

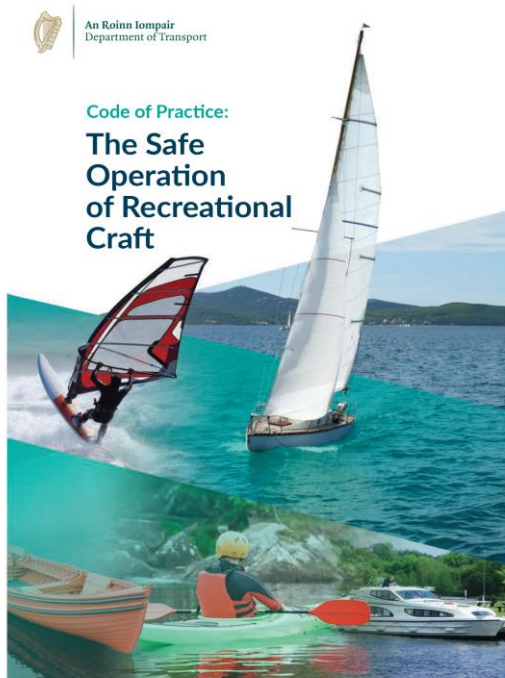


Marine Notice No. 54 of 2024

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

New Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft

The Department of Transport wishes to draw attention to the publication of a revised and updated edition of the Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft.



The Code of Practice contains legislative information, safety advice and best practice operational guidance for owners, masters and users of a range of recreational craft that operate in Irish coastal and inland waters. The publication of the new Code of Practice follows a review of the previous Code and public/stakeholder consultations undertaken in 2022 and 2023.

The importance of personal responsibility and safety awareness continues to be highlighted in the Code of Practice, with an added focus on the “Think and Prepare” message for anyone who decides to go out on the water. Each person needs to think about their proposed activity in advance, plan ahead, ensure that they have appropriate training and safety equipment and know what to do if things go wrong. The Code of Practice aims to assist in these areas.

Who is the Code for and What’s new?

The Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft is intended for use by owners, operators and users of all recreational craft operating in Irish coastal and inland waters including:

- Sailing craft
- Boats used for recreational angling
- Personal watercraft (e.g. jet skis)
- Rowing boats
- Canoes, kayaks

- Stand-Up Paddleboards (when used for navigation)
- Motor boats, ski boats, powerboats, sports boats and dive boats
- Windsurfers
- Non-powered craft.

A feature of the new Code is a series of “Think and Prepare” Safety Checklists and templates that it is hoped will provoke thought and assist recreational craft users in their preparations before they go out on the water. These cover such issues as the identification and assessment of hazards and risks, fatigue, as well as templates for a Traffic Report message to let the Irish Coast Guard know about each proposed trip and an information template for shore-based contact persons.

A useful Checklist of Basic Requirements and Advice can be found on page 7 of the Code and is attached as an Appendix to this Marine Notice.

In addition to providing updated information on the legislative requirements that apply to recreational craft, the Code of Practice also contains new content on such topics as Traffic Report messages to the Irish Coast Guard, foiling, surfing and kitesurfing safety, coastal rowing, cold water shock and hypothermia, electrical systems, radio communications and the online maritime radio licence registration system introduced in 2022.

How to Use the Code?

The Code of Practice contains a General Introduction with a number of Safety Checklists followed by two Parts and 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 safety guidance applicable to recreational craft generally and 11 Appendices cover such topics as radiocommunications, collision prevention, weather and sea states, lifejacket guidance, passage planning, buoyage and anchoring.

Owners and users of recreational craft should familiarise themselves with the General Introduction, Safety Checklists, Part A, the particular chapter in Part B appropriate to their type of vessel, together with Chapters 10, 11 and the Appendices.

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

The Code is also available to view or download from www.gov.ie, directly at the following link <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/66ff7e-safe-operation-of-recreational-craft/> and on 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.

Users of the Code of Practice also have a new option of scanning the following QR code and can download the Code, for example to their mobile phones, for future use or reference.



All recreational craft users are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Code of Practice and to follow the safety advice and guidance contained in the Code.

Please spread the word regarding the Code and its availability.

Irish Maritime Administration,
Department of Transport,
Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60, Ireland.

18/09/2024

Encl: Appendix: Think and Prepare – Checklist of Basic Requirements and Advice

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.



Think and Prepare

Checklist of Basic Requirements and Advice

It is recommended that 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 (See Appendix 9);
- ✓ Wear a 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. These requirements are dealt with in Part A of the Code of Practice;
- ✓ Check current weather forecasts and sea/lake/river conditions prior to departure and plan your voyage accordingly (see Appendix 6, Weather, Sea States and Tides);
- ✓ Check for any Hazards and Risks and Prepare a Passage Plan - See Appendix 8 of the Code of Practice for an example of a passage planning template and note the information on hazards and risk assessment on pages 10 – 16. Assess the hazards and risks before leaving shore but continue to be aware during your trip as the conditions can change;
- ✓ Avoid operating alone: Be aware of the additional 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 your craft 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, lifejackets, etc., and how to use the equipment;



Think and Prepare

Checklist of Basic Requirements and Advice

- ✓ 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. See page 20 for a suggested information template;

- ✓ Let the Coast Guard know: Before you go out on the water, it is recommended that all recreational craft users log a Traffic Report message via the nearest Coast Guard Radio Station – see page 18 for further information;

- ✓ Bring a dependable means of communication. VHF radio equipment is the recommended method of communication and craft users should be familiar with its use. 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;

- ✓ Consider bringing an appropriate Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) as these provide an effective means to send a distress alert – See sections 1.2.12.1, 11.3 and Appendix 2 of the Code for further information, including the registration of such devices;

- ✓ Be responsible – do not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs 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 to such an extent as to be incapable of having proper control of the craft;

- ✓ Be aware of and recognise the symptoms of fatigue – get proper sleep and rest before your journey;

- ✓ Wear suitable clothing and footwear;



Think and Prepare

Checklist of Basic Requirements and Advice

- ✓ **Float to live:** If you unexpectedly fall into the water, the initial cold shock can cause you to gasp, breathe uncontrollably, breathe in water and panic. If you are not wearing a Personal Flotation Device or lifejacket, lay your head back with ears submerged. Stay calm, try to relax and breath normally. 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. Once the cold shock has passed, 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 and elbows by your side. Once you are calm, call for help;
- ✓ **In a marine emergency, raise the alarm on VHF Channel 16 or call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.**