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## NEW BOATING LAWS AFFECT KANSANS IN 2008

*Rules affect everything from life jackets to vessel identification stickers*

PRATT -- The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) has announced several changes to Kansas boating laws and regulations that went into effect Jan. 1. Boaters should be aware of these changes in order to ensure safety and avoid potential citations.

**Safe operation of a vessel.** In the past, vessels have been restricted from operating within 100 feet of certain areas and 200 feet for others. KAR 115-8-7(d) requires vessels to be operated at no-wake speeds of less than 5 mph when within 200 feet of a dock, boat ramp, person swimming, bridge, moored or anchored vessel, sewage pump-out facility, non-motorized watercraft, boat storage facility, or a concessionaire's facility.

**KDWP validation sticker.** Previously, a KDWP validation decal was to be placed before the registration number regardless of which side of the vessel it was viewed from. KAR 115-30-1 (6) now allows the validation decal to be located either before the registration number or after the registration number but not above or below it. The validation sticker must be placed within 3 inches immediately left or right of the registration number.

**Capacity rating stickers.** All vessels at one time had a capacity rating sticker attached somewhere on the inside of the vessel by the manufacture. These stickers are sometimes no longer readable or are absent. KAR 115-3-5 (c) (1) and (c) (2) now establish a calculation for the capacity of each vessel. For monohull vessels (excluding personal watercraft), the calculation is the length of the vessel in feet times the width of the vessel in feet divided by 15. This equals the total number of persons allowed to be on board a vessel. (Length times width divided by 15 = number of persons.)

**Navigational buoys.** Boaters in the past have used navigational buoys to anchor near or tie to. This blocks the visibility of what is an important information sign for other boaters. KAR 115-30-7 (h) now prohibits a boat from interfering with the placement or visibility of any navigational aid, and KAR 115-30-7 (i) prohibits an operator from mooring or tying to any navigational buoy.

**Reporting accidents.** KAR 115-30-8 requires the operator of a vessel to immediately report to a commissioned law enforcement officer any accident regardless of amount of damage or injury.


**Marine sanitation devices.** Vessels containing marine sanitation devices that have been inspected and a lock installed by a Kansas Wildlife and Parks law enforcement officer may be re-inspected and the following new regulation would apply: KAR 115-30-12 (b) requires that once this lock is installed, the owner of the vessel must notify KDWP in writing prior to any modification to the sanitation device or removal of the lock.

**Personal flotation devices.** KDWP also urges boaters to wear personal flotation devices (PFDs, often called life jackets). In 2006, 89 percent of drowning victims nationwide were not wearing PFDs. In 2007, there were six fatal boating accidents in Kansas, four of which involved the absence of PFDs. This year, KDWP has adopted a zero-tolerance policy regarding PFDs. Operators of vessels on Kansas waters need to be aware that citations will be issued for unserviceable PFDs, insufficient number of PFDs, inaccessible PFDs, or children younger than 13 not wearing a properly fitted PFD.

For more information, contact Erika Nighswonger, KDWP boating education coordinator, at 620-672-0770.  
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