



Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
John R. Griffin, Secretary
Eric Schwaab, Deputy Secretary

August 25, 2009

Mr. Todd Johnson, Chairman
MSFA Watercraft Committee Chairman

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for raising the issue of compliance regarding boating regulations governing display of registration, possession of registration and possession of boater safety certificate while operating fire/rescue vessels.

Your request for information was forwarded to Colonel George F. Johnson, IV, Superintendent for the Maryland Natural Resources Police for research and follow-up. As a result of the research I am pleased to report the following:

Natural Resources Laws, NR § 8-712. Numbering vessels; owner's certificate of number.

(a) *Numbering required; exceptions.* – (1) Any vessel equipped with propulsion machinery of any type on the waters of the State shall be numbered for identification in accordance with this subtitle and any regulation pursuant to it. This provision does not apply to the following vessels:

(iv) A vessel used for public service and owned by the United States government, another state, or any political subdivision

Natural Resources Laws, NR § 8-712.2. Boating safety education

(a) *When required; certificate required* – (1) Except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (3) and (4) of this subsection, on or after July 1, 1988 a person born on or after July 1, 1972 may not operate on the waters of the State a vessel for pleasure that is required to be numbered in accordance with this subtitle or a vessel for pleasure that is required to be numbered in accordance with the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 without first obtaining certificate of boating safety education.



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According to the aforementioned laws that were gleaned from the Natural Resources Law Book, numbering for fire and rescue vessels are exempt. Therefore, since the numbering of fire and rescue vessels is exempt, it appears that the same vessels may be operated without first obtaining a certificate of boating safety education. However, for liability reasons, it is highly encouraged and recommended that each operator receive a certificate of boating safety education prior to operating a vessel.

Thank you for the inquiry and please do not hesitate to call Lieutenant Colonel Alphonso W. Hawkins at 410-260-8887 if you have further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Colonel George F. Johnson, IV
Superintendent
Maryland Natural Resources Police