

State of Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles Standard Operating Procedures	SOP No. B-1	Page No. 1 of 3
	Effective June 4, 2009	
Subject: INTRODUCTION TO BOAT REGISTRATION	Supersedes B-1	Dated 12/12/06
	Approved	
Statute: AS 05.25.055	Regulation: 2 AAC 70.005 - 230	Form No.

On January 1, 2001, the Division of Motor Vehicles took over the boat registration program from the US Coast Guard. HB 108, passed in the 2000 legislative session, authorized this registration program and a comprehensive boating safety program. Many state agencies are involved in the boating safety program. Division of Parks is the lead agency for the boating safety program and for mandatory boat safety equipment. DMV is responsible for the registration of boats. The Division of Parks and the Department of Public Safety jointly enforce boat registration and boat safety laws. The revenue from boat registration and from taxes on boat fuel fund the statewide boating safety program administered by the Division of Parks.

Prior to January 1, 2001, the Coast Guard registered powered boats that were used on navigable waterways of the state. These registrations were valid for three years and registrations issued by the Coast Guard were valid until the expiration date. DMV converted the Coast Guard registration records into the ALVIN database when the program began. When the Coast Guard issued registrations expired, boat owners were required to renew the registrations with DMV.

The state registration program is similar to the Coast Guard registration program but there are also some significant differences. The Coast Guard registered only powered boats used on navigable waterways. The state law requires all powered boats used on any water of the state to be registered. This includes all rivers, streams, and lakes, regardless of size, and all salt water within 3 miles of land. The DMV registrations are valid for three years and will expire at the end of the month in which the boat is first registered. The registration fees (See B-43 for fees.) are for a three-year period. Non-powered boats may be registered, but there is no requirement for them to be registered with the exception of Sport Fishing Guides. The fees for registration and the fees for transfer of ownership are the same so a new three-year registration period will begin each time ownership changes.

Only boats that are principally used in Alaska can be registered by DMV. Alaska residents such as military members or college students that live outside of the state cannot register their boats in Alaska. They must register them in the state where they are currently living or using the boat. This is required by federal law and there is no exemption for any group. This is an important point since it is very different from vehicle law and because registration fees in many states are higher than in Alaska.

There is a requirement for point-of-sale registration for any boat sold by a dealer, when required to be registered under the law. Under this law a dealer is defined as a business or individual who buys, sells, trades, exchanges, or demonstrates three or more boats in a year. The dealer must have the customer complete an application and pay the registration fee before the boat can leave the dealer's premises. The application and the fees must be submitted to DMV within 30 days. Dealers may submit the work to a local DMV office for processing or to the Contract Services Unit in Anchorage. See Appendix A for the current address.

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Boat registration can be done at all DMV offices and motor vehicle agents. Registration renewals may be done at offices, by mail, or by Internet (WEB). This will be much the same as the transactions for vehicles. The \$10.00 additional registration fee charged for vehicles renewed at a State DMV office is NOT applicable to boat registrations.

The state program is a registration-only program. DMV will not issue titles for boats nor will DMV record liens on boats. An owner with a title from another state may retain that title. Persons wishing to record a lien would normally do it as a Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) filing through the recorder's office.

There are similarities between vehicle or snowmachine registration programs and the boat registration program but there are some new terms. The following is a list of some of the common terms unique to the boat registration program:

BOAT NUMBER: This is the "license plate" for a boat. For boats registered in Alaska the first two letters of the boat number are always AK followed by a letter/number combination. The U.S. Coast Guard issued boat numbers consisted of 4 numerals followed by 1 letter. An example of the complete boat number would be **AK 1234 R**. When Alaska DMV took over the program, the first assigned number was **AK 1000 AA**. These numbers are sequentially assigned by the computer. These numbers are assigned to the boat when it is registered but DMV does not issue any decal or plate with this number. It is the responsibility of the owner to paint the numbers on the boat or use stick-on numbers/letters. This number always remains with the boat and may not be transferred to another boat. The only exceptions are dealer numbers which are issued to a dealership and may be used on any boat owned by the dealer for demonstration purposes prior to sale. There are no special request or "vanity" numbers.

Numbers will be issued to all boats that are registered in Alaska, but only powered boats are required to display the number. The size and spacing of the letters/numbers in the boat number are prescribed by regulation. Owners of non-powered boats are not required to display the number but may do so at the owner's option.

CERTIFICATE OF NUMBER: This document is the same as the registration document for a vehicle. The Certificate of Number must be carried aboard the boat whenever it is operated. The document contains the assigned Boat Number, a description of the boat, the registration expiration date, and the name and address of the owner.

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REGISTRATION VALIDATION STICKER: This is the same as the “year tab” for a vehicle license plate. Powered boats will be issued a pair of validation stickers which must be affixed next to the Boat Number on both sides of the forward half of the boat. Non-powered boats are issued a single validation sticker which may be displayed in a visible location on the top or side of the forward half of the boat. The validation sticker is approximately 3 inches square. There are different colors for each year and all states use the same color sequence. The 2001 stickers were blue followed by international orange in 2002, green in 2003 and red in 2004. The color sequence began over again with blue in 2005.

HULL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (HIN): This is the same as the VIN for a vehicle. It is the serial number or unique identifier for a boat. All boats are required to have a HIN. The HIN is usually placed on the outside, right side of the transom of the boat by the manufacturer. If the boat does not have a HIN or if the HIN is lost or defaced, DMV may assign a HIN.

DOCUMENTED BOAT: A documented boat is usually a larger, commercial use boat that has ownership or documentation papers issued by the Coast Guard. Documented boats cannot be registered. By Coast Guard regulations, any commercial use boat over five (5) tons must be documented. Any smaller commercial use boat and any non-commercial use boat may be documented but it is not required. Many owners of larger, more expensive non-commercial use boats elect to document the boat because this procedure gives ownership and lien recording that is not available in the state registration program.

Cross Reference

Appendix A DMV Addresses