

Facts For Florida Vessel Owners



A SAFER
FLORIDA
HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES

Providing Highway Safety and Security Through Excellence In Service, Education, and Enforcement.

INITIAL REGISTRATION AND TITLING

Vessel registration is a system of record-keeping and identification for vessels that operate on Florida waterways. Vessels are registered with the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Vessel registrations help the Fish & Wildlife Commission's Enforcement Division protect vessel owners against theft and against irresponsible actions by other vessel operators.

Vessel titling is a record-keeping system that provides ownership protection to vessel owners, going beyond the vessel registration system. Titling is also done by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. It also protects the interests of financial institutions or individuals that provide loans on vessels. The Department keeps computerized records on all titled vessels, and issues title certificates which document the owner of a vessel and any liens that lenders choose to record on the title certificate.

Applications for vessel registration and title certificates are to be filed by the vessel owner with the county tax collector office. Tax collectors serve as agents for the Department for motor vehicle and vessel services. A vessel not exempt from titling must be titled at the same time it is registered. A manufacturer's certificate of origin or its equivalent along with a registration fee based on the fee schedule shown on page 6 must be submitted. Vessel owners have the option of renewing vessel registrations for either one-year or two-year periods. A \$5.25 titling fee should be provided with an additional fee of \$1 to record each existing lien. There is an additional titling fee of \$4 required for each initial certificate of title issued for a vessel previously registered outside of this state.

If the sales tax on the total purchase price of the vessel has not been paid, it will be necessary for the vessel owner to remit this payment with the above referenced fees. If the sales tax has been paid, the vessel owner should furnish the county tax collector with a valid receipt indicating where the sales tax was paid and that it was paid in an amount equal to or greater than the applicable sales tax. The registration certificate must be on board the vessel when in operation. The purchaser of a new or used vessel has 30 days in which to apply for registration and title. During this 30 day period the owner is required to have aboard his vessel proof of date of purchase. Operation of an unregistered vessel after 30 days is a second-degree misdemeanor.

DEFINITIONS

Canoe – A light, narrow vessel with curved sides and with both ends pointed. A canoe-like vessel with a transom may not be excluded from the definition of a canoe if the width of its transom is less than 45 percent of the width of its beam or it has been designated as a canoe by the United States Coast Guard.



Commercial Vessel – Any vessel primarily engaged in the taking or landing of saltwater fish or saltwater products or freshwater fish or freshwater products, or any vessel licensed pursuant to section 379.361, Florida Statutes from which commercial quantities of saltwater products are harvested, from within and without the waters of this state for sale either to the consumer, retail dealer, or wholesale dealer, or any other vessel, except a recreational vessel as defined in section 327.02, Florida Statutes.

Documented Vessel – A vessel for which a valid certificate of documentation is outstanding with the United States Coast Guard pursuant to Title 46, Part 67 of the Code of Federal Regulations.



Floating Structure - A floating entity, with or without accommodations built thereon, which is not primarily used as a means of transportation on water but which serves purposes or provides services typically associated with a structure or other improvement to real property. The term "floating structure" includes, but is not limited to, entities used as residence, place of business, office, hotel or motel, restaurant or lounge, clubhouse, meeting facility, storage or parking facility, mining platform, dredge, dragline or similar facility or entity represented as such. Floating structures are expressly excluded from the definition of a vessel as provided in section 327.02(39), Florida Statutes. Incidental movement upon water or resting partially or entirely on the bottom shall

EXEMPTIONS FROM REGISTRATION

not, in and of itself, preclude an entity from classification as a floating structure. Questions as to whether or not a particular entity is considered a floating structure or a vessel should be directed to your local property appraiser.

Homemade Vessel – Any vessel built after October 31, 1972, for which a federal hull identification number is not required to be assigned by the manufacturer pursuant to federal law, or any vessel constructed or assembled prior to November 1, 1972, by other than a licensed manufacturer for his or her own use or the use of a specific person. A vessel assembled from a manufacturer's kit or constructed from an unfinished manufactured hull shall be considered to be a homemade vessel if such a vessel is not required to have a hull identification number assigned by the United States Coast Guard. A rebuilt or reconstructed vessel shall in no event be construed to be a homemade vessel.

Manufactured Vessel – Any vessel built after October 31, 1972, for which a federal hull identification number is required pursuant to federal law, or any vessel constructed or assembled prior to November 1, 1972, by a duly licensed manufacturer.

Personal Watercraft – A vessel less than 16 feet in length which uses an inboard motor powering a water jet pump, as its primary source of motive power and which is designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the vessel, rather than in the conventional manner of sitting or standing inside the vessel.



Recreational Vessel – Any vessel that is manufactured and used primarily for noncommercial purposes; or leased, rented, or chartered to a person for the person's noncommercial use.

Vessel – Synonymous with boat as referenced in s.1.(b), Art. VII of the Florida Constitution and includes every description of watercraft, barge and airboat, other than a seaplane on the water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water. The term "floating structure" is expressly excluded from the definition of a vessel.

Vessels exempt from registration include: non-motor powered vessel less than 16 feet in length, and any non-powered canoe, kayak, racing shell, or rowing scull, regardless of length; vessels used exclusively on private lakes and ponds; vessels owned by the United States Government; vessels used exclusively as a ship's lifeboat; and vessels covered by numbers in full force and effect which have been awarded pursuant to federal law or a federally approved numbering system provided that such vessels are not operated in state waters in excess of 90 consecutive days.

EXEMPTIONS FROM TITLING



Vessels exempt from titling include: non-powered vessels less than 16 feet in length; vessels owned by the United States Government; federally documented vessels; vessels used exclusively on private lakes and ponds; amphibious vessels for which a vehicle title is issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles; vessels used solely for demonstration, testing or sales promotional purposes by a bona fide dealer or manufacturer; vessels owned and operated by the state or its political subdivisions; vessels from a country other than the U.S., temporarily using the waters of this state for not more than 90 days and vessels already covered by registration numbers awarded according to a federally approved numbering system of another state or by the United States Coast Guard in a state without a federally approved numbering system, provided that the vessels are not operated in Florida waters more than 90 consecutive days.

TRANSFER OF TITLED OWNERSHIP

If the titled ownership of an undocumented vessel is transferred from one individual to another, an application for transfer of ownership must be filed with the county tax collector within 30 days along with a fee of \$5.25. The purchaser or transferee shall be charged an additional \$10 fee if the title transfer application is not properly filed within this 30 day period. In making application for such transfer, the new owner shall surrender to the county tax collector the last title document issued for said vessel, properly executed. In addition, the new owner must remit \$1 for each lien to be recorded plus applicable sales tax on the total purchase price or proof of sales tax payment. For specific instructions regarding the transfer of ownership based on probate, contractual default or prior federal documentation, contact your [county tax collector office](#).

HOMEMADE VESSEL TITLE APPLICATIONS



An initial application for the title and registration of a homemade vessel must be filed by the vessel owner with the county tax collector office. In making application for an initial Florida title, the owner of a homemade vessel less than 16 feet in length shall submit to the county tax collector [Form HSMV 82040](#), along with [Form HSMV 87002](#) and a \$5.25 titling fee. Upon receipt of the application, the Department may elect to conduct a visual inspection of the vessel to insure that it meets the legal definition of a *homemade vessel*. The owner of a homemade vessel 16 feet or more in length shall be required to contact the nearest district office of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to arrange for a physical inspection of the vessel. At the time of inspection, the owner of the homemade vessel shall be required to submit an executed [Form HSMV 87002](#) or Builder's Certificate to the inspecting officer. Upon satisfactory completion of the inspection, the inspecting officer shall provide the owner of the homemade vessel with an executed Certificate of Inspection, FWC/DLE-126, which must be submitted to the county tax collector along with [Form HSMV 82040](#), [Form HSMV 87002](#) or Builder's Certificate and \$5.25 titling fee. (Note: In addition, a registration fee based on the length of the vessel and any applicable sales tax must be paid.) The website for the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is www.myfwc.com.

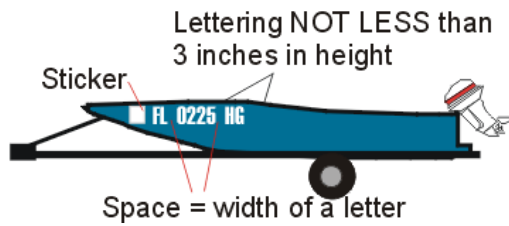
REQUIRED CERTIFICATE OF TITLE



No person shall sell, assign or transfer a vessel titled by the State of Florida without delivering to the purchaser or transferee a valid certificate of title with an assignment on it showing transfer of title to the purchaser or transferee. No person shall purchase or otherwise acquire a vessel required to be titled by the state without obtaining a certificate of title for it in their name. The purchaser or transferee shall file with the county tax collector an application for a title transfer within 30 days after a change in vessel ownership.

NUMBERING

Plain block characters
contrasting with the background



The Florida registration number issued to a vessel is permanent and remains with the vessel as long as it is operated or stored in this state, even though ownership may change. The registration number issued to an undocumented vessel is to be painted or permanently attached to both sides of the bow (forward half) of the vessel and must be in block letters and numerals at least 3 inches high. The registration number must read from left to right, must contrast in color with the hull and be maintained in a legible condition. The prefix and suffix must be separated from the numerals by a hyphen or space equal to the width of the digits, i.e., FL 0001 AB.

DECALS



A decal signifying the year during which the registration certificate is valid will be issued with each registration certificate. The decal must be displayed on the port (left) side of the vessel. It may be placed immediately before or after the registration number. A decal issued to a federally documented vessel may be affixed to a window or windshield on the port side. Any decal for a previous year's registration must be removed from the vessel.

HULL IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

Example: **ACBF0930A686**

ACB	F0930	A6	86
Manufacturer's ID Code	Production or Serial #	Month, Year of Production	Model Year

ACBF0930A686

Key to Month of Production
 A=January
 B=February
 C=March
 D=April
 E=May
 F=June
 G=July
 H=August
 I=September
 J=October
 K=November
 L=December

No person shall operate on the waters of this state a vessel for which the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has issued a certificate of title or which is required by law to be registered, unless the vessel displays the assigned hull identification number required by the United States Coast Guard for manufactured vessels or by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles for homemade vessels or other vessels for which a hull identification number is not required by the United States Coast Guard. The hull identification number must be carved, burned, stamped, embossed, or otherwise permanently affixed to the outboard side of the transom or, if there is no transom, to the outermost starboard side at the end of the hull that bears the rudder or other steering mechanism, above the waterline of the vessel in such a way that alteration, removal or replacement would be obvious and evident. The characters of the hull identification number must be of no less than 12 in number and no less than ¼ inch in height. Vessels for which the manufacturer has provided no hull identification number and homemade vessels constructed or assembled by the owner shall be assigned a hull identification number by the Department of Highway and Motor Vehicles. Any questions regarding the hull identification number on a vessel should be directed to the nearest Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Office or the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Bureau of Titles and Registrations, 2900 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 or (850) 617-2000.

REGISTRATION PERIOD

For vessels owned by individuals, the registration period begins the first day of the birth month of the owner and ends the last day of the month immediately preceding the owner's birth month in the succeeding year. If the vessel is registered in the name of more than one person, the birth month of the person whose name first appears on the registration shall be used to determine the registration period. For a vessel subject to this registration period, the renewal period of the 30 day period ending at midnight on the vessel owner's date of birth.

For vessels owned by companies, corporations, governmental entities, and registrations issued to dealers and manufacturers, the registration period begins July 1 and ends June 30. The renewal period is the 30 day period beginning June 1. Vessel owners have the option of renewing vessel registrations for either one-year or two-year periods.

CLASSIFICATION OF VESSELS

Any vessel that is required to be registered and is *not* operated for commercial purposes shall be classified and registered as a recreational vessel. Vessels that meet the definition of commercial vessel as provided on page 2 of this brochure must be registered as commercial.

CHANGE OF CLASSIFICATION

If the classification of a vessel changes from recreational to commercial, or from commercial to recreational, and the vessel has a current registration, the owner must forward a completed [Form HSMV 87015](#) and the certificate of registration along with applicable service fees to the county tax collector. Upon receipt of a properly documented request, the county will issue a replacement registration which depicts the new classification of the vessel. If a non-exempted vessel owned by a non-resident or alien changes from recreational to commercial then an additional \$50 commercial vessel fee is required.

ANNUAL FEES TO REGISTER VESSELS (RECREATIONAL OR COMMERCIAL)

Class Type	Type of Vessel	Fees
A-1	All vessels less than 12 feet in length, and motorized canoes	\$12.25
A-2	12 feet or more and less than 16 feet in length	\$23.00
1	16 feet or more and less than 26 feet in length	\$35.50
2	26 feet or more and less than 40 feet in length	\$85.00
3	40 feet or more and less than 65 feet in length	\$134.50
4	65 feet or more and less than 110 feet in length	\$159.50
5	110 feet or more in length	\$196.50
Dealer Classification		\$32.25
The above fee includes a \$2.25 service fees; \$.50 FRVIS fee and \$3 Decal on Demand fee.		

NOTE: Some counties have elected to impose an additional county registration fee. Therefore, if remitting money by mail, you should contact the tax collector office in which you will be registering your vessel for the exact fee amount.

COMMERCIAL FEES

An additional \$50 commercial vessel fee is required of all non-residents or aliens unless specifically exempted by statute. A Saltwater Products License is required of all individuals who possess over the recreational bag limit and/or sell, and/or harvest with certain gear in Florida. The minimum cost of a license is \$50 for residents, \$200 for non-residents and \$300 for aliens. For more information visit www.marinefisheries.org.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR INTEREST

The destruction or abandonment of a registered vessel must be reported by the vessel owner to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles within 30 days. The vessel owner must also notify the Department within 30 days of any transfer of interest in a vessel. The owner of a registered vessel who takes up residence at an address differing from that shown on his registration certificate must advise the Department or county tax collector office of the new address within 30 days.

OUT-OF-STATE RECIPROcity

Florida recognizes valid registration certificates and numbers issued to visiting vessel owners by other states for a period of 90 days. An owner who intends to use his vessel in Florida longer than 90 days must register it with a county tax collector. However, he may retain the out-of-state registration number if he plans to return to his home state within a reasonable period of time. The out-of-state vessel owner who plans to remain permanently in Florida must advise the county tax collector. They will receive a Florida registration number to replace those issued by the state of former residence. The out-of-state registration and certificate of title, if issued, must be surrendered to the tax collector. Out-of-state registration, certificates, and numbers for vessels owned by military personnel on active duty in Florida are valid in Florida until the expiration date, after which the vessels must be registered in the State of Florida.

DUPLICATE CERTIFICATES



If a valid Florida certificate of registration is lost, destroyed or mutilated, a duplicate can be obtained from the county tax collector by submitting [Form HSMV 87015](#). If a certificate of title is lost, destroyed or mutilated, the titled owner can obtain a duplicate by submitting a completed [Form HSMV 82101](#) and \$6 fee to the county tax collector. For those counties issuing expedited duplicates and the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles offices, the fee is \$11.

TIPS FOR FLORIDA BOATERS



Want to keep your day on the water fun and enjoyable? Most boating accidents happen because someone gets careless, often because their attention is not on operating the boat safely. All it takes is a split second of inattention for a pleasant day to turn into a tragedy. Practice these simple tips to keep you and your passengers safe.

1. Always stay alert for danger by scanning in all directions.
2. Develop a “life jacket habit.” Staying on top of the water is critical, and there is rarely time to put a life jacket on should tragedy strike.
3. Always wear your kill switch lanyard. Don’t take the risk of getting thrown from your boat and cut by the propeller.
4. While boating is both fun and relaxing – alcohol and boating don’t mix. With all the stressors on the water (sun, heat, vibration, noise) the last thing an operator needs is alcohol to slow their reflexes.
5. Make sure your passengers can operate your boat. In the unlikely event that something happens to you, you may need someone to get you and boat back quickly.

More information on Florida boating laws, boating safety, boating under the influence, boating accidents, personal watercraft laws, and boating citations, the Florida Boating Safety Education Program can be found at www.myfwc.com.

IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT



In the case of collision, accident, or other casualty involving a vessel in or upon or entering into or exiting from the water, including capsizing, collision with another vessel or object, sinking, personal injury requiring medical treatment beyond immediate first aid, death, disappearance of any person from on board under circumstances which indicate the possibility of death or injury, or damage to any vessel or other property in an apparent aggregate amount of at least \$2,000, the operator shall without delay, by the quickest means available give notice of the accident to one of the following agencies: the Division of Law Enforcement of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; the sheriff of the county within which the accident occurred; or the police chief of the municipality within which the accident occurred, if applicable.

Contact Us:



Florida Department of Highway Safety
and Motor Vehicles
Division of Motor Vehicles
Bureau of Titles and Registrations
2900 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Website: www.flhsmv.gov



Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission
Boating & Waterways Section
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Website: www.myfwc.com/boating



OUR MISSION

Providing Highway Safety and Security Through Excellence in
Service, Education, and Enforcement.

OUR VISION

A Safer Florida!

OUR VALUES

We Believe in:

Service by exceeding expectations;
Integrity by upholding the highest ethical standards;
Courtesy by treating everyone with dignity and respect;
Professionalism by inspiring confidence and trust;
Innovation by fostering creativity, and

EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO!

Visit the DHSMV website at:
www.flhsmv.gov
DHSMV Customer Service Center
(850) 617-2000