

Chapter 3

Sail and Motor Boats – Inland Waterways



Inland waterways comprise the navigable sections of the larger rivers, canal network and lakes. Conditions on inland waterways are generally not as severe as those experienced in coastal regions. However, they present their own unique set of hazards. Difficulties such as locks, open weirs, strong flows in confined spaces, narrow bridges, relatively shallow water and, in the case of the larger lakes, significant wave and wind forces, may present a danger to small craft. For the purposes of this Code, inland waterways refer to non-tidal and/or fresh water.

There are a number of different authorities with a role in managing navigable inland waterways in the State. Some of them are listed below:

Waterways Ireland is a North/South body with responsibility for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of over 1,000 km of inland navigable waterways, principally for recreational purposes. Special Marine Notice No. 1 of each year issued by Waterways Ireland gives an overview of general guidelines to the inland waterways under their remit.

Waterways Ireland has responsibility for the following:

- Barrow Navigation
- the Grand Canal
- the Royal Canal
- the Shannon-Erne Waterway
- the Shannon Navigation.

The Lough Corrib Navigation

Trustees have responsibility for the following inland waterways:

- Corrib system
- Eglinton Canal system

An Taisce is responsible for the Boyne Navigation.

Kerry County Council is responsible for the Tralee Ship Canal.

Other waterways may be under the administration of the relevant local authority/county council. Please check directly with them for further details.

3.1 Training

It is recommended that persons participating in sail and motorboat craft activities undertake appropriate training. A number of training schemes and approved courses are available and information can be obtained directly from course providers.

For the purpose of this Code, sailboats and motorboats are

classed in six categories, four of which refer to coastal water and are covered in Chapter 2. The remaining two categories are dealt with in this Chapter.

3.2 Recommended minimum safety equipment – Inland Waters

Boat owners should be aware of the category that applies to their vessel, based on its intended usage and area of operation, and ensure it is equipped with the required safety equipment. The following paragraphs provide a description of two vessel categories. Table F recommends the type and quantity of equipment that each category of craft should carry in the respective operating areas.

3.2.1 Category E

Craft that:

- Are capable of operating on the larger exposed lakes in extreme weather conditions;
- Have accommodation and can be used for overnight habitation;
- Are capable of extended voyages.

3.2.2 Category F

Craft that:

- Are open boats without shelter for occupants and generally less than 7 metres in length;
- Operate locally on rivers and sheltered sections of lakes.



3.3 Safety Equipment Checklist

Table F sets out the recommended type and quantity of equipment that craft should carry for their category of craft. The levels of recommended equipment should be regarded as a minimum. Owners are encouraged to equip

boats to a higher standard.

Mariners should stow fire extinguishers and a hand-held VHF in the cockpit in order that they are readily accessible in the event of an emergency, and in order to avoid having to go below to retrieve them.

Table F: Sail and Motor Boat – Inland

Type of Equipment	Vessel Category and Quantity of Equipment	
1. Lifesaving and personal safety equipment	E	F
1.1 An approved PFD/Lifejacket for each person on board of at least 100 Newtons (see Appendix 5).	✓	✓
1.2 Appropriate clothing.	✓	✓
1.3 A buoyant heaving line/throw bag.	✓	
1.4 Horseshoe type lifebelt with light.	✓	
1.5 Boathook (telescopic/fixed long shaft).	✓	✓
1.6 Boarding Ladder.	✓	
2. Flares (all to be within expiry date and manufacturer's instructions to be followed – see Chapter 11)	E	F
2.1 Orange smoke signal canisters.	(3)	(3)
2.2 Hand held Distress Flares.	(3)	(3)
2.3 Red Distress rocket flares.	(3)	(3)

3. Fire Fighting	E	F
3.1 Fire blanket – CE marked.	✓	
3.2 Fire extinguishers, one of which is suitable to fight oil fires in engine spaces or fire bucket.*	(2)	
3.3 All cooker/heaters using LPG should be installed as outlined in Marine Notice No. 37 of 2017.	✓	

* Do not deploy the bucket overboard while the boat is moving.

4. Navigation Equipment	E	F
4.1 Steering Compass.	✓	
4.2 Foghorn, powered or aerosol type.	✓	✓
4.3 Binoculars.	✓	
4.4 Navigation drawing instruments, parallel ruler, dividers or plotting instrument.	✓	
4.5 Navigation lights as required by boat length.	✓	✓
4.6 Suitable up to date charts and/or navigation guides for cruising.	✓	

5. Bilge Pumping	E	F
5.1 Manual/Electric Bilge pump capable of pumping from any hull watertight compartment and with all hatches closed.	✓	✓
5.2 At least one complete repair kit including spares should be carried.	✓	
5.3 A bucket fitted with a rope lanyard (Do not use bucket overboard while the boat is moving).	✓	
5.4 All through hull fittings to be fitted with isolation valves.	✓	
5.5 Softwood tapered plugs located adjacent to each through hull underwater fitting.	✓	

6. Anchors and Warps	E	F
6.1 Anchor with chain/warp, as appropriate for a vessels size and operating area ground holding conditions.	✓	(folding anchor)
6.2 Boats should have a suitably reinforced deck cleat/Samson post on the foredeck, and a suitable bow roller or fairlead used when anchoring.	✓	✓
6.3 An adequate supply of warps and fenders. These should include suitable warps to allow the craft to be towed if necessary.	✓	✓



7. General Equipment	E	F
7.1 Emergency steering means, i.e. tiller for vessels fitted with wheel steering as their primary means of steering.	✓	
7.2 Waterproof torch.	✓	✓
7.3 An appropriate tool kit, and spare parts for the type of craft being used.	✓	✓
7.4 Suitable secondary means of engine starting including battery or hand start.	✓	
7.5 Appropriate First Aid Kit.	✓	✓
7.6 Storm Sail which can be quickly rigged, or the facility to deep reef existing sails (Yachts).	✓	
7.7 Set of Oars / Oarlocks / Paddles.	✓	✓
7.8 Suitable Knife.	✓	✓
7.9 Instruction manuals for vessel's essential equipment.	✓	
7.10 Rigid or inflatable tender.	✓	
7.11 Laminated cards for life-saving and distress signals.	✓	
7.12 International Code of Signals Flag V <i>I Require Assistance.</i>	✓	

8. Communications Equipment	E	F
8.1 VHF Radio (fixed unit or handheld).	✓	✓
8.2 AM/FM Radio.	✓	

3.4 Boat Angling – Inland Waters

While inland water conditions are different to those of coastal or sea areas, they can be equally as dangerous to small craft due to rapid local deterioration of weather and surface conditions that can occur. There have been multiple fatalities among users of small boats on our inland waters in recent years.

Fishing from small boats on larger rivers and inland lakes is a popular past time. Craft used are predominantly of a small, narrow beamed, low freeboard design, propelled by either oars or outboard engines. Historically these boats were wooden boats of clinker type construction. In latter years they have been replaced by fiberglass replicas.

Fiberglass boats constructed after 1998 must comply with the Recreational Craft Directive and each hull must have a CE marking and plate fitted.

It is essential that owners do not modify or alter boats from their original design. Doing so may compromise the stability, handling characteristics or sea keeping qualities of a boat. Examples of such modifications are:

- Modification of seating

arrangements by fitting of swivel seating for anglers on thwarts or directly to gunwales;

- Fitting of permanent launching wheels to the transom;
- Using an outboard engine of a power rating in excess of the boats design rating. Maximum power ratings will be displayed on the boat's CE/RCD plate;
- Allowing repairs or alterations to be undertaken by unqualified persons using unsuitable or inappropriate materials.

Anglers and operators of boats should always be aware of their stability limitations. **Never overload or overpower such boats and always exercise the following best practice in their use:**

- Be aware of the area weather forecast in advance and check on it regularly throughout the day while on the water;
- Be aware of local conditions and dangers on the lake. If new to the area, always seek local advice before launching;
- Always wear a suitable PFD of a type that can be worn when fishing but which offers sufficient buoyancy to an individual in the water. Take into consideration clothing such as waders, boots, etc. that may be worn when fishing;
- Be aware of the contact details

for local rescue services;

- Always inform a person ashore of details of the persons on board, the areas of intended operation, and launching and return times;
- Do not overload the boat beyond its design rating;
- Never overpower the boat with an outboard engine in excess of the boat's maximum power design rating;
- Carry sufficient anchoring equipment and have it readily available to anchor the boat quickly in an emergency. Practice regularly!
- If operating single handed, make sure a means of quickly reboarding the boat is available in the event of a person overboard situation occurring;
- Pre-plan prior to departure, to deal with possible rapid deterioration of conditions on the water, for example:
 - Identify alternative safe landing points;
 - Check radio/phone coverage in the area of operation;
 - Be aware of other boats operating the area;
 - Check that all boat safety equipment is present and operating;
 - Carry sufficient fuel/spares to deal with emergencies;
 - Brief crew on the actions to take in emergency situations.

Appendix 4 provides information in relation to anchoring, stability and boat handling.

3.5 Communications

It is recommended that all vessels operating on inland lakes and waterways carry a VHF radio. Hand-held VHF batteries should be fully charged prior to departure. Vessels should also consider carrying an EPIRB or PLB on board. (See Radiocommunications section 1.2.11 for more information on EPIRBs and PLBs).

Vessel operators are reminded that a ship radio licence issued by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and a suitably qualified operator are required for vessels carrying marine radio equipment.

It is recommended that all vessels operating on inland lakes and waterways carry a mobile phone, ideally stored in a waterproof pouch or container. The mobile phone should be fully charged prior to departure.

Vessels on inland lakes and waterways are recommended to carry a Global Positioning System (GPS) to allow the vessel to indicate its position accurately to the search and rescue services in the event of an emergency.

Users of inland lakes and waterways are reminded that Coast Guard VHF and mobile phone network coverage is not guaranteed on inland lakes and waterways, particularly in remote locations.

Regular testing of communications equipment should be carried out to confirm correct operation.

3.6 Spread of invasive species by boats on inland waters

In recent years a number of new invasive species of flora and fauna, such as the Zebra Mussel and Asian Clam, have been introduced into Irish lakes and rivers. These species impact in a negative manner on existing natural species, in many cases leading to their extinction.

Many lakes and waterways now require boats to be registered to operate and visitor boats are controlled. Measures have been put in place, which boat owners should follow, to limit the propagation of new species into our inland waters, including:

- If travelling to a new area, make prior enquiries regarding any control measures that may be applied by the relevant authorities. For example, the National Parks and Wildlife Service should be contacted

where boats/water craft are being introduced into a National Park or Nature Reserve, as a licence or permission may be required;

- Always thoroughly clean/wash your boat, engine and trailer prior to launching;
- Angling equipment, including nets and waders, should be thoroughly washed and dried out before being used on a fishing trip;
- Anglers should use artificial lure in place of live bait;
- Avoid launching boats/engines on multiple waterways. Use locally hired boats if possible.

Further information is available from the National Parks and Wildlife Service:

National Parks & Wildlife Service
7 Ely Place
Dublin 2
D02 TW98

Telephone: +353 (0)1 888 3242
LoCall: 1890 383 000
Fax: +353 (0)1 888 3272
Email: nature.conservation@ahg.gov.ie
Website: www.npws.ie

Information regarding the spread of invasive species is also available at www.invasivespeciesireland.com.