

## Oil Spill Boat Operation Guidance



Before taking the helm, it is very important you have the education and certifications required to operate an on water vessel. Many states require powerboat operators to take a boater’s education course and carry a license or certificate proving successful course completion any time they are on the water.

### Best Practice Guidelines for Boat Operations on Moving Water

- Ensure boats are in good working order, maintained properly and has been inspected (document on company-approved inspection forms).
  - Get familiar with specific water body launch/landing sites.
  - Review regulations for launching and loading boats and river navigation rules.
  - Ensure all operators and passengers on boat are wearing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) (helmet with chinstrap, Type V PFD, knife).
  - Review rescue procedures, radio check and rescue plan before launching work boat.
- Ensure all boats are equipped with mandated and necessary safety equipment. At a minimum:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fire Extinguisher (ABC) Type</li><li>• Navigation Lights</li><li>• Sound Producing Devices</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Type IV Throwable Flotation Device</li><li>• Throw Bag</li><li>• Sufficient Fuel / Back-up Fuel</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paddles / Oars</li><li>• Marine Radio with Proper Channels</li><li>• Map of Operational Areal</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flashlight and Rescue Beacon</li><li>• Adequate Food and Water</li><li>• Personal Items</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compass</li><li>• Anchor</li><li>• Bilge Pump or Bailing Device</li><li>• First Aid Kit</li></ul>
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- Perform pre-launch check of vessel.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check boat for damage<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hull</li><li>• Engine</li><li>• Fuel Lines and Fuel Filter</li><li>• Steering Linkage</li><li>• Throttle Linkage</li><li>• Dewatering Device</li><li>• Electrical</li></ul></li><li>• Check registration and Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Stickers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disconnect trailer wiring</li><li>• Remove boat trailer traps</li><li>• Take keys out of the ignition and place on console</li><li>• Ensure drain plugs are in</li><li>• Review hand signals with vehicle operator</li><li>• Maintain visual contact with vehicle operator</li><li>• Launch boat secure boat to shore or dock</li><li>• Never leave boat unattended</li></ul>
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- Qualified boat operator is familiar with boat and reviews hazards in operational area.
- On-board deckhand is trained and is capable of performing work and man-overboard rescue tasks.
- On-board swift-water trained technician is recommended for swift-water work operations.
- If crew is not dressed for submersion in water, ensure that there is a safety boat available with crew trained and wearing proper PPE to perform in-water rescue.

## Oil Spill Boat Operation Guidance (Continued)

- If towing or pulling boom or floating equipment, never a fix rope (line) to the boat with a hitch or knot. Towline must be releasable and monitored at all times. Operator and deckhand should have a knife available to cut rope if necessary.
- Review need for up-stream and down-stream safety boats.

### Recommended Skill Checklist for Boat Operators

Being a competent boat operator in an emergency oil spill operation requires, at a minimum, mastery of these skills.

- ✓ Hydrology: Understanding Moving Water
- ✓ Personal Safety Equipment
- ✓ Mandated Boat Safety Equipment
- ✓ Additional Job Specific Equipment
- ✓ Communications: Hand and Whistle Signals
- ✓ Rules of the Road
- ✓ Pre-Trip Boat and Trailer Inspections
- ✓ Demonstrated Ability to Handle Boat in Moving Water
- ✓ Slow Speed Operations
- ✓ High Speed Operations
- ✓ Landings in Current
- ✓ Loss of Power
- ✓ Man Over Board
- ✓ Towing Boom
- ✓ Deploying Midstream Anchors
- ✓ Trailing Boats

### Training

#### Regulatory Mandated (OPA 90), Inland Oil Spill Responder Training:

- HAZWOPER Operations (CFR 1910.120)
- HazMat Technician (CFR 1910.120)

#### Inland Boat Operation Training Options:

- Online State Approved Boater Safety Courses: <https://www.boat-ed.com/>
- Dept. Of Interior Motorized Operations Course Certificate <https://nctc.fws.gov/mocc/>
- Commercial Boat Operator Training <https://www.nasbla.org/training/courses>
- Motorized Boat Operations and Inland Oil Spill Swiftwater Technician-Level (40Hour): [www.whitewaterrescue.com](http://www.whitewaterrescue.com)
- Oil Under Ice Training: SWAT, Whitewater Rescue Institute: [www.whitewaterrescue.com](http://www.whitewaterrescue.com)
- Jet Boat and Airboat Training: SWAT, Whitewater Rescue Institute: [www.whitewaterrescue.com](http://www.whitewaterrescue.com)