

# US COAST GUARD REQUIRED SAFETY EQUIPMENT

## Required List

- Personal Flotation Devices (life jackets)
- Registration and numbering
- Navigation lights
- Ventilation
- Fire extinguishers
- Distress signals (flares, horn, etc.)
- Discharge placards for boats 26' or greater

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## Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)

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All recreational boats must carry one wearable PFD (Type I, II, III or Type V PFD) for each person aboard. Any boat 16ft and longer (except canoes and kayaks) must also carry one throwable PFD (Type IV PFD).

### PFD's MUST be

- Coast Guard approved
  - In good and serviceable condition
  - The appropriate size for the intended user.
  - Wearable PFDs must be readily accessible.
  - They should not be stowed in plastic bags, in locked or closed compartments or have other gear stowed on top of them.
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- Throwable devices must be immediately available for use.
  - Inflatable PFDs must have a full cylinder and all status indicators on the inflator must be green, or the device is NOT serviceable, and does NOT satisfy the requirement to carry PFDs.
  - Coast Guard Approved Inflatable PFD's are authorized for use on recreational boats by person at least 16 years of age.
  - All children under 13 years old are required to wear the appropriate size PFD while onboard any vessel.



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## Fire Extinguishers

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When buying fire extinguishers always look for the part of the label that says "Marine Type USCG"

[Fire Extinguishers](#) are required on boats when any of the following conditions exist:



- Inboard engines are installed.
- There are closed compartments and compartments under seats where portable fuel tanks may be stored
- There are double bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not completely filled with flotation materials
- There are closed living spaces.
- There are closed stowage compartments in which combustible or flammable materials are stored.
- There are permanently installed fuel tanks. (Fuel tanks secured so they cannot be moved in case of fire or other emergency are considered permanently installed. There are no gallon capacity limits to determine if a fuel tank is portable. If the weight of a fuel tank is such that persons on board cannot move it, the Coast Guard considers it permanently installed.)

#### **Vessel Length (without a fixed system)**

Less than 26' 1 B-I extinguisher

26' to less than 40' - require 2 B-1 or 1 B-II extinguishers

40' to 65' - require 3 B-I or 1 B-II and 1 B-1 extinguishers

#### **Vessel Length (with a fixed system)**

Less than 26' - None

26' to less than 40' - require 1 B-I extinguisher

40' to 65' - require 2 B-1 or 1 B-II extinguishers

Fixed systems note- The pressure gauge alone is not an accurate indicator that Halon extinguishers are full. The weight of the units should be checked regularly. It is recommended that portable extinguishers be mounted in a readily accessible position.

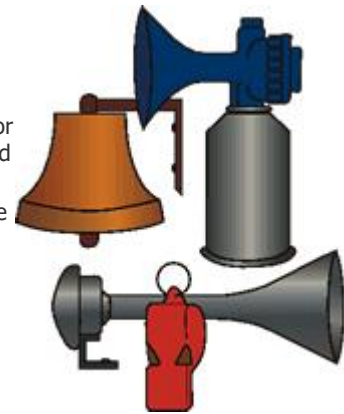



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## Sound Producing Devices

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- Any vessel less than 39.4 feet/12 meters in length may carry a whistle or horn, or some other means to make an efficient sound signal to signal your intentions and to signal your position in periods of reduced visibility.
- Therefore, any vessel less than 39.4 feet/12 meters in length is required to make an efficient sound signal to signal your intentions and to signal your position in periods of reduced visibility
- When operating on Inland Waters of the United States, vessels 39.4 feet/12 meters or more in length are required to carry on board a whistle or horn, and a bell.




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## Visual Distress Signals

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Vessels used on coastal waters, the Great Lakes, territorial seas, and those waters connected directly to them, up to a point where a body of water is less than two miles wide, must be equipped with U.S.C.G. Approved visual distress signals. Vessels owned in the United States operating on the high seas must be equipped with U.S.C.G. Approved visual distress signals.

These vessels are not required to carry day signals but must



carry night signals when operating from sunset to sunrise :

- Recreational boats less than 16 feet in length
- Boats participating in organized events such as races, regattas, or marine parades.
- Open sailboats less than 26 feet in length not equipped with propulsion machinery.
- Manually propelled boats.

#### **U.S.C.G. Approved Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals and associated devices include:**

- Pyrotechnic red flares, hand-held or aerial.
- Pyrotechnic orange smoke, hand-held or floating.
- Launchers for aerial red meteors or parachute flares.

#### **Non-Pyrotechnic Devices**

- Orange distress flag- Must be at least 3 x 3 feet with a black square and ball on an orange background. Day signal only
- Electric distress light- Accepted for night use only Automatically flashes the international SOS distress signal

Pistol launched and hand-held parachute flares and meteors have many characteristics of a firearm and must be handled with caution. In some states they are considered a firearm and prohibited from use.

[Click Here](#) for more visual distress info.

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## Ventilation

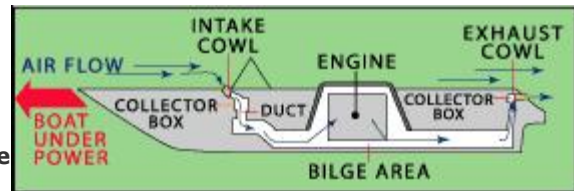
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Manufacturers of boats built after 1980 with remote starters are required to display a label which contains the following information:

**Warning gasoline vapors can explode. Before starting engine, operate blower at least 4 minutes and check engine compartment bilge for gasoline vapors.**

For boats built prior to 1980, there was no requirement for a powered ventilation system; however, some boats were equipped with a blower.

All boats which use gasoline for electrical generation, mechanical power or propulsion are required to be equipped with a ventilation system. A natural ventilation system is required for each compartment in a boat that:



- contains a permanently installed gasoline engine
- has openings between it and a compartment that requires ventilation
- contains a permanently installed fuel tank and an electrical component that is not ignition-protected
- contains a fuel tank that vents into that compartment (including a portable tank)
- contains a non-metallic fuel tank

A natural ventilation system consists of:

- A supply opening (duct/cowl) from the atmosphere (located on the exterior surface of the boat) or from a ventilated compartment or from a compartment that is open to the atmosphere
- And an exhaust opening into another ventilated compartment or an exhaust duct to the atmosphere.

[More ventilation info](#)

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## Backfire Flame Arrestor (BFA)

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Gasoline engines installed in a vessel after April 25, 1940, except outboard motors, must be equipped with an acceptable means of backfire flame control. The device must be suitably attached to the air intake with a flame tight connection and is required to be Coast Guard approved or comply with SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 standards and marked accordingly.

