

DISPLAY OF VESSEL REGISTRATION NUMBERS AND DOCUMENTED VESSEL NAME AND HAILING PORT

EITHER STATE REGISTRATION OR FEDERAL DOCUMENTATION

Vessels may ONLY be identified as either a State Registered Vessel or a Federally Documented Vessel - BUT NOT BOTH. When a vessel becomes Federally Documented, the State Registration Numbers and Letters must be removed. However the State Validation Sticker showing proof of paying sales tax may still be displayed on the vessel in accordance with the individual state's regulations.

STATE REGISTERED VESSELS -- The Requirements Are:

Use of Block Style letters and numbers only;

Letters & numbers must be at least Three (3) inches in height;

Letters & numbers must be of Contrasting Color (not outlined, shadowed or rounded); if the background is multicolored or patterned, a block out area of a single color may be required to facilitate readability.

The Letters and numbers must be separated by the width of one letter or number - not including the number one (1) or the capital letter (I). Use either a blank space or a hyphen and they must be read from left to right. The validation sticker must be visible and placed within six inches of the registration numbers. Placement either in front of or behind the numbers is determined by state regulation.

The Registration Numbers, Letters and Sticker must be PERMANENTLY ATTACHED and on the Forward Half of the Vessel. Adhering registration numbers and stickers on glass or plastic windows or using placards (signboards) are NOT considered Permanent and can no longer be used unless they are bolted or screwed in place on the hull or superstructure (including on dinghys). Signboards cannot be attached to railings. Inflatable boat manufacturers should be contacted for letters and numbers made of the same material / adhesive as the boat to attain permanency. Validation stickers issued by states can be adhered to metal or plastic plates and mounted on grab straps with non-reversible wire ties, but must be within 6 inches of the registration number and visible to law enforcement officers. Contact your state for guidance and acceptability.

FEDERALLY DOCUMENTED VESSELS -- The Requirements Are:

The Name of Vessel and Hailing Port, to include City and State, must be located TOGETHER on some clearly visible exterior part of the hull. The letters and numbers can be made by the use of any means and materials which result in durable markings. They must be made in clearly legible letters of the Latin alphabet or Arabic or Roman numbers, all of which are NOT LESS THAN FOUR (4) INCHES IN HEIGHT (all characters). This can be either on the Transom or on either side of the vessel. There is no requirement for Block letters or any other restrictions to type or font; or color on Documented Vessels. Abbreviations of both the place (city) and state are acceptable as long as they are recognized by the U.S. Post Office (i.e. NY, NY -- Phila., PA -- Wilm., DE -- Pgh., PA -- Balt., MD -- Jax. Bch., FL). This is a Federal issue and is not open to enforcement or interpretation by the state.

When dinghys are stored on the swim platform or transom causing the Vessel's name and hailing port to be obscured from view, there is no Federal requirement to place the name and hailing port elsewhere. That is a Law Enforcement issue only. However, the requirement to be CLEARLY VISIBLE may necessitate duplicating the name and hailing port on either side of the hull. Stenciling on the bottom of the dinghy is not considered a permanent marking.

Above reviewed by the United States Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety on: 12/16/04