Boating in Minnesota

The annual Minnesota Boating Guide summarizes Minnesota boating laws and regulations in an easy-to-read form. The guide supplies information about operators 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.

Fishing in Minnesota

Fishing Regulations and Licensing - All persons 18 or older are required to have the appropriate license with them while 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 (651) 296-6157 or 1-888-646-6367. To purchase a license by phone, 24 hours a day, call 1-888-MINN-DFW (646-3399) or visit www.license.auditor.mn.gov.

Selective Harvest Fishing - Improved technology and increased fishing have caused the quality of fishing to decline in many waters. Practicing Selective Harvesting can be an opportunity to take some fish while releasing others back into the water to improve fishing quality. Fishermen are encouraged to follow the tips in the Fishing Guide to help ensure safe and renewable fisheries for future generations.

Select your gear carefully. Have the right size, color, and shape of lures on hand. Make sure you have the proper lures for the type of fishing you intend to do.

Practice Sustainable Water Recreation - A healthy and attractive natural environment enables people to enjoy the outdoors without negative impacts on the environment. Communities working together can improve water resources by promoting environmentally sensitive land use practices along rivers and throughout watersheds.

Safe Boating

Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) - 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 10 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 (BWI) - Boating while intoxicated is illegal. If a person found to be under the influence of alcohol it is considered cause for arrest. A DNR safety video is available free of charge.

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