

Getting Out On the Water

The weather is getting warmer, and you've decided this is the year you're going to get out on the water in your dream boat. The good news is that there are just a few simple but key items you'll need to consider before you start singing "Anchors Aweigh". The best place to start is *DiscoverBoating.ca*. From basic safety to vacation destination planning, get the information from the experts. Boating safely is a relatively easy undertaking, and with just a few steps you can be sure to enjoy months of fun, for years to come. Navigate the website first, and you'll be navigating your boat like a pro in no time.

Here are just a few things to consider:

Pleasure Craft Operators Card

Depending on your age and the type of boat you're driving, Transport Canada regulations require some power boat operators to have a Pleasure Craft Operators Card (PCOC). By 2009, everyone will need a PCOC to drive a power boat. Your PCOC is similar to a driver's licence, and once you receive your PCOC it is yours for life. You can get yours by studying a basic boating course (you'll find a list of boat course providers at *DiscoverBoating.ca*) and then taking a straightforward exam.

Pleasure Craft Licence

The pleasure craft licence number is placed on the sides of your boat and is used to assist various organizations in identifying your boat. When you take ownership of your boat (new or pre-owned), you need to make sure that your boat's assigned licence number lists you as the owner (much like a car ownership document). To get your free pleasure craft licence, boaters must mail a completed application form, along with proof of vessel ownership and appropriate ID to the Pleasure Craft Licensing Centre (address and details are on the form). You can get a pleasure craft application kit from Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety at www.boatingsafety.gc.ca. Your boat dealer may also be able to help you with this process, so be sure to ask your dealer.

Towing and Trailing Your Boat

Now that you're ready to start making waves, you'll soon discover the sense of freedom that comes with boating and that's one of the reasons it is so popular. With a boat that fits easily on a trailer boat, you're free to go just about anywhere - lakes, rivers, bays or inlets – the options are practically endless. Trailering is a great way to explore different waterways in your province or region, with a new vacation choice possible every weekend.

Supplies

Wherever you decide to go and whatever you decide to do, make sure that you have everything you need on your boat. From regulation personal flotation devices (PFDs) to suntan lotion, from an anchor to paddles – take the time before you leave shore to be sure you have what you need. Some of it is required by law. You can find guidelines with handy checklists for pre-departure on *DiscoverBoating.ca*.

Whether you are fishing, wakeboarding, sailing or cruising, make sure you are prepared before you go. Boating brings you a rich variety of possibilities for creating memories that will last a lifetime. The fun really begins on the water.