

SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



SEATTLE

WATER & BOATING

REGULATIONS & INFORMATION

Harbor Patrol



Local Resources

Seattle Police Harbor Patrol

1717 N. Northlake Place
Seattle WA 98103
TEL: 206-684-4071
FAX: 206-684-4878
seattle.gov/police/units/harbor/

King County Marine Patrol

5165 Carillon Point
Kirkland WA 98033
TEL: 206-296-7559
FAX: 206-205-5371

United States Coast Guard

Pier 36
Seattle WA 98104
TEL: 206-217-6000
FAX: 206-217-6348

Mercer Island Marine Patrol

9611 SE 36th
Mercer Island WA 98040
TEL: 206-275-7953

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

PO Box 42650
Olympia WA 98504-2650
TEL: 1-800-233-0321
www.parks.wa.gov

State of Washington Title and Licensing

TEL: 360-902-3754

Towing

If you need a tow, the Seattle Police Harbor Patrol will assist you to the closest safe location where you can summon additional assistance. Here are some towing companies that can give you customized assistance.

Vessel Assist	1-800-367-8222
Dunato Boat Yard	206-730-7227
Fremont Tug	206-632-0151
Wilson Marine	206-284-3630
Tow Boat U.S.	1-800-391-4869
Foss Vessel Services	206-281-3800

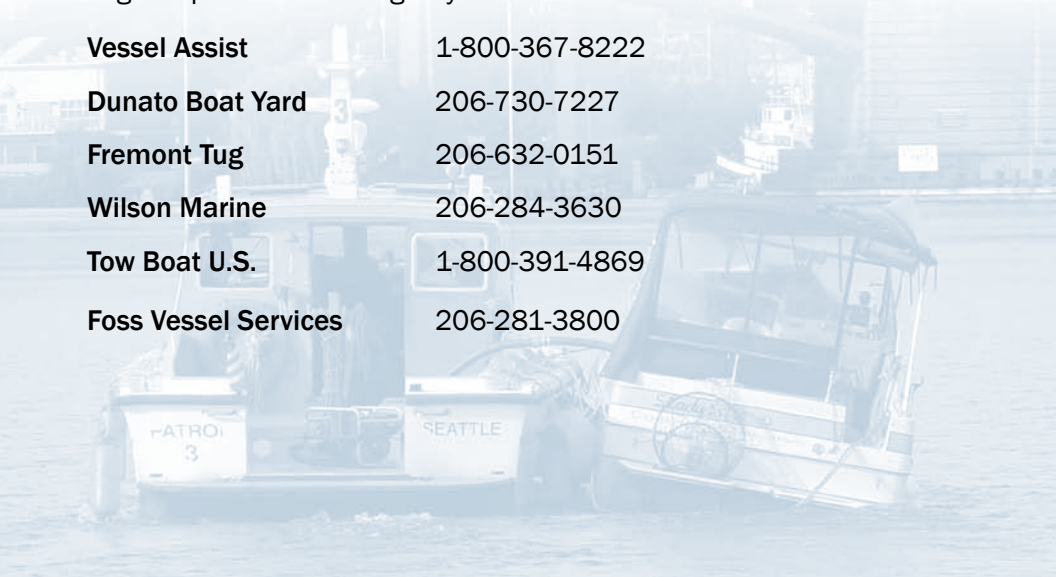


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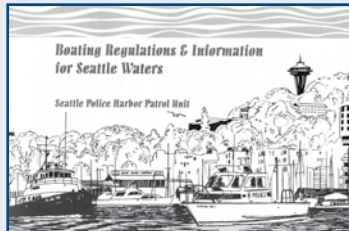
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About this Booklet

This booklet has been prepared for you by the Seattle Police Department for your boating and water safety. You will find charts of regional waters, explanations of local laws, equipment and licensing requirements, and answers to frequently asked questions, including a directory of local marine safety agencies.



Please note this 2008 "Seattle Water & Boating Regulations & Information" booklet replaces the outdated "Boating Regulations and Information for Seattle Waters" booklets.

Safety Equipment

Federal law requires your boat to be equipped with certain safety equipment.

Personal Flotation Devices

- You must have at least one, readily accessible, wearable life jacket of the correct size, per person on all recreational boats. This includes boats less than 16'/feet. *(Effective May 1, 1995)*
- Boats 16' and longer must carry at least one, wearable life jacket of the correct size, per person. You must also carry one throwable device. *(Type IV PFD)*
- By state law, children 12 years old and under must wear life jackets when on the open deck or open cockpit of boats less than 19'. *(Effective July 25, 1999)*

Sound Producing Devices

- Boats under 16' are not required to carry a sound producing device, but some type of horn or whistle is recommended.
- Boats 16' to 39' are required to carry a device capable of efficiently producing sound, e.g., horn, whistle, etc.
- Boats 39' to 65' are required to carry a whistle audible for one-half mile, and bell with a round, bell tone.

Fire Extinguishers

All motorized boats with compartments where explosive or flammable vapors can be trapped and boats with permanently installed fuel tanks must carry at least the following number of "B-I" type fire extinguishers:

- Under 26' – 1 extinguisher
- 26' to 40' – 2 extinguishers
- 40' to 65' – 3 extinguishers

Flame Control and Ventilation

Boats with inboard engines and using gasoline as fuel must be equipped with a Coast Guard approved and serviceable backfire flame arrestor, an air and fuel induction system, and approved engine and fuel tank ventilation systems.

Lighting Equipment

Boats operated from sunset to sunrise must show approved running lights. Small sailboats, rowboats and kayaks need only a flashlight or lantern to warn other boats. Larger boats need red and green sidelights and white lights as dictated by their size and configuration.

Reporting Accidents

It is often from the unpleasant and/or tragic experiences of others that the rest of us can best learn how to be safe on the water.

By law, a boat operator or owner must complete a Boat Accident Report when:

- There is damage of over \$500;
- A person is injured and requires medical treatment beyond first aid;
- There is loss of life; or
- There is the disappearance of any person engaged in recreational boating.

Boating Accident Report forms are available from the Seattle Police Harbor Patrol or the Washington State Department of Parks and Recreation.

Serious accidents, crimes or disappearances will be investigated by the Seattle Police Harbor Patrol or the agency having jurisdiction over the incident. If you are involved in a boating accident, you must offer practical assistance to save the people aboard the stricken vessel from danger when doing so, does not seriously endanger your own vessel and passengers.

The boating accident report you complete cannot be used against you. Reporting accidents and learning from them help save lives in the future. State law has a “Good Samaritan” clause for mariners who offer help in an emergency:

“Under no circumstances may the rendering of assistance or other compliance with this section be evidence of the liability of such operator for the collision, accident or casualty. Any person who gratuitously and in good faith renders assistance at the scene of a vessel collision, accident or other casualty, without objection of the person assisted, shall be not held liable for any civil damages as a result of the rendering of assistance or for any act or omission in providing or arranging salvage, towage, medical treatment, or other assistance, where the assisting persons act as any reasonable, prudent person would have acted under the same or similar circumstances.”

Licensing

Boat Registration

Most boats used in the Seattle area, which are federally regulated waters, require either federal documentation, state registration, or require both in some cases.

Documentation

- Boats over 5-tons are usually documented by the Coast Guard. If so documented, the boat must display its name and homeport as per Coast Guard regulations. If the boat is classified as a pleasure boat, it must also be registered with the state and display a current state decal. The display of state registration numbers is optional.
- Boats documented with a pleasure classification and in commercial service such as a charter or time-share should display the State Department of Revenue registration decals. Any relevant documentation, registration or commercial service paperwork must be carried on board.

Registration

- Non-documented boats must be registered and display the state number and current decal on the forward part of the hull, where clearly visible. The numbers must be of block style, at least 3" high and have enough color contrast to the hull for visibility. The registration certificate must be carried on board.
- Registration effects all motorized boats and motorless sailboats on federal waters such as Puget Sound, Lake Union and Lake Washington. This includes jet skis and similar watercraft. Excluded are motorless sailboats under 16', human-powered boats, tender dinghies with under 10-HP motors used from vessel anchorage to shore, and foreign boats with customs cruising permit or in the temporary state of repair.
- Boats for sale must display current dealer plates and may only be used for demonstration purposes. Registration may be purchased at any Washington State vehicle licensing agency.

If you have questions regarding the licensing of your boat in King County, call the King County Vehicle/Vessel Licensing Department at 206-296-4000.

Marine Ordinances

Federal, state and local law enforcement officers are empowered to stop, board and inspect your boat in the interest of safety and law enforcement. When necessary, these officers may prevent or terminate your voyage if equipment or safety problems exist. If you use common sense and have a reasonable knowledge of the following marine laws, you will have a safe and enjoyable voyage. Please keep in mind that the following are only brief explanations of selected laws. They are not the actual ordinances, and are available upon request.

Negligent Operation

It is unlawful to operate a watercraft in a manner likely to endanger any person or property. You can be in violation of this ordinance if your wake, because of your speed, damages the property of others.

Reckless Operation

It is unlawful to intentionally operate a watercraft in a manner likely to endanger any person or property. You can be in violation by combining speed, alcohol and driving close to objects and people.

Bright Lights

It is unlawful to shine bright lights at boats underway, except in emergencies. Do not use docking lights while underway.

Overpowering

It is unlawful to exceed boat design limitations by using oversize engines.

Overloading

It is unlawful to carry passengers or cargo beyond the safe capacity of the boat. It is also unlawful to carry passengers in an unsafe manner, such as bow riding without sufficient railing, riding on the gunwale or riding on the transom.

Intoxication

It is unlawful to operate or be in physical control of any watercraft when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Standards of being under the influence are much the same as those used in the case of driving under the influence.

Pollution

It is unlawful to dump any type of trash, oil or any other debris in any body of water.

Motor Boats Prohibited

Only authorized motor boats are allowed in the Washington Park Arboretum and Green Lake.

Speed Regulations

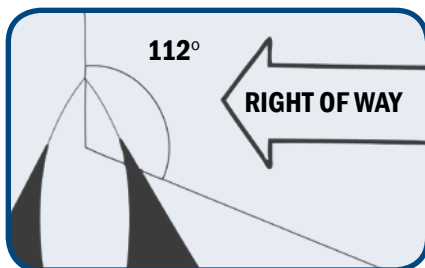
Speed regulations have been established to reduce personal injuries and property damage. The bodies of water in Seattle have seen a steady increase in boat traffic, as well as other uses. In many cases, the speed limit may be too fast, depending on other traffic and the size and wake characteristics of your boat.

You should be aware that you are responsible for your wake, even if you are traveling at or below the speed limit. Exercise common sense and courtesy at all times.

- **Lake Washington:** 7-knots (8-MPH) within 100-yards of shore, docks, bridges, or other fixed objects. In Andrews Bay, the speed limit is 3-knots.
- **Lake Washington Ship Canal:** This includes all waters between Webster Point and the outer marker at Shilshole Bay. Unless posted, the speed limit is 7-knots.
- **Lake Union Test Course:** This is a daytime operation course and is designed for boat mechanics to test their boats. The test course is not recommended for large boats due to the potential for wake damage along the shore. There is no speed limit within the test course. Travel must be east/west or west/east only. No high-speed turns are allowed, and you must be inside the buoys. The course is not to be used to see how fast your boat will run or to blow the engine carbon out. The boat operator is still responsible for damage caused by their wake.
- **Government Locks:** As posted, reduce speed to 4-knots in the vicinity of the locks.
- **Duwamish River:** 7-knots throughout the river.
- **Shilshole Bay and Elliott Bay:** The speed limit is 7-knots within 200-yards of shore or any shore installation.
- **Andrews Bay:** This area is a 3-knot zone, and is recognized by the area West from the North tangent of Bailey Peninsula.
- **Rainier Beach:** This area is a 3-knot zone, and is marked by buoys 100-yards from shore. Roughly, it is an area between South Henderson and South Carver Streets if they were extended into the water.
- **Wetmore Cove:** This is a 3-knot zone, and is recognized by the area from the North tangent of Sayres Park.

Rules of the Road

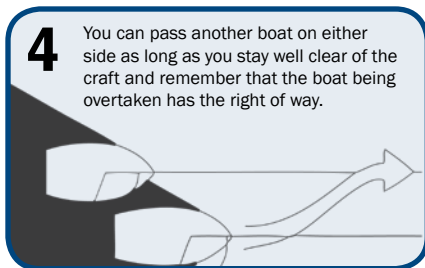
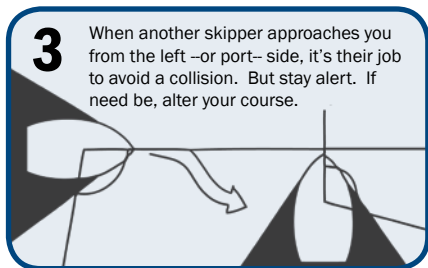
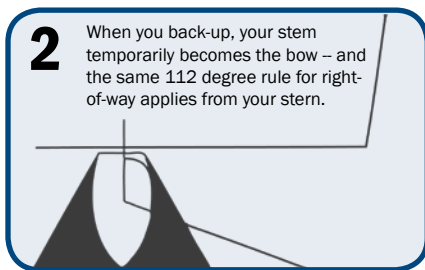
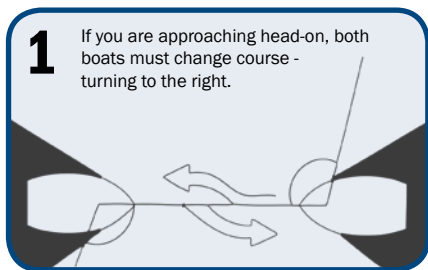
Once you launch your boat – remember there are rules of the road for water traffic, as there are for ground traffic. It's important you know and obey both.



Sailboats under sail and rowboats almost always have the right of way. Stay clear of them, remembering that your wake can give them trouble. The largest single complaint one boater has against another is the nuisance and damage caused by the boat's wake. Stay away from commercial and large vessels. It's easier for you to miss them than for them to maneuver around you.

A boat approaching your right or starboard side from dead ahead to roughly 112.5° toward your stern has the right of way. When another boat approaches you in this area, it's your job to avoid a collision.

The boat with the right of way must – in all cases – maintain its speed and course, unless a collision is imminent. Only then should you slow down or change course.



Water Sport Rules

Swimming

- Swimmers must remain within 50' of shore or docks unless in a marked swimming area or closely accompanied by a boat.
- The boat must be within 25' and have a personal flotation device for the swimmer.
- In no case, should anyone swim near a boat ramp or in the Ship Canal.

Skin/Scuba Diving

Diving is restricted to daylight hours – and the dive site must be marked with a dive flag. Unless authorized by the Seattle Police Harbor Patrol, the following areas are off limits to divers:

- Areas within 300' of any ferry dock, boat ramp or patrolled swimming beach.
- Elliott Bay, east of a line drawn between the northwest corner of Harbor Island and Pier 91.
- Lake Washington Ship Canal from Shilshole Bay outer marker to Lake Washington.
- Shilshole Bay Marina.
- 100-yards of the NOAA Facility at Sand Point.

Water Skiing

- There must be two competent people in the boat, with one competent observer. The operator and skier must act in a prudent manner.
- Skiers must wear a personal flotation device and when the skier is in the water, a 1'x1' red flag on a 2-foot staff must be displayed.
- Skiing is limited to daylight hours from sunrise to sunset.
- Skiing regulations also apply to pulling people on tubes, boards and other similar devices.
- Skiing is prohibited within 100-yards of shore or fixed objects in Lake Washington and within 200-yards of shore or the Ship Canal in Union Bay, unless the skier is being pulled straight out from shore or being returned to same right angle.
- Skiing is prohibited in Shilshole Bay and the Ship Canal that includes Portage Bay, Lake Union and Salmon Bay.
- Skiing is also prohibited in other saltwater areas within 200-yards of shore or fixed objects, unless pulling straight out and/or returning at right angles.

Water Sport Craft

Rafts, tubes, air mattresses, and sailboards are considered water toys when used within 50' of shore or accompanying boat. Outside the 50' area, they are treated as watercraft and subject to watercraft equipment requirements.

Alcohol, the Water and You

Boats, water and alcohol do not mix. We have found the average weekend boater has minimal knowledge about the relative effects of alcohol as it pertains to boating. Here are some facts:

- The effects of just two to three drinks, when magnified by the sun, wind, glare, noise, and vibration you encounter on the water can put you and your passengers in danger.
- Most boating deaths that occur under ideal conditions are alcohol related and involve drowning.
- Sixty percent of fatal boating collisions are alcohol related and caused by carelessness.

Alcohol promotes a false sense of ability and causes boaters to attempt surprising acts. Your ability to judge speed and distance, and recognize danger and act appropriately, is greatly reduced by alcohol. If you are intoxicated:

- You are likely to swim down or away from safety if you fall overboard.
- Alcohol hastens hypothermia (heat loss) and reduces your survival time in cold water.
- Alcohol reduces the chances of a successful resuscitation in a near drowning situation.

Operating a boat while under the influence of intoxicants is illegal.

The Seattle Police Harbor Patrol and all other local marine law enforcement agencies actively enforce this law. So don't let a few drinks make your voyage an unhappy one, or worse, a tragic one.

Avoid Pollution

Sewage

Problem – Untreated sewage dumped in the water can contain disease-causing organisms. Boaters who eat shellfish contaminated with sewage may be exposed to diseases. Don't discharge sewage into confined bays.

Solution – Equip your boat with a sewage treatment device or holding tank for toilet wastes. If the boat doesn't have a toilet, carry a portable one. Dispose of the sewage properly at sewage dump or pump out stations. Avoid flushing even treated wastes in shallow waters because these waters may contain shellfish or be used for swimming. It is illegal to dump untreated sewage in the water. Violators could be subject to a \$200 fine.

Used Oil and Maintenance Wastes

Problem – Used oil, paints, solvents, and wood preservatives are often discarded in the water or in tideland areas. These chemicals can kill marine life. The surface layer of the water is home for the larval stages of some marine creatures. One pint of waste oil can produce a 1-acre oil slick containing toxic hydrocarbons and heavy metals, deadly to marine life. Just 1-gallon of oil dumped into 1 million-gallons of water will kill half of the exposed Dungeness crab larvae.

Solution – Keep an oil absorbent product of a pillow in the bilge to absorb oil. Recycle used oil. Call the Ecology Hotline at 1-800-RECYCLE for the nearest oil recycling facility. Be careful when using toxic chemicals around the water. Dispose of paints, anti-freeze and maintenance wastes safely on shore.

Marine Litter and Plastic Debris

Problem – Litter and debris, including plastic, Styrofoam, 6-pack rings, fishing line, and nets are often tossed over the side. Boat engines fail when plastic bags or nets are caught in propellers and cooling water intakes. Marine creatures and birds often starve after eating bits of floating plastic or Styrofoam, as they can get tangled and drown in lost or abandoned nets and/or 6-pack rings.

Solution – Keep all waste onboard for later onshore disposal to avoid a fine. According to Washington State law, you are required to keep a trash receptacle onboard so that no debris is discarded, washed or blown overboard. Encourage your port authority or marina operator to provide convenient dockside disposal facilities.

Boat Sewage Disposal Locations

Ballard Mill Marina (ST PT) Seattle WA	206-789-4777
Morrison's Northstar Marina (PT) Seattle WA	206-284-6600
Elliott Bay Marine (ST PT) Seattle WA	206-285-4817
Marina Mart Moorings (ST) Seattle WA	206-447-5575
Parkshore Marina (ST) Seattle WA	206-725-3330
Carillon Point (ST DS) Kirkland WA	425-822-1110
Harbor Village Marina (ST) Kenmore WA	425-485-7557

Communications and Channels

The Seattle Police Harbor Patrol and other marine law enforcement agencies in the Seattle area monitor VHF Radio Marine Channel 16. The U.S. Coast Guard uses VHF 16 to broadcast information to boaters. They are prefaced by alert words that require your attention.

Mayday – This means a ship is in distress and there is an immediate danger to life and/or property. You must render assistance if you are in the area of a vessel calling Mayday.

Pan-pan – (pronounced “Pahn-Pahn”) This is used by the U.S. Coast Guard to broadcast information regarding ships in immediate need of assistance not amount to a Mayday.

Security – (pronounced “Securi-TAY”) This is used by the U.S. Coast Guard to broadcast notices to boaters such as navigational hazards, weather changes, etc.

If your boat is equipped with a VHF radio, keep it on and tuned to Marine Channel 16. You could be in a position to help a boater in distress or even save a life.

If you have an emergency and use your VHF radio – remember that the help you get is only as good as the information you provide. Stay calm and be as accurate as you can.

Marine Channels

Channel	Primary Use
16	Distress and calling frequency only. Do not converse on this channel.
13	Bridges and locks (low power only). For routine passage, wait in line. There is no need to radio the locks. Sailboats needing bridge openings should use audible signals as posted on the bridge.
68,69, 70,72	Ship-to-ship. Use Channel 16 to contact other ships. Once your contact is successful, shift to Channel 68, 69, 70, or 72.
25,26	Seattle Marine Operator (telephone calls).
28	Tacoma Marine Operator (telephone calls).

VHF channels are important tools used in case of emergencies as well as convenience, and are monitored by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The FCC is the authority to provide instructions regarding VHF channels and enforce rules and regulations appropriately.

Bridge Opening and Raising

If you are in a large vessel or sailboat, you may have to ask as many as six bridges to be raised. You should know the height of your mast and be prepared to signal the bridge tender at least 100-yards from the bridge.

Burlington Northern Bridge

206-784-2976

Clearance 43' at high tide

Ballard Bridge*

206-282-9525

Clearance 45'

Fremont Bridge*

206-386-4234

Clearance 30'

University Bridge*

206-684-4765

Clearance 44'

Montlake Bridge**

206-684-4710

Clearance 46'

SR 520/Evergreen Point

Floating Bridge

425-453-3073

Clearance 54' East side

Clearance 45' West side

Note: Use 1 and ½ hours before arrival to open bridge between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.

I-90/Mercer Island

Floating Bridge

206-232-6174

Clearance 35' East and West center span

*Normal closed periods are 7 – 9 a.m. and 4 – 6 p.m. Call 206-386-4251 or Marine Channel 13, 1-hour before arrival to open bridge between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.

** Montlake Bridge is closed on weekdays between 7 – 9 a.m. and 3:30 – 6 p.m. Scheduled openings on weekdays are on the hour and half-hour between 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. No scheduled closures on weekends or national holidays. Call 206-386-4251 or Marine Channel 13, 1 - hour before arrival to open bridge between 11 p.m. – 7 a.m.

Note: Please keep in mind that Marine Channel 13 is for use in emergencies and only by commercial vessels.

The Locks

As in all aspects of boating, common courtesy and good sense are a must. Traversing the locks can be a safe and fascinating experience, when the boat operator and crew pay attention to the lock officials. Remember to listen and obey all instructions from the lock officials.

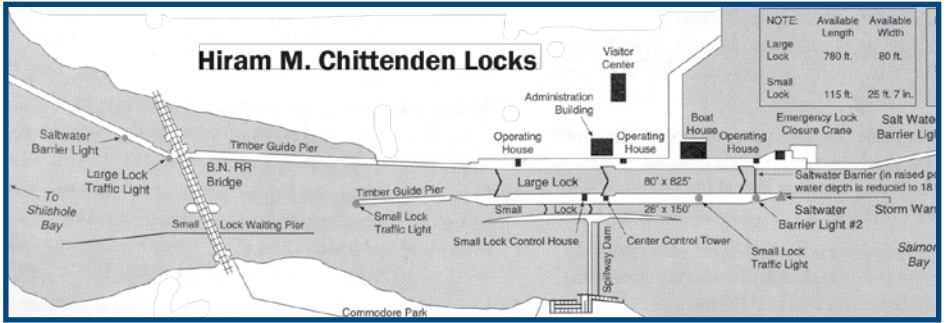
The locks consist of two separate channels, commonly known as the small and large locks. Most pleasure boats pass through the small lock, but may be directed into the large lock during busy times. Guide walls or waiting areas are located at either end of the locks. Watch for traffic signals and listen for loudspeakers as lock officials direct you into the locks. Lock officials may change the order of entry into the locks due to priority and size considerations.

You may contact the locks at 206-783-7000 or Marine Channel 13.

Necessary Equipment

Your boat should be equipped with all required safety equipment and be in good mechanical condition. You will need at least two 50'-mooring lines, with a 12"-diameter eye on the end of each line. Sufficient fenders for both sides of your boat may also be needed.





Locking Through

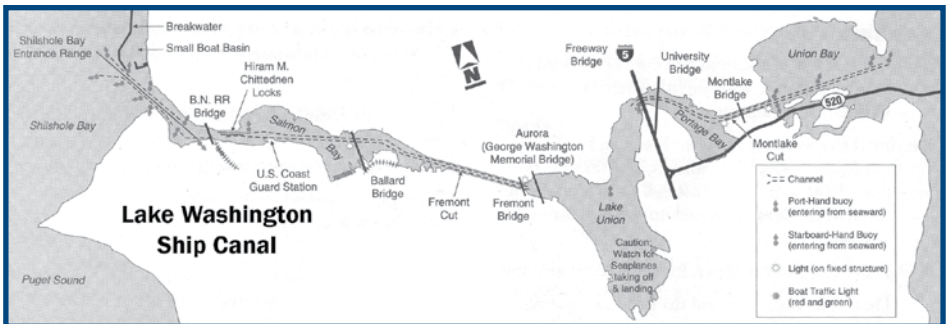
Be ready to tie up to either side and have lines and fenders laid out accordingly. If you have guests aboard who have never crewed through the locks, they should find out ahead of time as to what to expect. Station someone at the bow and the stern to handle lines.

Small Lock – You will be directed to tie to floating walls or to another boat. These floats are leveled with your boat, and you must stand by to pay out line if one should become stuck.

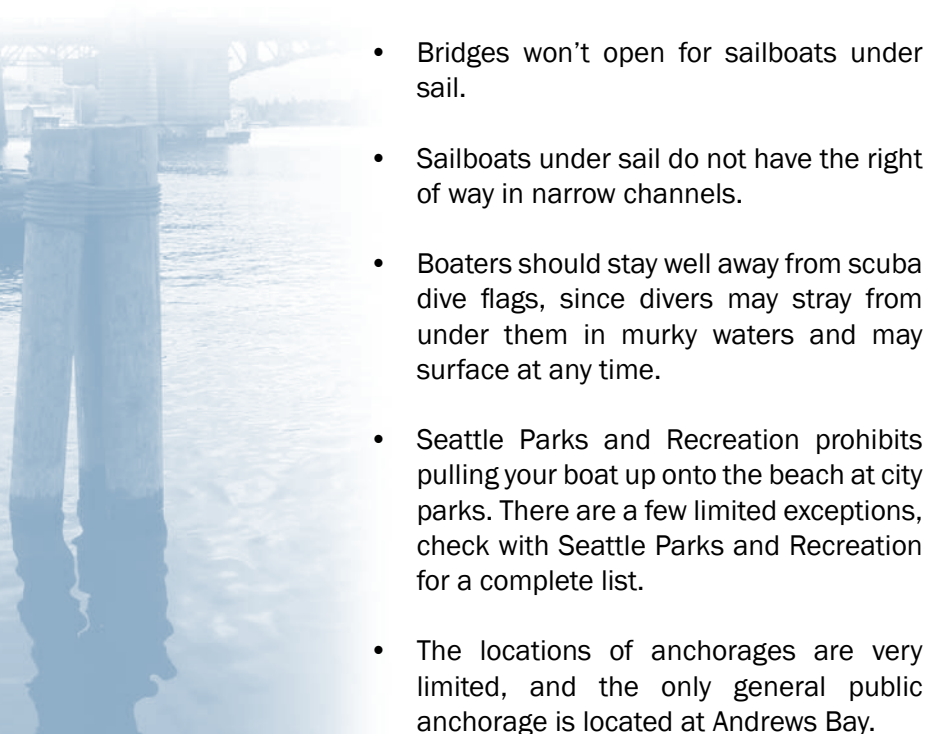
Large Lock – You will be directed to tie to stationary cleats by passing the 12”-eyes of your 50’-lines to a lock official, or you will be told to tie to another boat. You must stand by to pay out or take in line if tied to stationary cleats.

In the case of either lock, make sure your passengers are in a safe position. Stay aboard your boat and make sure your passengers do, too. Beware of strong currents in and around the locks. Do not untie until told to do so.

The Ship Canal



Water Safety and Boating Tips

- There is no record of a drowning in Seattle waters where the victim was wearing a personal flotation device.
 - Many boating mishaps occur because the operator was not aware of an imminent weather change.
 - Because of cold regional waters, you are in severe danger of cold water immersion, which can lead to shock, hypothermia and possible drowning in as little as 10 minutes.
 - Most marine gas stations are only open during normal business hours, with slightly longer summer hours. Check before departure.
 - Drawbridges won't open for boats on business days from 7 – 9 a.m. and from 4 – 6 p.m. After 11 p.m., you must call from a guide wall phone or on Marine Channel 13/low power to arrange for a bridge opening.
- 
- Bridges won't open for sailboats under sail.
 - Sailboats under sail do not have the right of way in narrow channels.
 - Boaters should stay well away from scuba dive flags, since divers may stray from under them in murky waters and may surface at any time.
 - Seattle Parks and Recreation prohibits pulling your boat up onto the beach at city parks. There are a few limited exceptions, check with Seattle Parks and Recreation for a complete list.
 - The locations of anchorages are very limited, and the only general public anchorage is located at Andrews Bay.

- During Seafair races, Lake Washington from the I-90 floating bridge to Seward Park is a 7-knot, no-wake zone. In addition, prepare yourselves in advance for any outing on Opening Day, Fourth of July and Seafair events as the waters of Lake Union and Lake Washington are extremely congested.
- Many boaters unknowingly cover part of their lights by carrying a dingy on the swim step.
- Your state registration expires on June 30.
- Follow all the navigation and boat regulation rules as if you were in a boat when you take your water sport craft beyond 50' from the shore.
- Know that you are responsible for your boat and what goes on even if you are not driving.

Prevent Property Crimes

Property crimes are the biggest problem boaters have. Here are suggestions for preventing and minimizing losses:

- Check your boat regularly and properly secure loose items to the boat. Install an alarm.
- Get to know people on your dock and keep an eye on each other's boat. Have a current phone list of marina owners and neighbors.
- Mark your electronics and dinghy with your boat's WN number. Record serial numbers and keep photos of your boat dinghy.

Stolen boats and equipment don't vanish into thin air. They usually re-enter the mainstream market as a "really good deal." If it sounds too good to be – it usually is. Know what you are buying and from whom. Look for altered or obscured serial numbers and check the equipment with the police agency if you are unsure.



The mission of the Seattle Police Harbor Patrol is dedicated to water safety and the protection and preservation of life and property on the water and along the shores within the City of Seattle. The Harbor Patrol covers over 200 miles of city shoreline and over 27 square miles of fresh and salt water, and provides patrol coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week, year round.



SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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