



Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners

Health and Safety

Updated: September 10, 2015

Recreational Water Safety

Background to the Issue:

- The issue of water safety involves people using common sense when swimming or boating.
- Drowning is a leading cause of death for Manitobans under 19 years of age.
- With the increased use of personal watercrafts, the issue of safety is a concern for most recreational property owners.

Cautionary Notes:

- New Small Vessel Regulations came into force in 2010. Everyone who operates a motorized pleasure craft must carry proof of competency on board at all times.
- During the summer, lakes and beaches in Manitoba are popular places for outings with families. Swimming accidents can and do happen.

Budget Implications:

- Acquiring a Pleasure Craft Operator Card has a one time fee.

Policy or Program Implications: What is current Policy or Program for this issue?

- As of September 15, 2009 it became law for all operators of pleasure crafts fitted with a motor and used for recreational purposes to have a pleasure craft operator card or equivalent proof of competency as stated in the web site www.theoperatorcard.ca.
- This issue falls under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Coast Guard and requirements were phased in over 10 years (1999-2009).
- The program is attempting to reduce the risk of boating accidents while increasing the competency of all operators.
- On-line testing is provided by numerous accredited PDF web sites or classroom testing by various accredited local providers across Canada.

Action Taken by MACO:

- MACO has encouraged all boaters to comply with the new law through promotion in its newsletter and by encouraging member associations to promote the same in their local newsletters.
- MACO will post the issue on its web site.

MACO's Recommendations for the Future:

- Promote awareness of the websites pertinent to safe boating – Google “Boating Safety” to find a great variety of sites with very detailed information.
- Go to the Transport Canada web page where you can obtain information on safety and how to obtain your boat operators card; <http://www.theoperatorcard.ca/>
- Promote Transport Canada free publication titled *Safe Boating Guide* for adults and *Boat safety with Pukta* for children (phone 1-888-830-4911).
- Encourage boaters to SLOW DOWN.
- Encourage recreational and cottage associations to develop water safety awareness programs.

Position of MACO

- Support and promote compliance by all boaters.