

Saving money when boating - Capt Geoff

If you want to save money, here's a tip. Make sure you have all your safety gear aboard and have your PCOC or other proof of competency (if boat has a motor) and Vessel Licence or Registration (if required) with you. If you don't, and you are inspected, under the Contraventions Act you can be ticketed for each shortfall. And the amounts are not small: \$250 for failure to carry required Proof of Competency, \$200 for operating without appropriate sized PFD (or lifejacket), plus \$100 for each additional missing PFD, etc. The list of offences where hefty fines can be imposed is quite long.

When seeking advice about what to write for these articles, one thing I heard fairly consistently was to stay away from talking about regulations. However in keeping with the saving money theme, there are a number of other relatively recent changes that people need to be aware of, as they could cost you a lot of money.

Although not really recent, one of the biggest changes involves “commercial” versus “pleasure” use. The equipment and certification requirements for commercial are more involved than for pleasure. Even if the vessel is only used for commercial part time, you need to meet those standards for that period. I've put some links to the official definitions of the differences on our web site's "On the Water" page. If you are still not sure, you need to talk to Transport Canada Marine Safety. I've included links for contacting them also.

A smaller, more recent change, is that an inflatable PFD must be worn to be counted as an approved PFD in an open boat (or while on deck or in the cockpit of a closed vessel), and the wearer must be at least 16 – remember those fines? Inflatables are not approved for personal watercraft or white-water paddling.

Some other regulations are not new, but new equipment requires a new endorsement. With the new DSC (Digital Selective Calling) radios, procedures have changed, and you need the DSC part of the ROC (Radio Operator's Certificate) if you have a DSC radio. How do you tell if you have a DSC radio? You will normally see a red button on the front of the radio marked “Distress”. If your DSC radio is hooked up to a GPS, when you hold that button down, a digital distress message with your exact position is transmitted. For day to day use, DSC works somewhat like a phone, allowing you to digitally call another DSC radio using their MMSI number.

For some more links to more information on these subjects, as well as more info on boating safety in general, please visit our website at <http://www.riplerocksquadron.com/>