

## **19.0 UNIVERSITY WATER VESSEL SAFETY PROGRAM**

### **19.1 General Information**

*Note: This section is in compliance with the Louisiana Office of Risk Management, Loss Prevention Unit's regulations as derived by R.S.39:1543.1C. The purpose of this legislation is to address water vessel safety, control the use of vessels on state business, reduce the state's exposure to liability, reduce loss expenses due to accidents, and achieve accountability*

The policies in this section pertain to any university employee who needs to operate a water vessel or boat as part of the scope of their employment. A State-owned water vessel is defined as any boat that is owned, leased, and/or rented by the State of Louisiana, or any agency of the State of Louisiana. These policies apply to boats that are owned and not owned by the University. Students are not allowed to operate a water vessel unless the University employs that student, or the student is part of the University Ski Team, which utilizes a water vessel in the scope of its sports practice and competitive events. Examples of these include:

- Student workers for the National Wetlands Research Center
- Student workers at the Marine Survival Training Center
- Students practicing for Ski Team Events/Competitions on or off campus

Exceptions for all other students who are not employed by the University are to be requested in writing to the EH&S office by the department head at least one month prior to any scheduled boat operation. This request should include clear justification of the need for students to operate the water vessel. Because of the inherent danger of operating a water vessel, employees are strongly discouraged from operating their personal water vessels. Student workers may not be allowed to operate non-state owned water vessels.

The University water vessel safety program shall be administered by the EH&S office. The EH&S Director is responsible for coordinating the water vessel safety procedures outlined in section 19.2. Supervisors and administrators are responsible for making sure the employees and students they supervise follow these procedures. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries instructs safe boating training courses and responds to water vessel accidents that occur. Employee and student water vessel operators are responsible for conducting themselves in a law-abiding and professional manner.

The University has the right to refuse anyone the authority to operate any water vessel on University business based on public or occupational safety over and above those listed in this written program.

### **19.2 Water Vessel Procedures**

- All University water vessel operators must submit a completed Water Vessel Authorization/Operator History form (DA 2066) to the EH & S office. (see section 19.3)

- All University water vessel operators must attend a Louisiana Better Boating Course, or similar, within 90 days of their employment or within 90 days of being assigned duties that include driving a water vessel in the course and scope of their job. All University water vessel operators must also attend a refresher course every three years thereafter. (see section 19.4)
- Any water vessel used for university business must pass a yearly inspection as outlined in section 19.5.
- All University water vessel operators must report any accidents to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the EH&S office. All water vessel accidents must also be reported using the DWF-A-BAIR 003 form. (see section 19.6)
- Authorized water vessel operators may not drive State owned university boats with passengers who are not riding within the scope of university business (ex: transporting family members for personal reasons).

### **19.3 Water Vessel Operator Authorization**

Before an employee or student is allowed to operate a water vessel on university business, he or she must complete the Water Vessel Authorization/Operator History form (DA2066). This form is used to:

- Provide valid identification information to the EH&S office for the purpose of identifying and controlling the use of water vessels on university business.
- Allow the EH&S Director (or his designee) to request a water vessel operator record from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.
- Determine whether the employee or student is a high-risk water vessel operator. (see high-risk operator in this section)

This form is available at the EH&S office and also on the EH&S website at <http://www.safety.louisiana.edu>

### **High-risk Operators and Operator Approval**

Once a completed authorization form is received, the EH&S Director shall request an accident history for each university water vessel operator from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. DWF will provide any convictions or guilty pleas related to boating associated with that driver. Based on this conviction or guilty plea information, a high-risk operator is one whose operator history indicates *any* of the following.

- One or more conviction, guilty plea, or no contender (no contest) plea within the last 12 months for:
  - ✓ Operating a water vessel while intoxicated
  - ✓ Careless operation of a water vessel
  - ✓ Reckless operation of a water vessel
  - ✓ Negligent homicide
  - ✓ Interference with navigation

- ✓ Any civil case for which negligence in operating a water vessel has been proven.

Authorized operators who experience a change in their status to high risk (based on the information above) must report this information to the EH&S office immediately.

High-risk water vessel operators will not be allowed to drive a boat on University business for at least one year after the latest conviction, guilty plea, or no contender plea. Once an operator history is obtained and reviewed, the EH&S director shall notify in writing any high-risk water vessel operator and their department head or supervisor the findings indicated in the history record. This document shall indicate the reason for classifying the high-risk operator and the duration for his or her suspension. Once that suspension has passed, the EH&S director shall review a new water vessel history for approval. Finally, high-risk operators shall re-take the boater safety course before they are re-authorized to drive water vessels on state business (see section 19.4).

The EH&S office shall request an operator history each year thereafter for every employee or student water vessel operator, as well for each new employee or student water vessel operator as necessary. The EH&S office shall maintain all of these records for a minimum of three years.

#### **19.4 Water Vessel Operator Training**

Initial Training is required within 90 days of hire or within 90 days of being assigned a duty of driving a personal or owned state water vessel. Authorization to drive a personal or state owned water vessel is not given until training is complete, a background check is verified through the LWL&F and the Director of Environmental, Health & Safety has signed the Authorization Operator/History Form (DA 2066). These persons must also attend a refresher course every three years thereafter. Initial training is sponsored by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (DWF). It shall be instructed by DWF personnel or UL Lafayette personnel who have been certified as instructors. Refresher training is available online. A direct link to this training course is available on our website.

University water vessel operators who have had safe boating training sponsored by the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the United States Department of the Interior or other agencies may be exempt from the state DWF course. These operators should contact the EH&S Office to ensure that all course training requirements have been met.

Water vessel operators who receive a conviction or a violation from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for operating a boat unlawfully are required to notify the EH&S Director of that conviction or violation. These persons will be required to take a refresher safe boat operator course within 90 days of their conviction or violation.

## **19.5 Water Vessel Inspection**

In order to ensure safety, equipment must be inspected regularly. This is especially important for boats because they are not used as often as roadway motor vehicles. Additionally, because of the nature of navigating waterways, boats tend to require more frequent maintenance than typical roadway motor vehicles. Therefore, all University boats shall be inspected for safety and equipment at least once monthly. However, it is the responsibility of the University department that operates the boat to regularly check it for safety. A preventative maintenance check should be performed yearly by the department to ensure boats are operating safely and efficiently. Annual PM Checks will be printed and performed by the Facilities Management Department. Once inspections are complete, the department is to return a copy the inspection report to the EH&S office.

### **Yearly Inspection Procedures for Boats Performed By the Facility Management**

*Note: These inspection procedures are not applicable to boats operated by the Marine Survival Training Center (MSTC). MSTC boats are subjected to more stringent internal inspections. Documentation of MSTC inspections shall be maintained at both the MSTC office and the EH&S office.*

- All university boats shall receive a yearly inspection from the Facility management Motor Pool.
- Facility management personnel shall contact the department who operates the boat and arrange for the inspection.
- Once scheduled, the department shall tow the boat to the Motor Pool for the inspection. In some cases, other arrangements can be made for the inspection.
- If the boat is towed by a State-owned vehicle, then it should be brought to the Motor Pool with that vehicle so that the tow vehicle can be inspected as well.
- Motor Pool personnel shall perform the inspection without charge to the department and these records shall be kept on file at the EH&S office for a minimum of one year.
- If the inspection reveals a deficiency, then the department shall be notified of this before the boat and tow vehicle (if applicable) is returned to the department.
- The Motor Pool may be able to remedy this deficiency. However, materials needed to repair the boat or tow vehicle (if applicable) shall be charged to the department who operates the boat.
- If this deficiency renders the boat unsafe, the department may not operate the boat until it (the deficiency) is repaired.

### **Yearly Inspection Checklist For Motor Pool Employees Inspecting University Boats**

*Note: This checklist shall be generated as a preventative maintenance work order yearly for each boat maintained by the University.*

#### **All University Boats**

- Ensure that there is a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for the maximum number of persons as indicated on the USCG identification tag posted on the boat.

- If the boat has no USCG tag, then it should have no less than 1 PFD for each occupant in the vessel.
- Make sure the PFDs are rated for adults and in good working condition.
- Check that the boat maintains a blank copy of the DWF-A-BAIR 003 form (see section 19.6)
- Check that the boat is registered with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries:
  - ✓ Each boat should have a copy of the registration on board at all times.
  - ✓ The DWF registration number must be posted on each side of the boat near the bow in 3" block letters that differ from the boat color.
  - ✓ These block letters must be visible when the boat is floating on water.
- If applicable, check the boat trailer for OMV and other requirements:
  - ✓ Check for operational trailer lights
  - ✓ Check the tires for adequate tread, dry rotting, and proper inflation
  - ✓ Ensure that each tire has a fender in good condition
  - ✓ Check the wheel bearings for leaking grease seals
  - ✓ Check the trailer tongue for good hardware and proper operation.
  - ✓ Check the trailer rollers for cracking and integrity.
  - ✓ Make sure the trailer has a visible license plate
- If applicable, ensure that there is a safe way to secure the boat to the trailer from both the bow (preferably with a winch) and the stern (rope, strap, tie downs, or similar).
- Check that the boat has a length of rope not less than 20 feet on board suitable for mooring it and a way to secure that rope to the bow of the boat (cleat).
- Check the fuel tank for unobstructed ventilation and leaks. Check the fuel lines for cracking, loose fittings, etc.
- If applicable, check the steering mechanism for safe operation, good cables, lubrication, etc.
- If applicable, check the tow vehicle for a proper trailer light connection and a properly rated towing hitch.

#### University Boats Greater Than 16 Feet (In addition to the above)

- Check for at least one USCG approved throw able PFD in good condition.
- Check for a working signaling device such as a horn or whistle.
- A boat operated south of the Intracoastal Waterway must have a non-expired flare kit on board at all times.
- Check for working navigational lights for both the bow and the stern.
  - ✓ The bow light should have both red and green reflectors with the red reflector on the left side from the driver's point of view.
  - ✓ The stern light should have a white reflector and should be visible above the level of the motor or any other devices attached to the stern.
- Check to ensure that the boat has a suitable paddle.
- Check for a Type A, B, or C portable fire extinguisher with adequate charge.

- If applicable, check the bilge pump for proper operation.
- Check for a suitable anchor with sufficient rope attached to it.

### **Monthly Inspection Procedures for Departments Operating Boats**

The following checklist will be used monthly for inspecting University boats:

#### **UL Lafayette Monthly Fleet Water Vessel Preventative Maintenance Checklist** *Revised September 2008*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fleet Vehicle #: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **All University Boats**

- \_\_\_ Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) (Life Jackets)
  
- \_\_\_ Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Paperwork
  - ✓ Each boat should have a copy of the registration on board at all times.
  - ✓ The DWF registration number must be posted on each side of the boat near the bow in 3" block letters that differ from the boat color.
  - ✓ These block letters must be visible when the boat is floating on water.
  
- \_\_\_ If applicable, check the boat trailer for:
  - ✓ Operational trailer lights
  - ✓ Serviceable tires
  - ✓ Trailer tongue for proper operation.
  - ✓ Trailer rollers
  - ✓ A visible license plate
  - ✓ Boat Winch (strap in good shape) and Stern Attachment (strap, tie downs)
  
- \_\_\_ Fuel tank has no leaks, fuel lines, fittings, etc. in good shape
  
- \_\_\_ If applicable, steering mechanism in safe operation, good cables, lubrication, etc.

#### **University Boats Greater Than 16 Feet (In addition to the above)**

- \_\_\_ Check for at least one USCG approved throw able PFD in good condition.
  
- \_\_\_ Check for a working signaling device such as a horn or whistle.
  
- \_\_\_ Flare Kit is not expired (for boats operated south of the Intracoastal Waterway)

- \_\_\_ Check for working navigational lights for both the bow and the stern.
- \_\_\_ Boat has a suitable paddle.
- \_\_\_ Portable fire extinguisher with adequate charge on board
- \_\_\_ A suitable anchor with sufficient rope attached to it on board

### **19.6 Accident Reporting and Record Keeping for Water Vessel Safety**

All university water vessel operators must report any accidents to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the EH & S office. A water vessel accident can include, but is not limited to, capsizing, collision with another vessel, flooding, fire, explosion, and disappearance of the vessel by theft. Water vessel accidents that result in injury to personnel shall be investigated using the procedures set forth in section 4 of the EH & S Policy. All water vessel accidents must be reported using the DWF-A-BAIR 003 form. University water vessel operators should be familiar with the information required in this form. Once responded, the DWF shall assist in the completion of this form.