such tasks. They also have grabbing tools for plants

When you see the Watercraft Inspectors, please be cooperative. The law requires compliance with inspection. The inspectors are there to help you, not to inconvenience you. If you have questions or concerns about the program, please ask.

Safe Boating
Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) - On all boats (except a sailboard regardless of length there must be a readily accessible Coast Guard approved wearable PFD for each person on board. In addition, on boats 14 feet or longer, except canoes and kayaks, there must also be at least one Coast Guard approved throwable device, such as a ring buoy or seat cushion.

Boating While Intoxicated (DWI) - Boating while intoxicated is illegal. For persons found to be under the influence there are significant penalties, including fines and possible jail sentences.

Personal Watercraft - Special laws apply including steering a PFD and operating at slow no wake speed at certain distances from other watercraft, swimmers and other boats on the water. Check the Guide for additional information. Consult the Boating Guide for more information. A DNR video safety is available free of charge.

Sustainable Natural Environments
Practice Sustainable Water Recreation!
- Keep a reasonable distance from birds, wildlife, and aquatic vegetation
- Travel at safe speeds and be aware of the effect your wake has on the shoreline and other users
- Operate your watercraft at a slow no wake speed when appropriate
- Use watercraft that is the appropriate type and size for the water resource
- Boating doesn’t require continuous movement; enjoy floating, anchoring, and beaching

Sustainable Agriculture
- Keep a reasonable distance from birds, wildlife, and aquatic vegetation
- Travel at safe speeds and be aware of the effect your wake has on the shoreline and other users
- Operate your watercraft at a slow no wake speed when appropriate
- Use watercraft that is the appropriate type and size for the water resource
- Boating doesn’t require continuous movement; enjoy floating, anchoring, and beaching

Conserve fuel by properly operating and maintaining your watercraft

DNR boating programs are funded by

Fishing in Minnesota
Fishing Regulations and Licensing - All persons 16 and older are required to have the appropriate license with them when fishing. Licenses are available through the DNR License Bureau, most County Auditors and many stores that sell fishing related goods. Trout fishing requires a trout stamp. For more information call the DNR Information Center at (507) 299-4157 or 1-888-636-5367. To purchase a license by phone 24 hours a day, call 1-888-MN-LICENSE (645-3624).

Selective Harvest Fishing - Improved technology and new fishing have caused the quality of fishing to decline in many waters. Fishing “Selective Harvest” offers anglers an opportunity to take some fish home while releasing others back into the water to improve fishing quality. There are some tips to use for Effective Selective Harvest fishing:
- Use barbless hooks
- Play the fish quickly and handle the fish carefully
- Never hold the fish by the eyes
- Use a needle nose pliers to remove hooks or cut the line if it is too deep
- Ease the fish back into the water, do not throw it back

You can make a difference by joining the DNR’s Adopt-a-River Program. Be a boat up-volunteer for protection of your favorite recreation area. Call the DNR Information Center for a brochure or visit www.mndnr.gov/boating/adopt-a-river

Boating in Minnesota
The annual Minnesota Boating Guide summarizes Minnesota’s boating laws and regulations in an easy-to-read form. The guide supplies information about operating watercraft on the state’s lakes and rivers. Operator age restrictions apply to operators 17 years old and younger.

Licensing - All motorized and non-motorized watercraft must be licensed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Please contact the DNR License Bureau for information.

This information is available in a downloadable format at www.mndnr.gov/wateraccess