

462A.5 Registration and identification number.

1. The owner of each vessel required to be numbered by this state shall initially register it with the commission through the county recorder of the county in which the owner resides, or, if the owner is a nonresident, the owner shall register it in the county in which such vessel is principally used. Both residents and nonresidents shall subsequently renew registration every three years with any county recorder. The commission shall develop and maintain an electronic system for the registration of vessels pursuant to [this chapter](#). The commission shall establish forms and procedures as necessary for the registration of all vessels.

a. The owner of the vessel shall file an application for registration with the appropriate county recorder on forms provided by the commission. The application shall be completed and signed by the owner of the vessel and shall be accompanied by the appropriate fee, and the writing fee specified in [section 462A.53](#). Upon applying for registration, the owner shall display a bill of sale, receipt, or other satisfactory proof of ownership as provided by the rules of the commission to the county recorder. If the county recorder is not satisfied as to the ownership of the vessel or that there are no undisclosed security interests in the vessel, the county recorder may register the vessel but shall, as a condition of issuing a registration certificate, require the applicant to follow the procedure provided in [section 462A.5A](#). Upon receipt of the application in approved form accompanied by the required fees, the county recorder shall enter it upon the records of the recorder's office and shall issue to the applicant a pocket-size registration certificate. The certificate shall be executed and delivered to the owner. The county recorder shall maintain an electronic record of each registration certificate issued by the county recorder under [this chapter](#). The registration certificate shall bear the number awarded to the vessel, the passenger capacity of the vessel, and the name and address of the owner. In the use of all vessels except nonpowered sailboats, nonpowered canoes, and commercial vessels, the registration certificate shall be carried either in the vessel or on the person of the operator of the vessel when in use. In the use of nonpowered sailboats, nonpowered canoes, or commercial vessels, the registration certificate may be kept on shore in accordance with rules adopted by the commission. The operator shall exhibit the certificate to a peace officer upon request or, when involved in an occurrence of any nature with another vessel or other personal property, to the owner or operator of the other vessel or personal property.

b. A vessel that has an expired registration certificate from another state may be registered in this state upon proper application, payment of all applicable registration and writing fees, and payment of a penalty of five dollars.

c. On all vessels except nonpowered sailboats the owner shall cause the identification number to be painted on or attached to each side of the bow of the vessel in such size and manner as may be prescribed by the rules of the commission. On nonpowered boats the number may be placed at alternate locations as prescribed by the rules of the commission. All numbers shall be maintained in a legible condition at all times.

d. No number, other than the number awarded to a vessel under the provisions of [this chapter](#) or granted reciprocity pursuant to [this chapter](#), shall be painted, attached or otherwise displayed on either side of the bow of such vessel.

e. The owner of each vessel must display and maintain, in a legible manner and in a prominent spot on the exterior of such vessel, other than the bow, the passenger capacity of the vessel which must conform with the passenger capacity designated on the registration certificate.

2. When an agency of the United States government shall have in force an overall system of identification numbering for vessels, the numbering system prescribed by the commission pursuant to [this chapter](#), shall be in conformity therewith.

3. a. The registration fees for vessels subject to [this chapter](#) are as follows:

- (1) For vessels of any length without motor or sail, twelve dollars.
- (2) For motorboats or sailboats less than sixteen feet in length, twenty-two dollars and fifty cents.
- (3) For motorboats or sailboats sixteen feet or more, but less than twenty-six feet in length, thirty-six dollars.

(4) For motorboats or sailboats twenty-six feet or more, but less than forty feet in length, seventy-five dollars.

(5) For motorboats or sailboats forty feet in length or more, one hundred fifty dollars.

(6) For all personal watercraft, forty-five dollars.

b. Every registration certificate and number issued becomes delinquent at midnight April 30 of the last calendar year of the registration period unless terminated or discontinued in accordance with [this chapter](#). After January 1, 2007, an unregistered vessel and a renewal of registration may be registered for the three-year registration period beginning May 1 of that year. When unregistered vessels are registered after May 1 of the second year of the three-year registration period, such unregistered vessels may be registered for the remainder of the current registration period at two-thirds of the appropriate registration fee. When unregistered vessels are registered after May 1 of the third year of the three-year registration period, such unregistered vessels may be registered for the remainder of the current registration period at one-third of the appropriate registration fee.

c. If an application for renewal is not made before July 1 of the last calendar year of the registration period, the applicant shall be charged a penalty of five dollars.

4. a. If a person, after registering a vessel, moves from the address shown on the registration certificate, the person shall, within ten days, notify any county recorder of the new address.

b. If the name of a person who has registered a vessel is changed, the person shall, within ten days, notify any county recorder of the former and new name.

c. No fee shall be paid to any county recorder for making the changes mentioned in [this subsection](#) unless the owner requests a new registration certificate showing the change, in which case a fee of one dollar plus a writing fee shall be paid to the recorder.

d. If a registration certificate is lost, mutilated, or becomes illegible, the owner shall immediately make application for and obtain a duplicate registration certificate by furnishing information satisfactory to any county recorder. A fee of one dollar plus a writing fee shall be paid to the county recorder for a duplicate registration certificate.

e. If a vessel, registered under [this chapter](#), is destroyed or abandoned, the destruction or abandonment shall be reported to the county recorder and the registration certificate shall be forwarded to the office of the county recorder within ten days after the destruction or abandonment.

5. All records of the commission and the county recorder, other than those declared by law to be confidential for the use of the commission and the county recorder, shall be open to public inspection during office hours.

6. The owner of each vessel which has a valid marine document issued by the bureau of customs of the United States government or any federal agency successor thereto shall register it every three years with the county recorder in the same manner prescribed for undocumented vessels and shall cause the registration validation decal to be placed on the vessel in the manner prescribed by the rules of the commission. When the vessel bears the identification required in the documentation, it is exempt from the placement of the identification numbers as required on undocumented vessels. The fee for such registration is twenty-five dollars plus a writing fee.

7. If the owner of a currently registered vessel places the vessel in storage, the owner shall return the registration certificate to the county recorder with an affidavit stating that the vessel is placed in storage and the effective date of the storage. The county recorder shall notify the commission of each registered vessel placed in storage. When the owner of a stored vessel desires to renew the vessel's registration, the owner shall apply to the county recorder and pay the registration fees plus a writing fee as provided in [subsections 1 and 3](#) without penalty. No refund of registration fees shall be allowed for a stored vessel.

8. The registration certificate shall indicate if the vessel is subject to the requirement of a certificate of title and the county from which the certificate of title is issued.

[C97, §2512; S13, §2512; C24, 27, 31, §1694; C35, §1703-e3, 1703-e7; C39, **§1703.03, 1703.07, 1703.08**; C46, 50, 54, 58, §106.3, 106.7, 106.8; C62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §106.5; [82 Acts, ch 1028, §6 – 9](#)

[84 Acts, ch 1082, §1, 2](#); [85 Acts, ch 110, §1](#); [87 Acts, ch 134, §3](#); [92 Acts, ch 1101, §1](#)

C93, §462A.5

2000 Acts, ch 1019, §2; 2002 Acts, ch 1113, §9; 2005 Acts, ch 137, §4 – 7; 2007 Acts, ch 28, §3, 4; 2011 Acts, ch 25, §119, 143; 2014 Acts, ch 1141, §71; 2019 Acts, ch 80, §3 – 5; 2020 Acts, ch 1062, §55

Referred to in §331.602, 331.605, 462A.5A, 462A.6A, 805.8B(1)(a)

For applicable scheduled fines, see §805.8B, subsection 1, paragraph a