

P. Water Vessel Operation

1. Inspection

- a. Operators shall be responsible for visually checking the water vessel for safety prior to placing it in motion. Each vessel's safety features should be checked before use each day, using the checklist provided by the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS).
- b. Department supervisors shall be responsible for assuring that fluid levels and safety equipment are checked at least weekly for vessels used on a routine basis. Other vehicles should be checked before each use.

2. Training

Employees and others authorized to operate water vessels on state business shall be trained in the water vessel safety course, and have their Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries' vessel operation records checked in accordance with the LSU Water Vessel Safety Program.

3. Accidents

Accidents in state vessels and in personal vessels being used for state purposes shall be reported as soon as possible to the appropriate supervisor.

4. General

- a. A float plan shall be developed and shared/discussed with the supervisor and other agencies as appropriate for the trip.
- b. Speed limits and wake production considerations shall be observed by operators at all times.
- c. Water vessels shall not be operated in excess of load and passenger ratings.
- d. State and federal laws and regulations shall be followed at all times during operation of water vessels.
- e. Personal flotation devices shall be worn by operator and passengers while the water vessel is in transit and during activities where the potential for drowning exists due to unintentional entry into the water.
- f. Operators and passengers shall be cognizant at all times of the potential for fires and explosions aboard the water vessel. Activities which involve ignition sources and flammable materials shall be conducted in a safe manner.
- g. Operation in threatening and dangerous weather shall be performed only as necessary and only with the express permission of the supervisor or in emergency situations.

5. Water Vessel Safety Program

The L.S.U. Safe Vessel Operation Program shall be followed by all employees and can be found below.

Water Vessel Operator Safety Program

LSU Main Campus

The LSU main campus will follow the guidelines for a water vessel operator safety program as outlined in the Loss Prevention Manual of the State Office of Risk Management. The following administrative procedures should be followed in carrying out this program.

Types of Water Vessel Operators

There are two types of water vessel operators, occasional and routine. Routine operators are defined as:

Individuals whose job duties requires them to operate a water vessels on a frequent basis such as once per week.

Occasional operators are defined as:

Individuals whose normal job duties does not require them to operate vessels on a frequent basis but may operate vessels on an infrequent basis.

Water vessels are defined as only “State owned/leased/hired vessels used on State business.”

Water Vessel Operator Record Checks

Water vessel operator record checks are required to be made on faculty, staff, and students who operate water vessels on an occasional or routine basis while on state / university business. In order for this to be accomplished, department heads must submit a Vessel Authorization / Operator History Form on a yearly basis to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to obtain water vessel operator history records for evaluation. This is accomplished through the Manager of the Boat Shop, who maintains records of boat maintenance, boat inspections, and authorized boaters list.

In addition, Driver Authorization forms are required to be completed for boater authorization.

On current and new faculty, staff, and students, the supervisor must determine the water vessel operating status based on the faculty, staff, or student’s job description and vessel operation capabilities / skill level. The supervisor must also assure that the operator history is obtained and reviewed by sending a copy of the Vessel Authorization / Operator History Form to the Manager of Boat Shop. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries will provide the operator’s history if the Manager of Boat Shop submits a request on LSU letterhead to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, PO Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000:

A High Risk water vessel operator, who, under the State Office of Risk Management guidelines should be prohibited from operating a water vessel on State business, is defined as:

An individual who has three or more convictions, guilty pleas and/or nolo contendere pleas for vessel violations or an individual who has a single conviction, guilty plea or nolo contendere plea

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for operating a vessel while intoxicated, hit and run operation, vessel negligent injury, reckless operation of a vessel or similar violation, within a one-year period.

Also, if an individual is determined to be a high risk Driver (according to Safe Driving program) the individual privileges to operate a watercraft is suspended or revoked as well

Upon reviewing the operator history and discovering that a water vessel operator is a high risk operator, the Manager of Boat Shop will send the information to the Office of Environmental Health and Safety for a determination on vessel operating status.

Safe Water Vessel Operation Training

Safe Water Vessel Operation Training must be provided to employees who will operate water vessels on a routine basis. Departments which have such operators include most departments residing under the Center for Coastal, Energy, and Environmental Resources (CCEER). The training is free of charge and is provided through the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Department heads are responsible for obtaining this training for water vessel operators, and for assuring that the training is repeated every 3 years. The training may also be scheduled as part of follow-up action when an operator has a preventable accident, or when operator performance or history reveals a need for additional training.

Records of this training must be kept by the departments. Training assistance can be obtained from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

Accident Reporting and Investigations

A water vessel accident is defined as:

A collision, accident, or other casualty involving a water vessel. A vessel is considered to be involved in a boating accident whenever the occurrence results in damage by or to the vessel or its equipment, in injury or loss of life to any person or in the disappearance of any person from on board under circumstances that indicate the possibility of death or injury. A boating accident includes, but is not limited to, capsizing, collision, foundering, flooding, fire, explosion and disappearance of a vessel other than by theft.

A water vessel accident must be reported and investigated in a timely manner using a Boating Accident Form and an Accident / Incident Investigation Form that can be obtained from the LSU Office of Risk Management.