



Marine Notice No. 52 of 2023

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

Think and Prepare – Important safety advice for owners and users of recreational craft

The Department of Transport wishes to remind all masters, owners and users of recreational craft of the need to think and prepare before going out on the water. All owners and users of recreational craft should follow this **Checklist of Basic Requirements and Advice** both before going on the water and while on the water:

- ✓ **Get training** from an approved training provider in the correct use of the type of craft you wish to use;
- ✓ **Wear a suitable Personal Flotation Device/Lifejacket:** Know about 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. Select the proper type based on activity or boating conditions. See [Marine Notice No. 32 of 2019](#) for further information;
- ✓ **Check current weather forecasts and sea/lake/river conditions prior to departure** and plan your voyage accordingly;
- ✓ **Check for any hazards and risks and Prepare a Passage Plan;**
- ✓ **Avoid operating alone:** There are increased risks involved with single person operation when there is nobody else on board or nearby to help you or to raise the alarm. Make sure you have an effective means of quickly re-boarding the boat in the event that you fall overboard;
- ✓ **Carry out Pre-Departure Safety Checks and Briefing:** Check your craft and safety equipment. All persons on board should know what to do in the event of an emergency, where the safety/emergency equipment is on board, e.g. flares, radio equipment, life jackets, etc., and how to use the equipment;
- ✓ **Tell someone about the plans for your trip: A designated person ashore** should know your departure and return times, where you are going, and what to do to raise the alarm if necessary;
- ✓ **Bring a dependable means of communication:** VHF radio equipment is the recommended method of communication and craft users should be familiar with its use, reference [Marine Notice No. 70 of 2022](#). Mobile phones should not be relied

on and should only be considered as a back-up means of communication. Where mobile phone use is proposed, the phone should be in a waterproof pouch with a lanyard, be fully charged at all times and the signal strength and charge indicator should be regularly checked while the vessel is underway;

- ✓ **Emergency Beacons:** Consider having a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or an Emergency Position Indicating Beacon (EPIRB) as appropriate. See [Marine Notice No. 25 of 2010](#) as amended, [Marine Notice No. 38 of 2013](#) and [Marine Notice No. 70 of 2022](#) for further information, including in relation to registration of PLBs and EPIRBs;
- ✓ **Do not consume alcohol or drugs before or during a trip:** When operating a recreational craft, a person must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or any combination of drugs or of drugs and alcohol;
- ✓ **Be aware of and recognise the symptoms of fatigue:** Get proper sleep and rest before your journey;
- ✓ **Relax and float:** If you fall into the water, the initial shock of being in cold water can cause you to gasp and panic. Stay calm and relax. Try to float or tread water while you catch your breath. A properly fitted lifejacket will keep your head above water, ensuring you gasp air. Try to get hold of something that will help you float and get as much of your body out of the water as possible. To lessen heat escape, keep your legs together with arms/elbows by your side. Once you are calm, call for help;
- ✓ **Wear suitable clothing and footwear;**
- ✓ **In a marine emergency, raise the alarm on VHF Channel 16 or call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.**

Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft

The Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft provides information on the legislation that applies to recreational craft, as well as safety 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 to be able to respond to any incidents that may arise.

A revised Code of Practice is being developed following a review of the 2017 edition within the Irish Maritime Directorate and consultation with the public and key stakeholders. An updated edition will be published later in 2023.

The existing edition is available to view or download at www.gov.ie and www.safetyonthewater.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 websites.

Additional online publications in relation to safety on the water are available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/60fd1-all-safety-on-the-water-booklets/>.

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 2, D02 TR60, Ireland.

27/07/2023

For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact:
The Marine Survey Office, email: MSO@transport.gov.ie.
For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, email:
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 or visit us at: www.gov.ie/transport.