

## **Safe Operating Procedures for Boating Activities**

### **Purpose**

To define the safe operating procedures in a manner that informs and instructs employees of CUSTOMER on the key health and safety points and controls for operating the boats.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

- When working near the water wear an appropriate fitting personal flotation device (PFD) approved by the Coast Guard.
- Before starting shift, apply sunscreen and insect repellent. Reapply as needed.
- Sun hat or cap
- Non-slip water shoes

### **Responsibilities**

All employees of customer:

- Must be in compliance with the policy and procedures for boating activities.
- Must notify Program Leaders of any health and safety concerns, so that they may be dealt with promptly.
- Every employee must protect his or her own health and safety by working in compliance with the law and with safe work practices and procedures established by St. Lawrence CUSTOMER of Environmental Sciences.
- Use appropriate safety equipment as required.
- Report unsafe or potentially hazardous conditions, without fear of reprisal, to your Program Leader.
- Performance of their duties in a manner conducive to safety, following all safety practices and procedures.
- Reporting of any incident, injury or hazard as outlined in procedures.

### **Safe Operating Procedure**

- Any boating activities must be pre-approved by the CUSTOMER.

### ***Complying with the Maritime Rules***

Any CUSTOMER employee that operates a CUSTOMER owned/operated watercraft is required to:

- Hold a valid Boating License;
- Maintain the appropriate level of insurance;
- Carry their license at all times;

- Adhere to all applicable maritime laws;
- Operate the watercraft in a safe and courteous manner.

### ***Watercraft Inspection***

- CUSTOMER employee operating a watercraft is required to perform an inspection of the watercraft before leaving. These inspections are critical in the identification and avoidance of potential watercraft malfunctions/defects that may create potential health and safety issues.
- The CUSTOMER owned/operated watercrafts will contain a first aid kit for use in case of emergencies.

### ***Safe Boating Techniques***

- Watercraft operators are expected to employ safe boating techniques at all times while operating the CUSTOMER owned/operated watercrafts.
- Obey maritime laws.
- Avoid risk-taking when operating a watercraft.
- Minimum 2 employees to operate the boat.
- Operate the boat only in areas appropriate to the size and limitations of the boat
- Consult available resources for new or unfamiliar areas to assess the potential of the environmental conditions prior to departure
- Ensure any boat occupants have received an appropriate safety briefing regarding the location and proper use of safety, navigation, and communications equipment aboard the boat prior to departure.

### ***Speeding***

- The CUSTOMER employees are directed to operate watercrafts within reasonable speeds and especially when entering marinas whether or not there are posted speed limits.
- Watercrafts are to be operated at speeds that are safe for the conditions, recognizing that, in some circumstances (such as wind or fog) speeds are reduced to ensure safety.

### ***Alcohol, Drugs and Boating***

- Never operate a watercraft under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, medications or other drugs that are likely to affect your alertness or boating performance.
- Do not operate a watercraft if you are unfit to do so. Contact your Program Leader if you are unsure about your fitness to operate a watercraft.

### ***Fatigue***

- Fatigue is basically a lack of sleep. Operating a watercraft when fatigued significantly increases injury risk by impairing boating skills or the inability to resist falling asleep.

### ***Use of Mobile Phones***

- The CUSTOMER **strictly prohibits** the use of mobile phones, and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) while operating the CUSTOMER owned/operated watercrafts.
- To make or receive calls:
  - Allow a passenger to operate the phone or;
  - Let someone else operate the watercraft, freeing you up to make or receive calls.

### ***Boat Maintenance***

- In the event that a maintenance issue exists, employees are directed to advise Administration, or their Program Leader of the issue.

### ***Inclement Weather***

- Inclement Weather may include Fog, Rain, Hail, and/or High Winds.
- Schedule boating operations when the environmental conditions are safe for the limitations of the boat.
- During periods of inclement weather, boaters should reduce their speed and operate the watercraft in a safe fashion to allow for decreased visibility, and waves.
- In the event that the inclement weather is at a level that makes boating unsafe, the CUSTOMER employees are directed to go to the nearest shoreline, and wait until it is safe to proceed. If the weather persist and they cannot leave for their destination, boaters are directed to inform their immediate Program Leader as soon as possible to alert them to the situation, and the inability to travel safely.

### ***Boating at Night***

- Boaters are highly encouraged not to operate a watercraft at night unless it is an absolute necessity.
- As with Inclement Weather, boaters are discouraged to operate a watercraft at night.

### ***In the Event of an Incident***

- In the event of a watercraft incident, the CUSTOMER employees that are operating a CUSTOMER owned/operated watercraft should assess the situation, and call the appropriate authorities where necessary (Ambulance, Fire Department, Police).
- If it is safe to do so, watercraft operator should contact their immediate Program Leader to inform them of the altercation, and provide as much pertinent information as possible.

### ***Additional Resources***

Safe Use of Boat Policy

SOP – Working Around Water

Pre-Use Checklist – Boat

Transport Canada, Office of Boating Safety: Safe Boating Guide

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/publications/EN/TP511/PDF/HR/TP511E.pdf>

**Document Management**

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