



## Marine Notice No. 40 of 2021

*Notice to all Masters, Owners and Users of Pleasure and Recreational Craft.*

*This Marine Notice supersedes Marine Notice No. 27 of 2020*

### Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft

The Department of Transport wishes to remind all masters, owners and users of pleasure and recreational craft of the existence of the Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft.

#### 1. What is the Code of Practice about?

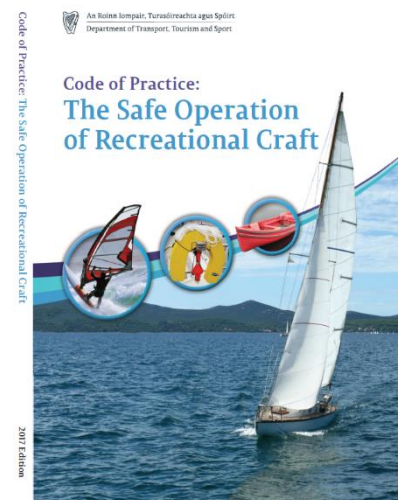
The Code of Practice is a valuable source of information, advice and best practice operational guidance for owners, masters, operators and users of a range of pleasure and recreational craft operating in Irish coastal and inland waters.

The Code highlights the importance of personal responsibility for all those who take to the water. Each person must take maritime safety seriously, prepare and plan for a safe trip, behave responsibly on the water and be properly equipped so as to be able to respond to any incidents that may arise.

#### 2. Who is the Code of Practice for?

The Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft is intended for use by owners, operators and users of all pleasure and recreational craft operating in Irish coastal and inland waters. The Code contains information on legislative requirements, safe operation and advice on best practice when using a range of recreational craft including:

- Sail and motor boats
- Sailing dinghies
- Personal watercraft (e.g. jet skis)
- Power boats
- Canoes, kayaks
- Rowing boats
- Charter boats
- Ski boats and dive boats
- Windsurfers, stand-up paddle board users and other non-powered craft.



### 3. How to use the Code?

The Code of Practice is in two Parts followed by a series of Appendices.

**Part A** (Chapter 1) outlines the **legislative requirements** that apply to all recreational craft or specific types or size of craft. Owners and operators must comply with the requirements appropriate to their craft.

**Part B** (Chapters 2 to 11) contains **recommended guidelines and best practice information** on the safe operation of recreational craft. Chapters 2 to 9 provide guidance in relation to particular types of craft/activities. Chapters 10 and 11 provide information on safety operations and emergency procedures, while a series of 11 Appendices cover such topics as radiocommunications, collision prevention, weather and sea states, lifejacket use, passage planning, buoyage and anchoring.

Owners and operators of recreational craft should familiarise themselves with Part A of the Code, the particular Chapter in Part B appropriate to their type of vessel, together with Chapters 10, 11 and the Appendices.

### 4. Where to get the Code?

The Code of Practice is a free document and hardcopies can be obtained on request, in both English and Irish, from the Maritime Safety Policy Division of the Department at email [MarineLeisureSafety@transport.gov.ie](mailto:MarineLeisureSafety@transport.gov.ie).

The Code is also available to view or download from [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie).

For the convenience of those who may only be interested in a particular type of recreational craft, individual chapters of the Code are also available to view or download from the above website.

### 5. Has the Code been updated since the 2017 Edition was published?

The content of the Code is kept under review in order to ensure that it remains up to date. Since the publication of the November 2017 edition, a number of revisions and updates have been identified. A list of these updates is available to view in both English and Irish at [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie).

### 6. Some reminders and personal responsibilities to be aware of when taking to the water:

- Know that **mobile phones should not be relied on as the primary method of contacting the emergency services**. Marine VHF radio is the most appropriate means of communication. For further advice and information, please see [Marine Notice No. 40 of 2019](#) (Limitations of Mobile Phone Use for Emergency Communication at Sea). However, it is recommended that all vessels operating on inland lakes and waterways as well as in coastal waters carry a fully charged mobile phone contained in a watertight storage bag or casing. Please see Chapter 11.11 (Mobile Devices) of the Code (page 127).

- **Maritime Radio Beacons:** Owners and operators of recreational craft are reminded that EPIRB Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons and PLB Personal Locator Beacons provide an effective means to transmit a distress alert in a marine environment. It is important that these devices are registered with the Irish EPIRB and PLB registries to provide a point of contact on shore for the Beacon in the event of activation. This information is made available to the Irish Coast Guard. The following Marine Notices apply: Marine Notice No. 25 of 2010, Personal Locator Beacons (PLB) Registry, and Marine Notice No. 38 of 2013, Care and maintenance of EPIRBs.

Registration of PLBs is provided by the Commission for Communications Regulation (Comreg), One Dockland Central, Guild Street, Dublin 1, D01 E4X0.

**For Reference:** [Marine Notice 25 of 2010:](#)

[Marine Notice 38 of 2013:](#)

[Comreg PLB Registration:](#)

- Consult [Marine Notice No. 61 of 2020](#) (Changes to Irish Coast Guard VHF working channels) for changes that have been made to the **VHF working channels** used by the Irish Coast Guard for communications with the public.
- Check current **weather forecasts** and sea/lake/river conditions prior to departure and **plan your voyage** accordingly. For further information see [Marine Notice No. 19 of 2021](#) (Importance of Voyage Planning and avoiding dangerous situations in Adverse Weather and Sea Conditions).
- Know the increased **risks involved with single person operation**. See [Marine Notice No. 58 of 2020](#) (Two Separate Fatal incidental incidents involving recreational fishing by persons operating alone).
- Note the importance of appropriate **training** in the operation of the craft that you are using.
- Be aware of the **prohibitions in relation to being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs when operating or while on board a recreational craft**. Please see [Marine Notice No. 11 of 2018](#) (Prohibitions on the consumption of Alcohol and/or Drugs) for further information.
- Know the importance of abiding by the legal requirements in relation to the **wearing and carrying of Personal Flotation Devices/Lifejackets**. Please see [Marine Notice No. 32 of 2019](#) (Personal Flotation Devices for Pleasure Craft and Personal Watercraft) for further information.
- Know **the importance of wearing clothing and footwear that will not affect your chance of survival in the water**. Clothing traps air, which may result in a person not floating as would be expected. Clothing also absorbs water, making a person heavier. Please consider if you need to use a Personal Flotation Device with a higher performance standard to ensure that if you enter the water you self-right face up and your mouth and nose are kept sufficiently clear of the water.

- A **Checklist of Basic Requirements and Advice** to be followed before taking to the water can be found on page 5 of the Code and is also attached as an Annex to this Marine Notice.

**All recreational craft users are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Code of Practice and to heed the safety advice and recommendations.**

Please spread the word regarding the Code of Practice and its availability.

Note: Marine Notices are issued purely for maritime safety and navigation reasons and should not be construed as conferring rights or granting permissions.

Irish Maritime Administration,  
Department of Transport,  
Leeson Lane, Dublin, D02 TR60, Ireland.

25/06/2021  
Annex encl:

For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact:  
The Marine Survey Office, email: [MSO@transport.gov.ie](mailto:MSO@transport.gov.ie)  
For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, email:  
[MaritimeSafetyPolicyDivision@transport.gov.ie](mailto:MaritimeSafetyPolicyDivision@transport.gov.ie)  
Written enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to:  
Dept. of Transport, Maritime Safety Policy Division, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60, Ireland.  
email: [MarineNotices@transport.gov.ie](mailto:MarineNotices@transport.gov.ie) or visit us at: [www.gov.ie/transport](http://www.gov.ie/transport)

## ANNEX

### Checklist of Basic Requirements and Advice

Particular attention is drawn to the following **Checklist of Basic Requirements and Advice**, which all owners and users of recreational craft should be aware of before taking to the water:

- ✓ the legal requirements in relation to the **wearing and carrying of Personal Flotation Devices/Lifejackets** and the need for the proper care and maintenance of such devices. These requirements are dealt with in Part A of the Code of Practice;
- ✓ the need to **check current weather forecasts and sea conditions** prior to departure and to **plan your voyage accordingly** (see Appendix 6 (Weather, Sea States and Tides) and Appendix 8 of the Code of Practice for an example of a passage planning template);
- ✓ **Pre-Departure Safety Checks and Briefing** – the briefing of all persons on board on emergency procedures and the location and use of safety/emergency equipment on board, e.g. flares, radio equipment, life jackets;
- ✓ the need to ensure that a **designated person ashore** is aware of your departure and return times, where you are going, and have a procedure in place to raise the alarm if necessary;
- ✓ the importance of having a **dependable means of communication**. VHF radio equipment is the recommended method of communication and craft users should be familiar with its use. Where mobile phone use is proposed, the phone should at all times be fully charged and stowed in a waterproof pouch with a lanyard, the signal strength and charge indicator should be regularly checked while the vessel is underway;
- ✓ when operating a pleasure craft, a person must not be under the influence of **alcohol or drugs** or any combination of drugs or of drugs and alcohol to such an extent as to be incapable of having proper control of the craft;
- ✓ in a **marine emergency**, the alarm can be raised on **VHF Channel 16** or **call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coast Guard**.