



SIGNAGE REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

VESSEL OPERATION RESTRICTION REGULATIONS



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SIGNAGE REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

VESSEL OPERATION RESTRICTION REGULATIONS

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Approval



Director, Office of Boating Safety
Marine Safety and Security

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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, or for the purpose of allowing a person to wake surf; and
- 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.

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 restriction.

You can find this guide at: [https://tc.canada.ca/sites/default/files/migrated/local_authorities__guide__english__accessible_pdf.pdf](https://tc.canada.ca/sites/default/files/migrated/local_authorities_guide__english__accessible_pdf.pdf)

On waterways with a restriction, installing signs (land or buoys) will help boaters know what the restriction is and what they must do. There are no rules for the number of signs (land or buoys) you must install or where you should place them. However, well-placed signs (land or 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 (land or buoys). [*VORR*, s. 6(2)(a)]

This guide, which sets out legal requirements, will help you meet your responsibilities and comply with the regulations.

REMEMBER

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

CREATING ARTWORK FOR SIGNS – REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will help you design your signs (land or buoys) to Transport Canada’s requirements. Your regional Transport Canada office can also give you advice on these technical specifications.

Make sure your signs meet all regulatory requirements. If they don’t, you can be required to:

- Remove any sign that does not comply;
- Modify it to meet the requirements; and
- Pay a fine for not meeting the requirements set out in this guide.

To learn more about your responsibilities when placing signs (land or 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://tc.canada.ca/en/marine/contact-navigation-protection-program-receiver-wreck>



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. For all your signs (land or buoys), you must use the symbol corresponding to your type of restriction found in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 – Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations SCHEDULES SPECIFIC SYMBOLS

| VORR Schedule | Description | Symbol | Information Graphics | Example |
|---------------|--|--------|--|---------|
| SCHEDULE 1 | Waters on which all vessels are prohibited | | NONE | |
| SCHEDULE 2 | Waters on which power-driven vessels and vessels driven by electrical propulsion are prohibited | | | |
| SCHEDULE 3 | Waters on which power-driven vessels and vessels driven by electrical propulsion that have an aggregate maximum power greater than 7.5 kw are prohibited | | 12345 67890 MAX kW | |
| SCHEDULE 4 | Waters on which power-driven vessels and vessels driven by electrical propulsion are subject to an engine power limit | | 1234 5678 90 MAX kW | |
| SCHEDULE 6 | 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 | Waters in which towing a person on any sporting or recreational equipment is prohibited except during the permitted hours | | SKI | |
| SCHEDULE 7.1 | Waters in which allowing a person to wake surf is prohibited except during the permitted hours | | | |
| SCHEDULE 8 | Waters in which a sporting, recreational or public event or activity is prohibited | | REGATTA | |



If two or more restrictions apply, you must 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.

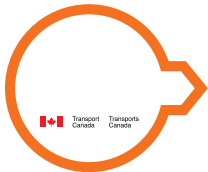
STEP 2 – DETERMINE IF CONDITIONS APPLY

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

- Specified times;
- Certain days or 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, you must use one of the following graphics, as appropriate:

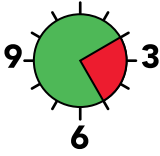





The first shape is a directional disc with an arrow pointing in the direction where the restriction applies. The directional disc must also have the symbol that relates to the restriction within its border. Please refer to Table 1 above for more information on symbols.



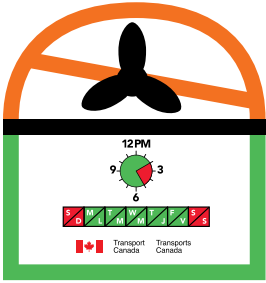


The second shape is a half-circle bordered by a band coloured international orange above a black line surmounting a half-rectangle bordered by a band coloured green. The half-circle must show a restriction symbol from Table 1, while the rectangle must describe the condition(s) in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2 – RESTRICTIONS CONDITION INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>CERTAIN TIMES OF THE DAY</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;"><i>In this example, the restriction is in place between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.</i></p> |
| <p>CERTAIN DAYS OF THE WEEK</p> <p>When the restriction only applies to certain days of the week, these days must be marked in red on the bar symbol opposite. This bar contains seven boxes representing the days of the week. 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;"><i>In this example, the restriction is in place for both Saturday and Sunday.</i></p> |
| <p>CERTAIN MONTHS OF THE YEAR</p> <p>A local authority may wish to restrict boating activities for certain months between April and November. You must represent these types of restrictions 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;"><i>In this example, there is a restriction in place for April, October and November.</i></p> |
| <p>SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHICAL AREA RESTRICTIONS</p> <p>The sections of the compass coloured in international orange must show the direction where the restriction applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper right and left corners: north • Upper right corner: northeast • Upper and lower right corners: east • Lower right corner: southeast • Lower left and right corners: south • Lower left corner: southwest • Upper and lower left corners: west • Upper left corner: northwest |  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In this example, the restriction is to the north of the sign.</i></p> |

Examples of signs for restrictions with conditions

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  <p><i>No towing activities north of sign</i></p> |  <p><i>10 km/h maximum in the direction of the arrow</i></p> |  <p><i>No motorized boats are allowed Saturdays and Sundays between 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.</i></p> |
|--|---|--|

STEP 3 – FOLLOW TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNS

After you have identified all the graphic elements that fit the restriction(s) you want people to follow, you must also comply with the following three requirements:

- A sign that is authorized by the Minister must be marked with the words **Transport Canada** (English) and **Transports Canada** (French) printed in black at the lower edge. The image of the Canadian flag, in red, must be placed to the left of those words as illustrated below. This is known as the Transport Canada Signature block.



- The width of the band coloured international orange must be one-twelfth of the width or diameter of the sign.
- If additional information (clarification) on the restriction needs to be communicated to boaters, it must take the following form:

Place any additional information on the restriction inside an additional information rectangle which must be underneath the main 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.

Colours:

Borders and some of the symbols must be in specific colours (International Orange, Green, Red). You will find, in the chart below, **the colour number suggestion** to help you when printing your signs (land 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 |

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; and
- Able to stand up to the marine environment.

In the table below, you will find **recommendations** that will help you in designing your signs (land or buoys).

| | Visible 30 metres from sign travelling 15 km/h max | Visible 60 metres from sign travelling 60 km/h max |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| SIGN SIZE (<i>MINIMUM</i>) | At least 52 cm in diameter or width "medium-sized" sign | At least 82 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 | At least 5 cm high, recommend plain, bold font in black | At least 10 cm high, recommend plain, bold font in black |
| 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

A sign announcing a restriction may be placed on a private buoy. Thus, if your communication of a restriction to boaters includes the installation of a buoy, you must ensure that it complies with the requirements set out in this guide. In addition, as prescribed in the *Private Buoy Regulations* (PBR), no person shall place a private buoy in any Canadian waters unless:

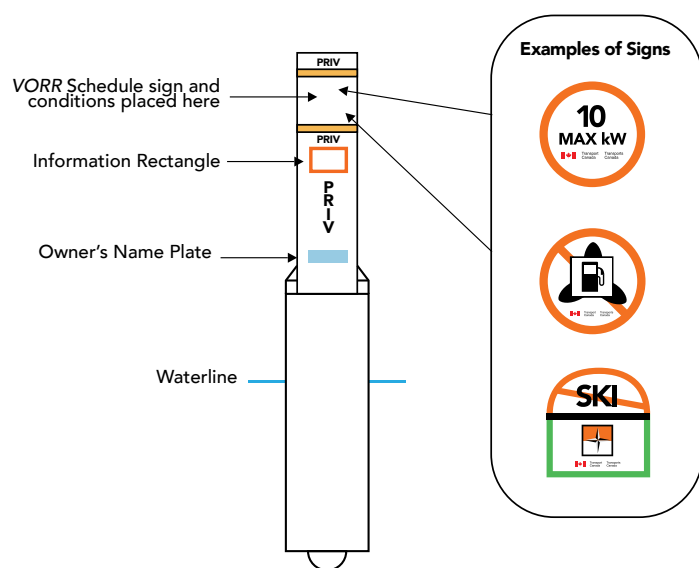
- The part of the buoy that shows above the surface of the water is at least 15.25 cm wide and at least 30.5 cm high; [PBR, s. 4(1)(a)]
- The buoy displays, on opposite sides, the capital letters “PRIV”. These letters must be:
 - As large as is practical for the size of the buoy; and
 - White when the 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)]
- The buoy displays, in a conspicuous location and a permanent and legible manner, the name, address and telephone number of its owner. [PBR, s. 4(1)(d)]

You can find the *Private Buoy Regulations* at <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-99-335/FullText.html> or learn more in *An Owner’s Guide to Private Buoys* https://tc.canada.ca/sites/default/files/2021-03/2020-2021-MARINE-06%20PRIVATE%20BUOYS%20GUIDE_EN-access.pdf





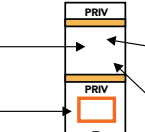
NOTE:

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: <https://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/publications/maritime-security-surete-maritime/aids-aides-navigation/page01-eng.html>.

Diagram 1 – Example of a Buoy



Requirements for signs on private buoy

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>INTERNATIONAL ORANGE BANDS</p> | <p>Two horizontal bands (one immediately above and one immediately below the sign (restriction symbol), each band must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-twelfth (1/12) of the width of the sign; • international orange; and • extend around the entire buoy. |
| <p>SIGNATURE BLOCK</p> | <p>A sign that is authorized by the Minister must be marked with the words Transport Canada (English) and Transports Canada (French) printed in black at the lower edge. The image of the Canadian flag, in red, must be placed to the left of those words as illustrated below. This is known as the Transport Canada Signature block.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Transport Canada</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Transports Canada</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Transports Canada</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Transport Canada</p> </div> </div> |
| <p>INTERNATIONAL ORANGE BORDER</p> | <p>One twelfth (1/12) the width or diameter of the sign.</p> |
| <p>INFORMATION RECTANGLE</p> <p>Must be used when additional information or clarifications on the restrictions should be communicated to boaters.</p> <p>Example of how to use an information rectangle:</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>VORR Schedule sign and conditions placed here</p> </div>  </div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Information Rectangle</p> </div> <div style="margin-top: 10px; border: 2px solid orange; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <p>HYDRO DAM AHEAD</p> </div> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the information inside a rectangle with an international orange border at least one twelfth (1/12) the width or diameter of the sign. • Place this information rectangle below the bottom international orange band. |

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

Each buoy must conform to *Canadian Aids to Navigation System* (TP 968) requirements. [PBR, s. 4(1)(c)]

STEP 4 – INSTALL SIGNS (LAND OR BUOYS)

Placing Signs

There are no specific rules as to where a sign must be placed. 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 cottage owners 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, signs should be posted at all entry points to the restricted area.
- If the restriction's purpose is to protect swimmers, signs should be posted on buoys at the edges of the restricted area.
- To ensure signs remain clearly visible in all conditions, you should choose spots that will not become overgrown with plants and trees throughout the season, the same goes for water levels which may fluctuate over the course of the year.
- You should 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.

IMPORTANT TIP:

You should ensure that signs installed on shore also meet local bylaws or regulations in your area.

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:

- 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 [*PBR*, s.3]
- 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, it is recommended to 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 let boaters know it's location through the "Notice to Mariner" System.

You can find these requirements in the *Private Buoy Regulations* at:
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-99-335/FullText.html>

STEP 5 – MAINTAINING SIGNS (LAND OR BUOYS)

As the local authority, you are responsible for all costs associated with signs (land and buoys):

- Installation
- Maintenance
- Replacement

You should inspect 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: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-96-313/index.html>

LIABILITY

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

- Make sure that they meet current Canadian regulations;
- Operate and maintain them in the proper manner; and
- Purchase liability insurance.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Transport Canada Marine Safety and Security - Regional Offices

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Vancouver, British Columbia V6Z 2J8

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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

https://tc.canada.ca/sites/default/files/migrated/local_authorities__guide__english__accessible_pdf.pdf

VESSEL OPERATION RESTRICTION REGULATIONS CHECKLIST

https://tc.canada.ca/sites/default/files/migrated/local_authorities__guide__english__accessible_pdf.pdf

PRIVATE BUOY REGULATIONS

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

Websites and Publications

CANADIAN AIDS TO NAVIGATION (TP 968)

<https://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/publications/maritime-security-surete-maritime/aids-aides-navigation/page01-eng.html>

CONTRAVENTIONS REGULATIONS

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-96-313/index.html>

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

https://tc.canada.ca/sites/default/files/2021-03/2020-2021-MARINE-06%20PRIVATE%20BUOYS%20GUIDE_EN-access.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

<https://gazette.gc.ca/accueil-home-eng.html>

LET'S TALK TRANSPORTATION – MARINE SAFETY AND SECURITY

<https://letstalktransportation.ca/>