

SIGNAGE GUIDE

FOR VESSEL OPERATION RESTRICTION REGULATIONS



www.tc.gc.ca/boatingsafety



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Canada

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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre «Guide des administrations locales – Règlement sur les restrictions visant l'utilisation des bâtiments».

Catalogue No.: T29-75/2010E-PDF

ISBN: 978-1-100-16061-0

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INTRODUCTION

The *Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations (VORR)*, established under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001 (CSA, 2001)* allow any level of government (federal, provincial, territorial and municipal) to ask the federal government to restrict the use of recreational and commercial boats on all bodies of water in Canada. These restrictions may help achieve local safety, environmental or public interest goals. For example, you may ask for *VORR* restrictions to:

- Prohibit all boats
- Limit engine power or type of propulsion
- Set speed limits
- Restrict towing activities on any sporting or recreational equipment, including wake surfing
- Prohibit a sporting, recreational or public event or activity

Restrictions can apply at all times or can be specific to certain times of the day, week, month or year. They can also target specific types of boats on a waterway or a portion of it.

On waterways with a restriction, installing signs or buoys will help boaters know what the restriction is and what they must do. There are no rules for the number of signs or buoys you must install or where you should place them. However, well-placed signs and buoys will increase the chance that the restriction will produce the results you want and make it easier to enforce.

Since you, as the Local Authority, have been granted the right to restrict boating on one or more water bodies in your area, you are responsible for:

- Producing;
- Installing; and
- Maintaining restriction signs and / or buoys. [*VORR*, s. 6(2)(a)]

This guide will help you meet your responsibilities and comply with the regulations.

REMEMBER

No one is allowed to place a sign or buoy that restricts any vessel from operating in Canadian waters without the Minister's permission. [*VORR*, s. 5(a)]

Vessel Operating Restriction Regulations are the last resort for solving problems.

Involved stakeholders working together can often find more timely, effective and affordable solutions. If, however, parties cannot agree on an alternate solution, the *VORR* can be an efficient way to resolve waterway conflicts. *Please refer to the Local Authorities' Guide to Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations* for more information on how to create a *VORR*.

You can find this guide at: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-menu-1362.htm>.

CREATING ARTWORK FOR SIGNS AND BUOYS

This section will help you design your signs and buoys to Transport Canada's requirements. Your regional Transport Canada office can also give you advice on these technical specifications.

Make sure your *VORR* signs and buoys meet these legal requirements. If they don't, the Minister may:

- Remove any private buoy or sign that does not comply with the regulations;
- Order you to modify it to meet current standards; and
- Fine you for not meeting the requirements under *VORR*, s.6 (2).

To learn more about your responsibilities when placing signs and buoys, please go to:

- The *Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations*
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-2008-120/>
- The *Private Buoy Regulations (PBR)*
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-99-335/>

Transport Canada's Navigation Protective Program (NPP) staff can provide information to anyone looking to place a private buoy or design a navigation system for a waterway. You can find a list of NPP regional offices and contact information at <https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs-631.html>



No Wake Signs

Everything that moves through the water will cause a wake. Canada does not recognize "no wake" signs because they are **not enforceable**. If boat wakes are a concern, consider placing "watch your wake" or "low wake" signs on shore.

















Also, the sign to the left does not meet *VORR* legal requirements.

STEP 1 – DETERMINE WHAT RESTRICTIONS APPLY

As a Local Authority that has received the right to restrict boating on one or more waterways in your area, **you** are responsible for making people aware of the restrictions. This isn't hard, as each type of restriction has a specific symbol and format you must use on all signs and buoys.

Table 1 (page 6) will help you determine which symbols apply to your restriction(s).

TABLE 1 – VORR SCHEDULE SPECIFIC SYMBOLS

VORR Schedule	Description	Symbol	Information Graphics	Example
SCHEDULE 1 VORR, s. 8(1)(a)	Waters on which all vessels are prohibited		NONE	
SCHEDULE 2 VORR, s. 9(1)(a)(b)	Waters on which motorized vessels (including power-driven vessels and electric powered vessels) are prohibited			
SCHEDULE 3 VORR, s. 9(1)(a)(c)	Waters on which power-driven vessels (vessels propelled by an internal combustion engine or a steam engine) are prohibited			
SCHEDULE 4 VORR, s. 8(1)(b)] VORR, s. 9(1)(d]	Waters in public parks and controlled access bodies of water on which motorized vessels (including power-driven vessels and electric powered vessels) are subject to an engine power limit.		1234 5678 90 MAX kW	
SCHEDULE 6 VORR, s. 8(1)(b) VORR, s. 9(1)(e]	Waters on Which Power-driven Vessels and Vessels Driven by Electrical Propulsion Are Subject to a Speed Limit		1234 5678 90 MAX km/h	
SCHEDULE 7 VORR, s. 9(1)(a)(f)	Waters in which towing a person on any sporting or recreational equipment, or allowing a person to wake surf, is prohibited except during the permitted hours.		SKI	
SCHEDULE 8 VORR, s. 9(1)(a)(f) VORR, s. 11	Waters in which a sporting, recreational or public event or activity is prohibited.		REGATTA	

NOTE:

Schedule 5 was repealed in 2016 and all existing restrictions in that Schedule are now in Schedule 6.



If two or more restrictions apply, use the elongated circle symbol to display the appropriate symbols. In the example to the left, this waterway has the following restrictions:

- Schedule 7 - no recreational towing activities allowed; and
- Schedule 6 - a 10 km / h speed limit.

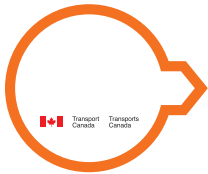
STEP 2 – DETERMINE IF CONDITIONS APPLY

In some cases a restriction may have conditions, such as:

- Specified times;
- Certain days / months; or
- Specific geographic areas.

If no additional conditions apply to your restriction, please go to STEP 3.

If the boating restriction is subject to conditions, there are two types of graphics you may use, depending on the situation:

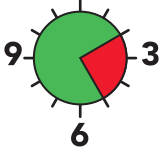





The first shape is a directional disc with an arrow pointing in the direction where the restriction applies. The directional disc will also have the symbol that relates to the restriction within its border. Please refer to Table 1 for more information on symbols. [VORR, s. 8(2)]



The second shape is a semi-circle with an international orange outline, over a black line above a rectangle with a green border. The half circle will show a restriction symbol from Table 1, while the rectangle will describe the condition(s) in Table 2. [VORR, s. 8(1)(d)]

TABLE 2 – VORR CONDITION INFORMATION

<p>CERTAIN TIMES OF THE DAY [VORR s. 9(2)(a)]</p> <p>When a restriction applies to certain hours of the day, those hours must be marked in red on a symbol of a clock.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AM 12 PM</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">In this example, the restriction is in place between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.</p>
<p>CERTAIN DAYS OF THE WEEK [VORR s. 9(2)(b)]</p> <p>When the restriction only applies to certain days of the week. Each day is represented by a bar with seven boxes. Each box is marked with the first letter of the day (<i>English and French</i>). Letters are white. Red squares show when the restriction is in effect and the green squares show when the activity is allowed.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">In this example, the restriction is in place for both Saturday and Sunday.</p>
<p>CERTAIN MONTHS OF THE YEAR [VORR s.9(2)(c)]</p> <p>A Local Authority may wish to restrict boating activities for certain months between April and November. You must represent these types of VORR with a bar with eight boxes. Each box has the first letter of the month in white. Red squares show when the restriction applies. Green squares show when the activity is allowed.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">In this example, there is a restriction in place for April, October and November.</p>
<p>SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHICAL AREA RESTRICTIONS [VORR s.9(3) & (4)]</p> <p>The sections of the black compass coloured in international orange show the direction where the restriction applies.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">In this example, the restriction is to the north of the sign.</p>

Examples of signs for restrictions with conditions



STEP 3 – FOLLOW TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNS

Land and Water-based Signs

Once you have identified all the graphic elements that fit the restriction(s) you want people to follow, it is important to make sure the signs and buoys also follow the format described in the regulations. Please see the *VORR*, Sections 8, 9 and Schedule 9 for more details on these requirements.

You must make sure every *VORR* sign:

- Has the words **Transport Canada** (English) and **Transports Canada** (French) printed in black at the lower edge. This is known as the Transport Canada Signature block. [*VORR* s.8(5)]



- Has an international orange band as a border. The width of the band must be one-twelfth of the width or diameter of the sign. [*VORR* s.8(4)]
- Has any additional information on the restriction you need to share with boaters inside an information rectangle underneath the sign with an international orange band as a border. The width of that band must be one-twelfth of the width or diameter of the sign. [*VORR* s.8(3)]

Size:

Your local sign shop or Public Works Department can provide advice on the size and materials to use so the sign is:

- Easy to see from far away;
- Easy to read from a moving boat;
- Cost-effective
- Able to stand up to the marine environment.

Guidelines to use when calculating sign size:

- Land-based sign should be at least 60 cm in diameter or width.
- Floating signs should have a minimum 30 cm diameter or width.

Height:

When installing signs, remember wind or heavy rain can affect water levels. Make sure signs are clearly visible in all conditions, **you should** install them so:

- The lower edge of a symbol on a sign is at least 40 cm above the surface of the water; and
- For land-based signs, the lower edge of a sign is at least two (2) metres above calm water.

IMPORTANT TIP:







Make sure any signs you install on the shore also comply with local bylaws or regulations in your area.

Colours:

The *VORR* states some of the borders and symbols are specific colours. Please refer to the chart below the appropriate colour match when printing your signs or buoys.

International Orange	Green	Red
RGB: 255, 79, 0 CMYK: 0, 69, 100, 0 Websafe: ff6600 HEX: ff4f00 RAL (closest match): 2008	RGB: 0, 181, 26 CMYK: 70, 0, 90, 0 Websafe: 00cc33 HEX: 00b51a RAL (closest match): 6038	RGB: 204, 44, 36 CMYK: 0, 100, 90, 0 Websafe: cc3333 HEX: cc2c24 RAL (closest match): 3028

Land and Water-Based Signs

Signs should be at least 60 cm in diameter or width	Visible 30 metres from sign travelling 15 km/h max	Visible 60 metres from sign travelling 60 km/h max
SIGN SIZE (MINIMUM)	At least 45 cm in diameter or width "medium-sized" sign	At least 75 cm in diameter or width "large-sized" sign
SYMBOLS	At least 45 cm 	At least 75 cm 
INFORMATION GRAPHICS	At least 20 cm high 	At least 40 cm high 
LETTERING (TABLE 1, COL. 4)	At least 5 cm high Recommend plain, bold font in black	At least 10 cm high Recommend plain, bold font in black
BORDER IN INTERNATIONAL ORANGE	One-twelfth (1/12) the width or diameter of the sign	One-twelfth (1/12) the width or diameter of the sign
INFORMATION RECTANGLE (IF NEEDED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Border in international orange at least one-twelfth (1/12) the width or diameter of the sign; Placed below the VORR signage graphics (ex: Table 1, Col. 5)  <i>Example of how to use an information rectangle</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Border in international orange at least one-twelfth (1/12) the width or diameter of the sign; Placed below the VORR signage graphics (ex: Table 1, Col. 5)  <i>Example of how to use an information rectangle</i>
INSTALLATION HEIGHT - ON LAND	at least two (2) metres above calm water	at least two (2) metres above calm water
INSTALLATION HEIGHT - ON WATER	at least 40 cm above the surface of the water	at least 40 cm above the surface of the water

Requirements for Buoys

You must make sure all buoys have:

- The words Transport Canada (English) and Transports Canada (French) printed in black at the lower edge. This is known as the Transport Canada Signature block. [VORR s. 8(5)]
- An international orange band as a border. The width of that band must be one-twelfth of the width or diameter of the sign. [VORR s. (8)(4)]
- Any additional information on the restriction you need to share with boaters, inside an information rectangle underneath the sign, with an international orange band as a border. The width of that band must be one-twelfth of the width or diameter of the sign. [VORR s. (8)(3)]
- A horizontal band immediately above and immediately below the sign so each band [VORR s. 9(5) (a)(b)(c)]:
 - Is one-twelfth the width or diameter of the buoy;
 - Is coloured international orange; and
 - Extends all around the buoy.

Please refer to *Diagram 1* on the following page for more details.

Each buoy must be:

- Large enough for boaters to see from a distance;
- Easy for boaters to read, understand, and take action in a timely manner; and
- Comply with *Canadian Aids to Navigation* (TP 968) requirements. [PBR, s. 4(1)(c)]

NOTE:

Buoys owned by a federal or provincial department or agency **must** meet the requirements above but are not subject to the *Private Buoy Regulations (PBR)*. The *PBR* applies to all other buoys not covered by this exemption. To determine if your buoy has the exemption, please refer to:

- Government of Canada Departments and Agencies list, or
- The provincial or territorial government website for your area.

If you have questions, please contact your local Transport Canada Navigation Protection Program (NPP) office for more information.

Privately-owned buoys

PBR requires all privately-owned buoys to:

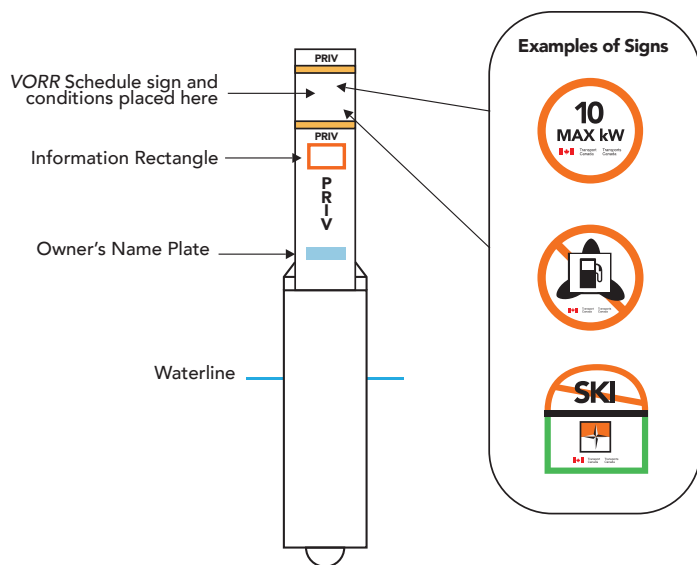
- Show at least 30.5 cm above the waterline and be at least 15.25 cm wide. [PBR, s. 4(1)(a)]
- Be at least 15.25 cm wide. [PBR, s. 4(1)(a)]
- Display “PRIV” in capital letters, on opposite sides of the buoy. These letters must be:
 - As large as practical for the size of buoy;
 - White when the background colour is red, green or black; and
 - Black when the background colour is white or yellow. [PBR, s. 4(1)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)]
- Permanently display the name, address and telephone number of the owner where it is easy to see and read. [PBR, s. 4(1)(d)]

You can find the *Private Buoy Regulations* at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-99-335/> ; or learn more in the *Owners Guide to Private Buoys* <https://www.tc.gc.ca/Publications/en/TP14799/PDF/HR/TP14799E.pdf>

NOTE:

If the buoy has a light, it must remain lit throughout the night and meet *Canadian Aids to Navigation System, 2011* (TP 968) requirements. You can find details at: <http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/aids/Canadian-Aids-To-Navigation-2011>.

Diagram 1 – Example Buoy





BUOYS

Requirements in the VORR	Minimum size visible from 30 m and travelling 15 km/h	Minimum size visible from 60 m away and travelling at 60 km/h max
INTERNATIONAL ORANGE BANDS [VORR, s. 9(5)(a)(b)(c)]	Two bands that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are one-twelfth (1/12) the width or diameter of the buoy. These bands should be at least 40 mm wide. • Are international orange; and • Extend around the entire buoy. Note: The bottom band should be at least 40 cm above the waterline.	
SYMBOLS (MINIMUM) [VORR, s. 8(1)(2) and 9(1)(2)(3)(4)]	At least 45 cm 	At least 75 cm

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Requirements in the <i>VORR</i>	30 m from sign travelling 15 km/h max	60 m from sign travelling 60 km/h max
GRAPHICS	At least 20 cm high 	At least 40 cm high 
LETTERING (<i>TABLE 1, COL. 4</i>)	At least 5 cm high Recommend plain, bold font in black	At least 10 cm high Recommend plain, bold font in black
INTERNATIONAL ORANGE BORDER [<i>VORR, s. 8(4)</i>]	One twelfth (1/12) the width or diameter of the sign	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION [<i>VORR, s. 8(3)</i>]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place in a rectangle with an international orange border at least one twelfth (1/12) the width or diameter of buoy; Place this information rectangle below the bottom international orange band; 	

Requirements in the Private Buoy Regulations (<i>PBR</i>)	
HEIGHT – TOP OF BUOY TO WATERLINE [<i>PBR, s. 4(1)(a)</i>]	At least 30.50 cm
WIDTH OF BUOY ABOVE WATERLINE [<i>PBR, s. 4(1)(a)</i>]	At least 15.25 cm
“PRIV” MARKINGS [<i>PBR, s. 4(1)(b)</i>]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use black capital letters, either horizontal or vertical; Make letters as large as possible; Place “PRIV” on opposite sides of the buoy in any of the three (3) spots shown in Diagram 1.
OWNER’S CONTACT INFORMATION [<i>PBR, s. 4(1)(d)</i>]	<p>The name plate on all private buoys must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the owner’s current [<i>PBR s. 4(2)</i>]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - name - address - telephone number Display information in a permanent way that is easy to read.

STEP 4 – INSTALL SIGNS AND BUOYS

Placing Signs

No set rules exist when placing signs. You should apply local knowledge of the waterway, study boaters' behaviour, consider the shape and the size of the waterway, and the number of access points.

Consider what kind of boaters use the waterway:

- Are many of the users' day visitors using launching areas?
- Are many boaters just passing through?
- Are most boat operators familiar with the area?
- Are they local cottagers or residents?

TIPS

- Access points to the waterway are natural places for signs, and can include any public launching area. These signs should be clearly visible and face into shore.
- If the restricted waterway is a river or channel, post signs at all entry points to the restricted area.
- If the restriction's purpose is to protect swimmers, post signs on buoys at the edges of the restricted area.
- Choose spots that will not become overgrown with plants and trees throughout the season, so they are easy to see. This will also reduce maintenance costs.
- Work with the local enforcement agency that can also provide advice on sign locations.

If many visitors to the area use the waterway, you may need more signs at boat launches and other entry points. Ask yourself if the official vessel operation restriction signs are enough. Perhaps adding a sign with a map of the lake near boat launches (like a "you are here" map in a shopping mall) that shows the restricted areas and local hazards would be helpful to boat operators.



If most waterway users return season after season, installing just a few signs in high traffic areas and distributing pamphlets which explain the restriction(s) may also work well.

Placing Buoys

If your plan to let boaters know about a restriction involves placing of a buoy, you'll need to make sure to install it following the *Private Buoy Regulations (PBR)* requirements. For example, the buoy:

- Must be built and maintained in a manner and with materials that ensure that it will remain in position. [*PBR*, s. 4 (1)(e)]
- Must have an anchor built, installed and maintained in a way and with materials that will keep it in position. [*PBR*, s. 4(1)(f)]
- Must not interfere with or is likely to interfere with the safe navigation of any vessel; and
- Must not mislead or is not likely to mislead the boaters. [*PBR*, s.3]

Placing buoys on waterways with a nautical chart

If you are placing a buoy on a waterway that has a nautical chart, please contact the Canadian Hydrographical Society (CHS) and let them know the location and type of buoy being placed. This way, CHS can add the buoy to the existing nautical chart and also let boaters know it's location through the "Notice to Mariner" System.

You can find these requirements in the *Private Buoy Regulations* at:
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-99-335.pdf>

STEP 5 – MAINTAINING SIGNS AND BUOYS

As the local authority, you are responsible for all costs associated with sign and buoy:

- Installation
- Maintenance
- Replacement

It is important to check the signs often to make sure they have not been vandalized, hidden by plant growth or changed in any way. You should also check buoys regularly to make sure they have not drifted out of place and are still in good condition.

REMEMBER

Under Section 10 of the *Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations*, it is illegal to:

- Remove an authorized sign unless the Minister has cancelled the authorization;
- Alter, conceal, damage or destroy an authorized sign; or
- Use an authorized sign or sign post as a mooring.

The *Criminal Code*, Section 439(2) states:

"Everyone who willfully alters, removes or conceals a signal, buoy or other seamark that is used for purposes of navigation is guilty of an indictable offence **and liable for imprisonment** for a term not exceeding ten years."

You can be fined if you fail to follow *Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations* and *Private Buoy Regulations* under the *Contraventions Act and Regulations*. In areas where the *Contraventions Act* is not in place, offences will go through the Summary Conviction process. For more details, go to: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-96-313/page-4.html#docCont>

LIABILITY

If an accident involving a private sign or buoy happens, you, as the owner may be held liable for any damage resulting from negligent operation and/or maintenance of signs and buoys. We strongly recommend you:

- Make sure your private aids meet current Canadian regulations.
- Operate and maintain them in the proper manner.
- Purchase liability insurance.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Transport Canada Marine Safety and Security - Regional Offices

ATLANTIC

(Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador)

10 Barter's Hill, 9th floor

P.O. Box 1300

St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 6H8

Tel: 1-709-772-6915

QUEBEC

1550, d'Estimauville Ave.

Quebec City, Quebec G1J 0C8

Tel: 1-418-648-5331

ONTARIO

100 Front Street South

Sarnia, Ontario N7T 2M4

Tel: 1-877-281-8824

PRAIRIE AND NORTHERN

(Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut)

344 Edmonton Street

P.O. Box 8550

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0P6

Tel: 1-888-463-0521

PACIFIC

(British Columbia)

700-800 Burrard Street

Vancouver, BC V6Z 2J8

Tel: 1-604-666-2681

USEFUL LINKS AND REFERENCES

Regulations

VESSEL OPERATION RESTRICTION REGULATIONS

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2008-120/>

LOCAL AUTHORITIES' GUIDE – VESSEL OPERATION RESTRICTION REGULATIONS

http://www.tc.gc.ca/media/documents/marinesafety/LOCAL_AUTHORITIES_GUIDE_-_ENGLISH_-_ACCESSIBLE_PDF.pdf

VESSEL OPERATION RESTRICTION REGULATIONS CHECKLIST

http://www.tc.gc.ca/media/documents/marinesafety/VORR_APPLICATION_CHECKLIST_2014_-_ENGLISH_-_ACCESSIBLE_PDF.pdf

PRIVATE BUOY REGULATIONS

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-99-335/>

Websites and publication resources

CANADIAN AIDS TO NAVIGATION (TP 968)

http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/Aids_To_Navigation_System_2011

CONTRAVENTIONS REGULATIONS

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-96-313/page-4.html#docCont>

OWNER'S GUIDE TO PRIVATE BUOYS (TP 14799E)

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/Publications/en/TP14799/PDF/HR/TP14799E.pdf>

TRANSPORT CANADA MARINE SAFETY AND SECURITY WEBSITE

www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety

TRANSPORT CANADA OFFICE OF BOATING SAFETY WEBSITE

www.tc.gc.ca/boatingsafety

TRANSPORT CANADA NAVIGATION PROTECTION PROGRAM WEBSITE

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs-621.html>

CANADA GAZETTE

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