

Student Web Activity: *Alabama Boating Safety*

Introduction:

Using the right equipment and following the rules are just as important while boating as they are while driving a car. Whether you are fishing with friends, riding a personal watercraft (PWC), or just out for a paddle on a lake, practicing responsible boating techniques enhances the enjoyment of being on the water and promotes safety in the boating community.

As part of a campaign to increase safety and encourage the responsible use of waterways, Alabama's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has created a Web resource to educate the public on boating laws and required boating equipment that is essential for safe and responsible boating. Learn more about safe boating and certification at the Web site below.

Links to Explore:

Outdoor Alabama

<http://www.outdooralabama.com/boating/>

Directions:

- Click on the above link and read the main "Boating" page. Also read the "Boating Equipment Checklist" and "Personal Watercraft" pages, using the links on the right side of the "Boating" page.
- Then answer the following questions.

Questions:

1. How many life jackets or personal floatation devices (PFDs) must be on board a vessel at all times?
2. Do teens need to wear a PFD while operating a personal watercraft or when being towed on skis or on a tube?
3. What is the minimum age requirement for operating a personal watercraft in Alabama?
4. Give three examples of unsafe operation of a personal watercraft.
5. The _____ on a personal watercraft is responsible for stopping the motor in the event of a fall. It is required equipment (unless the PWC has a self-circling feature) and must be attached to the operator at all times.
6. A diver's flag signals to boaters that people are in the water nearby. How many feet must boats and personal watercraft stay away from the flag?
7. Name two types of waterway that are designated as "federally controlled waters."
8. All boats must be equipped with _____ if operated at night.
9. Orange Smoke, Red Meteor, and Red Flare are all examples of what type of distress signal?
10. If visibility is reduced or a vessel has an emergency at night, what other signaling device can be used to attract attention?

[Teacher Page—include student content above]

Answers:

1. The law requires that a vessel must have a life jacket for everyone on board, regardless of age.
2. All persons on a personal watercraft must wear a life jacket. Additionally, anyone being towed on skis or a tube must wear a life jacket.
3. No person under the age of 12 is allowed to operate personal watercraft. Violations result in a substantial fine.
4. Answers will vary but may include any three of the following:
 - Weaving through congested vessel traffic at high speed
 - Following closely behind within the wake of a vessel towing a person or persons on water skis, a surfboard, or other water sport device
 - Jumping the wake of another vessel traveling in the same direction in close proximity to the vessel
 - Cutting between a boat and the person or persons being towed by that boat.
 - Crossing at right angles in close proximity to the stern of another vessel, or when visibility around the other vessel is obstructed
 - Steering a personal watercraft toward any object or person in the water and turning sharply at close range so as to spray the object or person
5. Kill switch, engine shut-off switch, ignition safety switch, or emergency cut-off switch are all acceptable answers.
6. Boat operators must stay at least 30.5 meters (100 feet) away from a displayed diver's flag.
7. Answers will vary but may include any two of the following:
 - Coastal waters
 - The Great Lakes
 - Territorial seas
 - Waters which are 2 miles wide or wider and are connected to one of the above
8. Navigation lights, lights, or signal lights are all acceptable answers.
9. Visual distress signal, pyrotechnic visual distress signal, daytime distress signal, and flare are all acceptable answers.
10. Sound device and electric light are both acceptable answers.

Additional Links to Explore:

Use the links below to gather additional information on the activity topic. When appropriate, have students extend their research to include important concepts contained in these Web sites.

North American Safe Boating Campaign

<http://www.safeboatingcampaign.net/welcome.htm>

National Safe Boating Council

<http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org/>