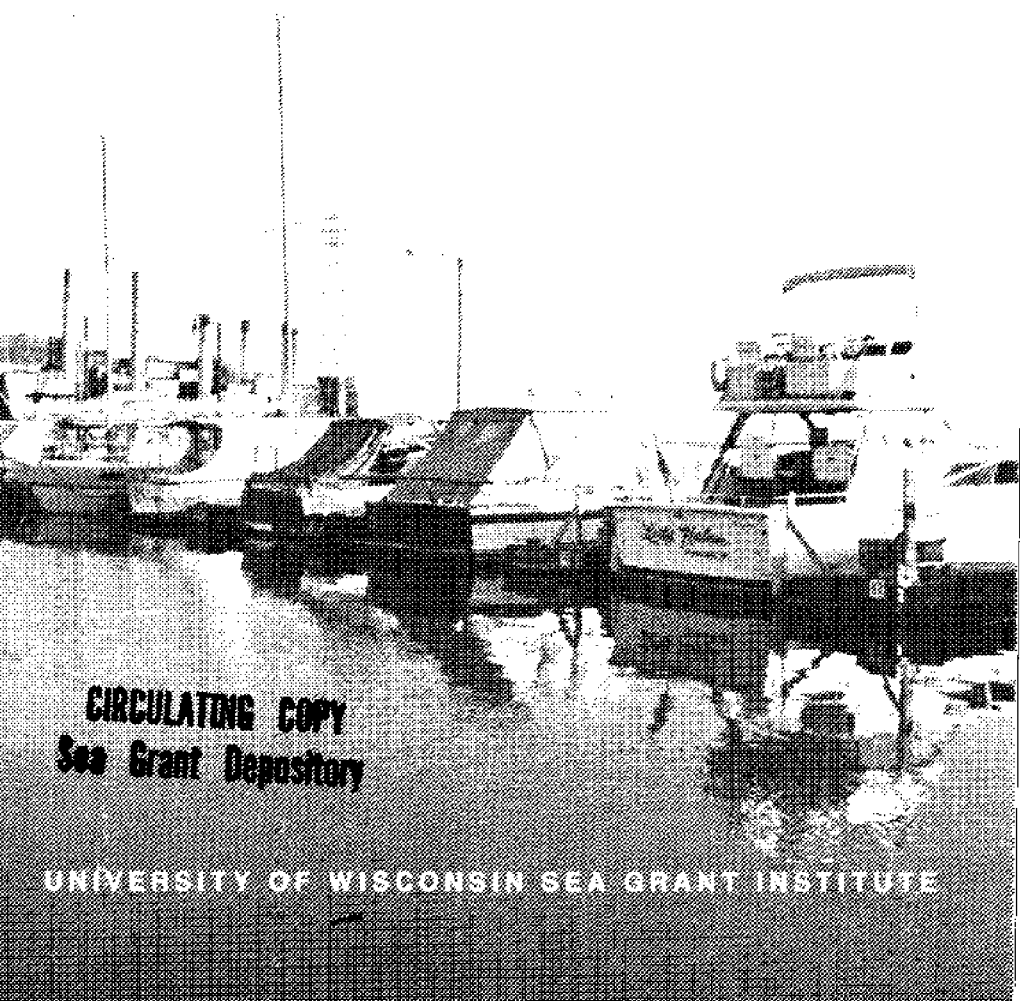


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A Guide to Requirements for Uninspected Charter Fishing Boats in Wisconsin



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A Guide to Requirements for Uninspected Charter Fishing Boats in Wisconsin

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Introduction

This guide is designed for Wisconsin charter fishing captains who operate uninspected vessels that carry six passengers or less for hire. It provides information on federal and state requirements for motorboats 16 to 65 feet long used as charter fishing vessels in Wisconsin waters and for the captains licensed to operate those vessels.

This guide complements the two-page "Charter Boat Requirements—Six or Less Passengers for Hire: Checklist" distributed by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) as part of its preseason boarding program. Following the sequence established in the USCG checklist, this guide provides an explanation of the requirements briefly covered in the checklist and includes information on additional Wisconsin state requirements.

Charter captains may use this guide to equip a boat for initial service in Wisconsin's charter fishing fleet and/or to ready their charter boats at the start of each fishing season. Along with the USCG checklist, this guide may be used to prepare for preseason boarding and to discuss specific requirements with Coast Guard personnel. Captains are encouraged to take advantage of the preseason boarding program offered by local USCG stations.

Disclaimer

This guide has been produced by the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute for informational purposes only. It has been reviewed by the U.S. Coast Guard, Milwaukee; the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and charter boat captains to ensure that the information it contains is current and accurate.

However, this guide is not an official interpretation of the Code of Federal Regulations nor of the Wisconsin statutes, and it is not so endorsed by any law enforcement agency.

Federal Documentation/State Registration

Federal documentation is required for commercial vessels of five or more net tons. Generally, charter fishing vessels 26 feet or longer measure five net tons or more and so must comply with this requirement.

The federal Certificate of Documentation must be carried aboard the vessel at all times. The certificate must include a Great Lakes license endorsement allowing use of the vessel in Great Lakes trade. A pleasure license endorsement does not permit a vessel to be used as a charter boat. Federal documentation must be renewed annually.

On documented vessels, the vessel name and hailing port as listed on the certificate of documentation must be attached to the stern, and the vessel name must be displayed on each side of the bow. All of the letters used for the vessel name and port must be at least four inches high.

The official documentation number preceded by the abbreviation "No." must be plainly and permanently marked on a clearly visible internal structural part of the hull. This is often accomplished by carving, burning or engraving the number into the keel or main beam. The number must be in block-style Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) at least three inches high.

Wisconsin law requires that all motorboats used in Wisconsin, including federally documented vessels, be registered with the state. Vessels with home ports outside Wisconsin must also comply with this requirement if the boat is in Wisconsin more than 60 consecutive days (including storage time), or if Wisconsin is the state where the boat is principally used. The wallet-size Wisconsin registration card must be carried aboard the vessel at all times. Wisconsin registration must be renewed every two years.

Undocumented vessels must have the assigned registration number, reading from left to right and with the specified proper spacings, attached to each side of the forward half of the boat. The number must be in block-style characters not less than three inches in height and in a color that contrasts to the background.

On undocumented vessels, valid registration stickers/decals must also be attached to each side of the forward half of the boat, just aft of the registration number. On documented vessels, valid registration stickers/decals must be attached to the transom on each side of the vessel name.

Operator's License

Charter fishing boats must be operated or navigated by a person who holds a valid license as "Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels" (new term) or as "Motorboat Operator" (old term), or someone who holds a higher license. The operator's license must be aboard the vessel whenever the vessel is being used to carry passengers for hire. These licenses are issued by the U.S. Coast Guard and must be renewed every five years.

Wisconsin does not license charter captains as boat operators. However, Wisconsin law does require that charter captains be licensed to "guide" customers on a fishing trip. A valid "Sport Trollers License" is required to conduct fishing trips for salmon and trout on Great Lakes waters under Wisconsin jurisdiction. A "Fishing Guide License" is required to conduct fishing trips for other species.

Wearable Flotation Devices (Life Preservers)

Charter boats must carry one USCG-approved life preserver -- a Type I Personal Flotation Device (PFD) -- of the right size for each person aboard the vessel, including the captain and crew members. Type II and Type III PFDs are **not allowed** as additional equipment aboard charter boats.

Type I PFDs are available in only two sizes: adult and child. The adult size is required for persons weighing 90 pounds or more; the child size is required for persons weighing less than 90 pounds. The PFDs must be readily accessible -- stowed where anyone aboard can get them easily.

The PFDs must be in serviceable condition. The manufacturer's label stating the size and type of PFD and the Coast Guard approval number must be readable. All straps and ties must be securely attached, and the fabric covering must be intact. PFDs that use kapok-filled plastic bags to provide buoyancy must not leak air and collapse when squeezed. (Type I PFDs with foam flotation tend to be more durable and are easier to store.)

Lights on Wearable Flotation Devices

Each Type I PFD must have a USCG-approved "personal flotation device light" securely attached to the front shoulder area of the PFD. If its battery is nonreplaceable, the light must be replaced on or before its expiration date. If replaceable, the battery must be replaced on or before its expiration date. This implies that a battery with an expiration date must be used in lights with replaceable batteries. Under some circumstances and in some areas, the Coast Guard has allowed the use of undated batteries, provided the batteries are of the alkaline (or better) variety and replaced annually (generally at the start of each fishing season) and that a dated receipt for the batteries can be produced upon request as proof of the date of replacement. Ask the local Coast Guard if they require the use of batteries with an expiration date.

Retroreflective Tape on Wearable Flotation Devices

Each Type I PFD must have USCG-approved Type I retroreflective tape. A minimum of 31 square inches (200 square centimeters) of reflective tape must be attached to the front side of the PFD, and another 31 square inches must be attached to the back side. One version of the reflective tape is designed to be sewn on (generally by the PFD manufacturer). A second version is glued on to the PFD (generally by the purchaser) using an adhesive supplied with the tape. The required tape must be divided

equally between the right and left halves of both the front and the back of the PFD. The reflective material must be attached as closely as possible to the shoulder areas of the device.

Type I PFDs are designed to be reversible. At least the minimum amount of reflective tape must be attached to both the "outside" and the "inside" of these devices so that the tape will be properly visible no matter how the PFD is worn.

Throwable Flotation Devices (Ring Buoys/Cushions)

Charter boats 26 feet or more in length must have at least one USCG-approved ring-type life buoy 20 inches in diameter or larger. Charter boats under 26 feet long must have at least one USCG-approved Type IV throwable ring buoy or cushion. The required ring buoy or cushion must be immediately available so that it can be reached and used immediately in the event of an emergency. The device must be in serviceable condition. The manufacturer's labeling regarding the size and type of device and the USCG approval number must be readable. Straps and grab ropes that are part of the device must be securely attached, and the outer covering must be intact. Cushions containing kapok-filled plastic bags must not leak air and collapse when squeezed.

Throwable (Type IV) devices are not required to have a light or additional line attached; however, these items will increase the effectiveness of the device in an emergency.

Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers approved for marine use are classified by a letter and a Roman numeral (e.g., B-II) according to the type of fire and the size of the extinguisher. Marine fire extinguishers must be type "B," which are designed to extinguish gasoline, oil and grease fires. Size "I" extinguishers are the smallest approved for marine use. One B-II portable extinguisher is considered the equivalent of two B-I extinguishers. An approved fixed fire extinguishing system installed in the engine compartment is considered the equivalent of one B-I portable extinguisher.

Charter boats less than 26 feet long must carry at least one B-I portable fire extinguisher, unless they have a fixed fire extinguishing system installed in the engine compartment, in which case no portable extinguisher is required.

Charter boats at least 26 but less than 40 feet long must carry at least two B-I portable extinguishers, or one B-II extinguisher. If the vessel has a fixed fire extinguishing system, only one B-I portable extinguisher is required in addition to the fixed system.

Charter boats at least 40 but not more than 65 feet long must carry at least three B-I portable extinguishers, or at least one B-I and one B-II extinguisher. If the vessel has a fixed fire extinguishing system, one less B-I device is required.

To meet these requirements, all fire extinguishers, whether portable or fixed systems, must be USCG-approved as a marine-type device. The manufacturer's permanent labeling regarding the size and type of device and the USCG approval number must be readable. A fire extinguisher approved only by Underwriters Laboratory (UL) does not satisfy these requirements.

Fire extinguishers must be maintained in good and serviceable condition. Pressure gauges/indicators must indicate that the device is properly charged (neither overcharged nor undercharged). If it has no pressure gauge/indicator, the extinguisher must have an inspection tag that shows that it has been inspected within the previous six months.

Portable fire extinguishers must be securely mounted using the bracket supplied with or specified for the extinguisher. They must also be readily accessible in case of fire.

The equipment listed above is the minimum requirement. Consider carrying more than the minimum (a greater number and/or larger sizes) so that fire extinguishers with sufficient capacities are available in several locations in the vessel.

Backfire Flame Control Devices

Every gasoline-powered engine (except outboard motors) on a charter boat must have a USCG-approved backfire flame arrester. This requirement applies to generators as well as to propulsion engines. The flame arrester must be securely attached to the engine's air intake with a flame-tight connection.

The fins used in many flame arresters become dirty over time as oily deposits build up. Check this build-up occasionally by carefully (the fins are sharp!) running your fingertips around the outside of the device. If dirty, remove the arrester from the engine and clean it with soap and water.

Natural Ventilation (see also "Power Ventilation System and Placard")

All charter boats built between April 25, 1940, and August 1, 1980, that have gasoline- or diesel-fueled engines must have at least two ventilator ducts fitted with cowls (or equivalent louvers, funnels or vents) for the efficient removal of explosive fuel vapors from the bilges of every engine compartment and every fuel tank compartment. These ducts must be at least two inches in diameter.

One of the two required ventilator ducts must be an intake duct, and the other must be an exhaust duct. The intake duct must be installed so that the duct extends from the open air to a point at least midway to the bilge, or to a point at least below the level of the engine air intake. The exhaust duct must extend from the

open air to the lower portion of the bilge. To prevent blockage, the exhaust duct should not extend below the normal accumulation of bilge water. Cowls (or an equivalent) must be placed so as to prevent the recirculation of fumes. They must be trimmed (e.g., the intake cowl should face forward) for maximum effectiveness.

Boats built after July 31, 1978, need not meet the above ventilation requirements for fuel tank compartments that contain a permanently installed fuel tank, if there is no electrical source of ignition in the compartment and the fuel tank is vented to the outside of the boat. Fuel tank compartments that do not meet these requirements must have proper ventilation.

The captain is responsible for the proper installation and maintenance of the natural ventilation system.

These ventilation requirements do not apply to "open boats." An open boat has all engines and fuel tanks, and any spaces where fuel vapors could collect, open to the air so that vapors cannot be trapped. The majority of boats used as charter fishing vessels are not open boats.

Liquefied Petroleum (LP) Gas

The use of liquefied petroleum gas is not allowed on vessels carrying passengers for hire. This includes portable devices, such as grills, heaters and torches, that use propane or butane fuels, as well as permanently installed LP gas systems.

Safety Orientation Procedures

Before getting under way, the charter captain must make sure that all passengers are familiar with the safety equipment and procedures aboard the vessel. This must be accomplished by making a public announcement and/or passing out written instructions. The required procedure is similar to that used aboard all commercial airline flights regarding safety belts, oxygen masks and crash procedures.

The information provided to charter customers must include at least the following:

- ✓ The stowage locations of Type I PFDs;
- ✓ The proper method of putting on and adjusting the Type I PFDs aboard the vessel;
- ✓ The type and location of all life-saving devices aboard the vessel, and
- ✓ The location and contents of the "Emergency Checkoff List" (see next section).

Emergency Checkoff List

A list of procedures/instructions to be used in case of an emergency must be posted in a conspicuous and constantly accessible place aboard the vessel.

This list is meant to inform passengers and remind crew of the precautions that may be necessary in the event of rough weather and the procedures to be employed in an emergency. An emergency checkoff list modeled on that provided in the Code of Federal Regulations is enclosed with this booklet.

Visual Distress Signals

All charter boats must have USCG-approved day and night visual distress signals aboard at all times. The signaling devices must be in serviceable condition and readily accessible.

Pyrotechnic signaling devices (e.g., flares and smoke signals) must be clearly marked with a USCG approval number and an expiration date. To be considered serviceable, the device must not be past its expiration date. Nonpyrotechnic devices (e.g., distress flag, light) must carry the manufacturer's certification of compliance with Coast Guard requirements.

If pyrotechnic signals (flares, smoke signals) are carried, the USCG requires a minimum of three devices approved for daytime signaling and three devices approved for nighttime signaling, or at least three devices approved for both day and night use.

Power Ventilation System and Placard

All motorboats built after July 31, 1980, that have gasoline-powered engines must have an operable power blower to ventilate every closed compartment with a gasoline engine in it. A natural ventilation system for these spaces is also required (see "Natural Ventilation" section).

Exhaust ducting at least two inches in diameter must be connected to the suction side of the blower. The ducting must extend to the lower third of the engine compartment but not below the normal accumulation of bilge water. The blower duct can also serve as the exhaust duct required for natural ventilation, provided the flow of air is not obstructed by the blower fan blades. Intake openings are also required. Intake ducting is permissible but not required.

A warning label regarding the use of the power ventilation system must be attached near each ignition switch for any gasoline-powered engine (e.g., propulsion engine or auxiliary generator). The statement on the label must begin with the word "WARNING." The following is an example of an acceptable warning label:

WARNING

Gasoline vapors can explode. Before starting engine, operate blower for at least four minutes and check engine compartment bilge for gas vapors.

On boats built after July 31, 1980, the manufacturer is responsible for installing a system meeting the requirements outlined above, but the captain must maintain the ventilation system.

Electrical System

Federal requirements regarding electrical systems are the responsibility of the boat manufacturer; the captain is responsible for maintaining the installed electrical system in a satisfactory condition.

In general, "satisfactory condition" means properly installed wiring in good condition, with no areas where bare wire is exposed or where the insulation has deteriorated. The electrical system should be protected by fuses or manual-reset circuit breakers. Breaker or fuse panels should be protected from rain and spray. Compartments containing storage batteries should be well ventilated to vent the explosive gases generated during battery charging. Wisconsin regulations require that batteries **must** be securely fastened. In addition, the terminals **must** be covered to prevent shorting. Rubber or plastic "boot-type" terminal protectors meet this requirement.

The proper configuration of navigation lights, which are usually part of the electrical system of charter boats, is beyond the scope of this guide. Requirements for charter boats are the same as for recreational boats of the same size and may be found in "Navigation Rules, International-Inland," published by the Coast Guard. Navigation lights must be in working order.

Fuel System

Federal requirements regarding permanently installed fuel systems are the responsibility of the boat manufacturer; the captain is responsible for maintaining the installed fuel system in a satisfactory condition.

In general, "satisfactory condition" means tanks that are free of excessive corrosion and do not leak. All connections should be tight to prevent fuel leakage. Tanks and fuel fill fittings should be securely fastened and grounded. Tanks should be vented overboard, and fuel fill fittings should be located and constructed so as to prevent spillage into the boat. Hoses should be neither dry and cracked, nor soft and mushy.

Old-type fuel hoses deteriorate more rapidly when exposed to gasoline blends containing alcohol. If you use this type of fuel, inspect the fuel hoses regularly for signs of deterioration—especially those near the engine, where heat can add to deterioration. When replacing hoses, use products marked SAEJ1527DEC85 Class 1, which are designed to resist deterioration from alcohol-containing fuels.

Portable fuel tanks, if any, should be secured in a well-ventilated area. These tanks should also be free of leaks and excessive corrosion.

Pollution Placard and Related Regulations

All vessels 26 feet or longer must have a pollution placard. The placard must measure at least 5 inches by 8 inches and be made of a durable (e.g., plastic) material. The placard must be attached in a conspicuous place in the engine/machinery compartment, or at the bilge pump controls. The placard should read as follows:

DISCHARGE OF OIL PROHIBITED

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act prohibits the discharge of oil or oily waste into or upon the navigable waters and contiguous zone of the United States if such discharge causes a film or sheen upon, or discoloration of, the surface of the water, or causes a sludge or emulsion beneath the surface of the water. Violators are subject to a penalty of \$5,000.

All vessels must have some means, fixed or portable, of discharging oily bilge slops to a collection facility. A bucket or a bailer serves as a portable means. Intentionally draining oil or oily waste into the vessel's bilge is prohibited.

For boats equipped with toilets, Wisconsin law also prohibits the disposal of any toilet waste into the waters of the state.

Sound Signaling Devices (Power Whistle or Horn/Bell)

(Metric units, with English equivalents, are used in this section to reflect the wording of the new Inland Navigation Rules, which became effective for the Great Lakes on March 1, 1983.)

Motorboats less than 12 meters (39.4 feet) long must carry some means of making an efficient sound signal. Any device that can produce a four- to six-second blast, including a police or referee's whistle, is considered adequate to meet the minimum requirements.

Vessels 12 meters (39.4 feet) to less than 20 meters (65.6 feet) long must carry a power whistle or horn that is audible for one-half mile and has a sound pressure level of at least 120 decibels.

In addition, vessels 12 to 20 meters long must carry a bell. The diameter of the mouth of the bell must be at least 200 millimeters (7 7/8 in.). Bells must be made of corrosion-resistant material and must produce a clear tone. The bell may be carried inside the cabin, provided that it can be mounted outside for use.

Sources of Information

The first 10 sections of this guide are based on requirements found in Parts 24, 25, 26 and 67 of Title 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and in Chapter 30 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The last six sections are based on requirements found in Parts 173-183 of Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and in Chapter 30 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

The following documents were used in preparing this guide:

Code of Federal Regulations, Titles 33 and 46, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1987 revision.

Navigation Rules, International-Inland, doc. no. COMDTINST M16672.2A, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1983.

These publications can be purchased through the U.S. Government Printing Office. In Wisconsin, a U.S. Government Printing Office Bookstore is located in Milwaukee.

■ For information on vessel documentation, contact:

Commander (mvd) Ninth District
U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Documentation Office
Federal Office Building, Room 2029
1240 East Ninth Street
Cleveland, OH 44199-2060

Phone (216) 522-3945

■ For information on initial licensing as an "Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels" and license renewals, contact:

Regional Exam Center
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office
Federal Building, Room 501
234 Summit Street
Toledo, OH 43604-1590

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