



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

P.O. Box 140

Gustavus, AK 99826-0140

Tel: 907-697-2230

Fax: 907-697-2654



Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve

Boating Policy

For Park-Operated Motorized Vessels

Approved:

Susan L. Boudreau, Superintendent

Date

POINT OF CONTACT: **Gus Martinez**, GLBA Marine Safety Officer

ALTERNATE POINT OF CONTACT: **Jake Ohlson**, GLBA Park Safety Officer

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (GLBA) Boating Policy serves to ensure all motorized boating missions aboard National Park Service (NPS) or other vessels carrying NPS employees (and/or their representatives) are conducted in a safe and efficient manner. Equipment, training, and operations are to be maintained in accordance with agency and industry standards. With consideration to the unique, complex environment and changing sea conditions experienced in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, safety is to be the paramount priority in all park boating operations. The following policy shall be enforced to meet or exceed the requirements established in Department of the Interior (DOI) Departmental Manual 485 Chapter 22 and NPS Reference Manual 50B Chapter 9 (see **Appendix A**). This policy is not designed to provide absolute direction for any given situation; rather, it establishes basic parameters for the operation of motorized vessels within Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. Common sense, local knowledge, weather and sea conditions, operational leadership concepts, and experience of the individual operator and crew will be taken into account by all employees and managers when deciding to embark upon a specific vessel-based mission. Requests to conduct operations that are contrary to policy must be submitted through the employees' supervisor in writing, justifying the deviation and providing mitigation strategies to ensure the safety of all personnel. The park superintendent has the authority to approve, modify, curtail, or prohibit any operation. *Any deviation from policy must be approved by the superintendent.*

Passengers aboard NPS vessels shall be limited to government employees, VIPs, volunteers, and/or passengers authorized by the superintendent. An operator may use his/her judgment to exclude any passenger if the operator feels that vessel or mission safety may be compromised by that individual or group of individuals.

2 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. *Supervisors and Project Leaders will:*

- Ensure that watercraft operations are conducted in a safe manner and in compliance with established GLBA and DOI policies.
- Ensure that watercraft and equipment are maintained in compliance with existing policies and procedures.
- Ensure that all employees, volunteers, and others who operate or work in watercraft are trained and experienced in watercraft operations appropriate to the:
 1. Type and size of watercraft used
 2. Geographic and environmental conditions of the operation(s)
 3. Operational task being performed
- Ensure that all required safety and survival equipment is available.

B. *The Boat Operator will:*

- Complete the Department of Interior Motorboat Operator Certification Course (DOIMOCC) and maintain certification.
- Be responsible for the safety of personnel on board regardless of position or grade.

- Operate the watercraft safely, in compliance with existing policies, guidelines, and training.
- Determine what safety and survival equipment is needed and ensure that the required safety equipment is on board and is in serviceable condition.
- Brief crew and passengers on emergency procedures (e.g. issuing a Mayday, fire, capsizing) and emergency equipment location prior to mission embarkation.

C. *The Boat Crew and Passengers will:*

- Take responsibility for their own safety. Be prepared!
- Assist with other operations as required or directed by the operator.
- Adhere to boating and operational policies.

D. *The Marine Operations Committee will:*

- Consist of at least one experienced person from each park division that has boat operations.
- Meet at least quarterly to review boating safety issues, review and update policy, plan future training sessions, and determine marine operations needs.
- Advise the superintendent and management team on boating issues.
- Review reported boating accidents and incidents.

3 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Following training and verification of proficiency, individually tailored vessel operation certification letters will be issued to employees detailing:

- The type of vessel(s) they are authorized to operate
- The geographic bounds within which they are authorized to operate
- The types of missions for which the operator and vessel are authorized
- The weather, sea, and visibility conditions under which they are allowed to operate

A. *Basic Certification*

The content and requirements for the Department of Interior Motorboat Operator Certification Course (DOIMOCC) are described in DOI 485 DM 22. In addition to these requirements, DOIMOCC at GLBA is to include coursework on park-specific boating subjects, including vessel loading and stability, local knowledge, vessel maintenance, troubleshooting, and other pertinent subjects.

Upon successful completion of the basic DOIMOCC course, the student will be certified to operate skiffs alone, but only under the following conditions:

- Daylight hours
- Unrestricted visibility (e.g. no fog).
- Beaufort Scale force three or less (**see Appendix B**)
- Only within the geographic bounds of Bartlett Cove (BARCO).

B. Advanced Certification

If the certified DOIMOCC operator subsequently wishes to travel beyond BARCO or advance their certification, they must (in this order):

- **Provide documentation of a minimum of 10 hours of operation** of that class vessel with an operator certified to the level of competency sought by the less-experienced operator. This documentation will show areas of operation, sea conditions experienced, weather, and nighttime operations if applicable.
- The operator shall **obtain a written recommendation** specifying the next level of certification. This recommendation shall come from a more-experienced operator who has consistently observed the individual safely operating that class vessel under the range of conditions commensurate with the next level of certification. This recommendation will include areas in which the vessel may be operated, sea conditions, and visibility restrictions.
- **The supervisor of the requesting operator must give concurrence.**
- **Pass a check-ride and tabletop exercise** with the boating officer and either a USCG licensed operator or a DOIMOCC instructor. The evaluation shall be based on the operator's skill and knowledge relating to the following:
 1. Type of vessel
 2. Geography
 3. Mission
 4. Conditions (environment of operations)
 5. Local knowledge
- The operator's **division chief will be responsible to approve the certification** and any endorsements or limitations.

C. DOIMOCC Recertification

At GLBA it is required that all vessel operators attend a DOIMOCC refresher course no more than two years after the original or previous refresher training. The eight-hour refresher course will consist of a four-hour classroom lesson and a four-hour hands-on exercise that will include immersion suit training.

Operators may request that a designated instructor review their proficiency and give written approval to operate a vessel if they have not attended the refresher class within the past two years. Regardless of written approval and level of proficiency, each operator must attend a refresher course every five years (in accordance with 485 DM 22).

D. U.S. Coast Guard Licensing

Operators who have current and documented USCG licensing may operate vessels that are covered by their license without attending DOIMOCC **only with** written approval from the park superintendent. The minimum requirement is an orientation to park boating and NPS policies by a designated instructor.

4 REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

A. *Navigational Equipment*

All vessels shall have on board:

- The most current paper navigational charts covering the area in which they are operating
- Correct tide tables for the area

B. *Vessel Safety Equipment*

Each vessel shall carry all safety equipment required by the USCG and Alaska State regulations (**see Appendix C**). All GLBA government vessels shall be equipped with a park radio and a backup VHF radio (a spare park radio or standard VHF radio) and immersion suits for each passenger on board. GLBA employees on official business in commercial, private, or other agencies' vessels shall carry at least one park radio and spare batteries and an immersion suit of proper size. This excludes commercial vessels required by USCG regulations to provide life saving equipment such as life rafts (e.g. cruise ships and tour boats).

In addition to USCG requirements and immersion suits, all vessels shall have the following equipment:

- A secondary means of propulsion (oars, kicker motor, second engine)
- Bailing bucket
- One anchor
- Spare kill switch for outboards
- Fuel absorbent pads
- A survival kit or "ditch bag" (**see Appendix D**)
- Basic tool kit (**see Appendix E**)
- Spare propeller
- Spare parts and supplies (**see Appendix F**)

C. *Personal Protective Equipment/Personal Flotation Devices*

DOI 485 DM 22 requires that all personal flotation devices (PFDs) be international orange in color and equipped with type I retro-reflective tape in accordance with 46 CFR 25.25-15 (**see Appendix A**).

In addition, at GLBA, when a skiff or vessel 18 feet or less in length is taken out of BARCO or out of sight of a support vessel, all occupants shall wear full (coverall style) exposure suits (e.g., Mustang suits) or dry suits with a PFD. Written permission from the superintendent must be obtained prior to departure when conditions warrant deviation from this requirement.

6 COMMUNICATIONS

At least one person on each motorized vessel shall monitor marine VHF channel 16 and the appropriate park frequency for the area at all times while underway. The radio monitor, whether the vessel operator or a passenger, must be able to hear and respond to radio traffic.

A. *Float Plans and Vessel Tracking*

Prior to departing Bartlett Cove, all vessels must call BARCO or visit the Visitor Information Station (VIS) to file a float plan that includes the name of the vessel, number and identity of people on board, and their estimated time of return (ETR) to Bartlett Cove or other destination (see **Appendix G**). A float plan should also be filed for each day upon departure from overnight locations or anchorages. All vessels must close or modify their float plan prior to the ETR. If a deviation occurs from the float plan, a call must be made to inform BARCO of these changes. If the vessel is going out overnight, two check-in calls per day are required: one in the morning and one in the evening. Supervisors of vessel operators will ensure that a plan is in place for who to contact in case the vessel is overdue. Operators are encouraged to establish a more frequent check-in schedule with BARCO as conditions warrant.

Procedure if going out of communication range: Vessels transiting into known park radio dead zones (see **Appendix H**) should notify the VIS or other monitoring NPS staff of when they anticipate being out of the dead zone and back in radio contact. Vessels and operators that regularly frequent radio dead zones or are planning to occupy these areas for more than a day should arrange alternative communication (e.g., satellite phone). Vessels that are in radio dead zones longer than they anticipated are encouraged to arrange for other vessels in the area to relay information to BARCO or other park vessels.

B. *Electronic Vessel Tracking (RESERVED)*

7 OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. *Inspections*

Pretrip inspection: The vessel operator is required to ensure all vessel systems are operating normally and that required safety and other necessary equipment is aboard and in serviceable condition prior to the start of each mission.

B. *Load Limitations*

Operators and employees will not exceed the personnel or weight limits of the vessel as determined by the manufacturer (as indicated on the vessel's capacity plate).

C. *Weather Limitations*

Skiffs are prohibited from embarking on a mission beyond BARCO under a standing National Weather Service small craft advisory unless a risk assessment model is used to evaluate risk given existing and forecasted weather conditions and mission objectives prior to departure. Missions can proceed only when risk is deemed acceptable under an approved risk model (e.g., GAR or SPE) (see Appendix J).

D. Job Hazard Analyses are to be completed for all vessel-based missions and referenced regularly by the operators who undertake these missions (see **Appendix I**).

E. Prohibited Activities

- No operator or passenger shall consume alcohol within eight hours prior to vessel operation.
- There shall be no recreational fishing or any other personal recreational use from a government-owned vessel.
- No park motor vessel shall transit through the “cut” to the inner lagoon/administrative dock when any part of the big rock is showing.

8 ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT REPORTING

The following incidents must be reported immediately to the vessel operator and to the supervisor of the reporting employee:

1. Damage to a protected natural resource
2. Discharge of oil or gasoline that causes sheen
3. Fire and/or explosion
4. Any significant compromise in seaworthiness
5. Any significant damage to a vessel or safety equipment
6. Unintentional grounding
7. An injury requiring more than basic first aid
8. Collision with another vessel or object
9. Any man overboard

Supervisors are to report all accidents or incidents to the Marine Operations Committee within one month of the initial report for committee review.

9 VESSEL MAINTENANCE

Operator Responsibilities

Operators are responsible for fueling, cleaning, and scheduling the repair of vessels after each use.

10 GLOSSARY (RESERVED)

11 ATTACHMENTS (ITEMS IN RED FONT ARE IN DEVELOPMENT)

- A) Referenced Policies/Regulations
 - 1) DOI 485 DM 22
 - 2) NPS RM 50B Chapter 9
 - 3) 46 CFR 25.25-15
- B) Beaufort Scale for Wind Severity
- C) State of Alaska Required Boating Equipment
- D) Survival Kit or “Ditch Bag” Recommended Contents
- E) **Vessel Tool Kit Recommended Contents**

- F) Vessel Spare Part List Recommended Contents
- G) Float Plan Sample
- H) Glacier Bay Radio “Dead-Zone” Chart
- D) Go/No Go Checklist
- J) Risk Assessment Tool Worksheets
 - 1) GAR (Green/Amber/Red)
 - 2) SPE (Severity/Probability/Exposure)
- K) Vessel Capability Chart
- L) Vessel Start-Up Procedure
- M) Check Ride Rating Form
- N) Certification and Endorsement Sample
- O) GLBA Marine Operations Committee Charter
- P) Policy for Nonmotorized Vessels
- Q) Job Hazard Analyses for Common GLBA Marine Operations
 - 1) Trailering
 - 2) Loading and Unloading Vessels
 - 3) Fueling
 - 4) Docking
 - 5) Anchoring
 - 6) Shore Landing
 - 7) Training
 - 8) Towing
 - 9) Field Maintenance and Repairs
 - 10) Maintenance Diagnostic Rides
 - 11) Moving Equipment from Boat to Shore Using Dinghy
 - 12) At-Sea Personnel Transfers
 - 13) General Law Enforcement Patrols
 - I. Boarding Vessels
 - II. Hauling Crab Gear
 - 14) Oil Spill Response
 - 15) Medical/EMS Transfers
 - 16) Search and Rescue
 - 17) Response to Vessel Grounding
 - 18) Fuel Barge Operations
 - 19) Research Operations
 - I. Gear Deployment
 - II. Dive Operations
 - III. Towing Nets
 - IV. Underwater Cable Maintenance
 - V. Whale Surveys
 - 20) Multiday Research Trips
 - 21) Wildlife Rescue and Recovery