

TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT CHAPTER 2: STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES	
Part 1: Response Guidelines Subject: Watercraft Page 1 of 3 Effective Date: 01-31-05	Section: 2-1-34 Revised Date:

34.01 Purpose. To provide a uniform guideline for the safe operation of boats and other watercraft used by Township Fire Department, Inc.

34.02 Goal. These guidelines will be in effect for all members of Township Fire Department, Inc.

34.03 Definitions.

- A) Boat. A small vessel used for travel on water where the occupant(s) ride inside the vessel.
- B) Bow. The forward part of a boat.
- C) Fortuna. A durable, inflatable, rapid deployment craft that may be used for ice rescue, swift water rescue, dive rescue operations, mixed water conditions, dam rescues, and may be towed by a water craft, ATV or snowmobile.
- D) Hard Bottom Boat. A boat that is constructed of wood or metal.
- E) Inflatable. A boat constructed of flexible material that receives its rigidity, stability, and flotation from air.
- F) Jet Outboard Motor. Outboard motor that propels the watercraft by a high-pressure jet of water. This type of outboard motor contains an internal impeller and has no external moving parts.
- G) Outboard Motor. A motor affixed to the stern of a boat that propels the boat. Size of the unit is rated in number of horsepower (hp). Traditional outboard motors employ the use of a spinning propeller (prop) at the bottom of the motor to provide thrust.
- H) Personal Watercraft. Watercraft that is less than sixteen feet long, propelled by machinery powering a water jet pump and designed to be operated by a person who sits, stands, or kneels on rather than sitting or standing inside the craft.

I) Stern. The aft (hindmost) part of a boat.

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J) Watercraft. Any vessel used for travel on the water.

34.04 General Safety Rules.

- A) Township Fire Department, Inc. owns several types of boats, outboard motors, and rescue rafts. Each device has capabilities that are unique from the others. It is imperative that the proper type of watercraft is chosen for a given situation.
- B) Each watercraft shall be inspected prior to use. This inspection shall include a visual check for physical defects and mechanical checks prior to leaving shore.
- C) Only those personnel who have successfully completed Township Fire Department's boat handling course may operate any watercraft during a rescue or recovery operation. Anyone who has completed Township Fire Department's "Introduction To Water Rescue", operations level, meets this requirement.
- D) The minimum personal protective equipment required for anyone operating or riding in any watercraft is a "swiftwater" personal flotation device equipped with a cutting device and whistle. When operating in moving water, a water rescue helmet shall be worn. Hypothermia protection may be required when air and water temperatures warrant. Under no circumstances shall fire fighting turnout gear be substituted as PPE while near or on the water.
- E) A minimum of two trained Township Fire Department personnel shall be present in each watercraft when utilized. The boat operator is responsible for the boat and the operation of the outboard motor. The rescuer (second person) shall be responsible for aiding in navigation, maintaining control of the boat should the outboard fail, and rescue operations from the boat.
- F) Each watercraft has a specific maximum weight and maximum horsepower capacity that shall never be exceeded. Check the capacity plate of the watercraft you intend to use and never exceed it.
- G) Fueling the watercraft shall be done with the motor turned off and the fuel tank removed from the watercraft. If spillage to the fuel tank does occur, clean any spilled from the tank prior to placing the fuel tank into the watercraft.

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- H) Outboard motors shall be turned off when operating near victims or other rescuers in the water. This does not apply to jet outboard motors where there is no chance of injury from an exposed propeller.
- I) Any watercraft used during the hours of darkness shall be equipped with a minimum of a red/green bow light and a white stern light that is visible 360 degrees.
- J) All watercraft shall be operated at a reasonable speed at all times. Water conditions, light, operator knowledge of the body of water and operator experience will determine how fast a watercraft can be safely operated.
- K) All watercraft owned by Township Fire Department, Inc. is intended for official use by trained personnel or by personnel in training under the supervision of trained personnel. Personal use of TFD watercraft is prohibited.