

Michigan Sailing Club

Powerboat Driving Skill Checklist for Helm Rating

Latest Update: 7/20/22

Prerequisite Requirements:

- 1- Michigan Boater Safety Certificate.
(See <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/boating/safety-certificate>)
- 2- Completed requirements and signatures for the MSC Basic Rating.

Required Skills

1) Prestart Checklist

- a- Be aware of the weather forecast.
- b. Identify certificate of Number and Watercraft Registration information. [validation decal, registration number on both sides of the bow](#).
- c- Check **engine oil** level.
- d. Check that the **outboard mounts** that hold it to the transom are **tight**.
- e- **Check** outboard **trim** by lowering the outboard all of the way into the water.
- f- Check **choke position**. It should only be choked if the engine is cold.
- g- Make sure the **transmission** is in **neutral** gear position.
- h- Use the **primer bulb** to prime the outboard.
- i- Confirm that the **fuel tank** is at least **1/3rd full** and connected to the outboard motor.
- j- Confirm that the **fire extinguisher** is charged.
- k- Make sure that **6 life jackets** are onboard.
- l- Check that a **horn or whistle** is in the boat if it isn't equipped with one.
- m- **Oars or /paddles** need to be onboard.

n- Confirm that **towlines, anchor & anchor** line are on board.

o- Check that the **drain plugs** are securely fastened in the hull.

p- Boat **bailed out** using bilge pump, hand pump, scoop, etc.

2) Starting the engine

a- Outboard engine is in the correct down position.

b- Follow starting procedure and start engine.

c- Confirm cooling water discharge from the tell-tale.

d- Warm up engine for a minute and operate at reduced speed for another minute or so if there is time to do

so.

3) [Leaving Dock](#) (without assistance) [Leaving dock animation](#).

a. Dock lines cast off and securely stowed.

b. Maneuver safely away from dock without pushing off.

c. Bring aboard and stow fenders.

d. Attach kill switch lanyard to driver.

e. Use remote tilt function at slow speed for operating the outboard in shallow water.

f. Avoid the swimming area between the dock and raft by slowly going out beyond the raft, then heading into the lake.

g. Clear the propeller of weeds by briefly reversing outboard if needed.

4) Slow-speed Maneuvering

a. Back boat on a straight course.

b. Maneuver in forward and reverse on a slalom course.

5) [Up current/Upwind Position Hold](#)

- a. Maneuver to a position directly upwind or up current (whichever is dominant) of a designated buoy.
- b. Turn so that vessel's bow is within reach of buoy with stern directly upwind/up current.
- c. Hold this position for at least 10 seconds without drifting onto the buoy and without allowing the stern to swing from its upwind/up current position.

6) High-speed Maneuvering

- a. Operate in planning mode.
- b. Execute controlled turns.
- c. [Execute high-speed stop](#) by quickly turning the boat by about 90° while decreasing the throttle to

idle.

7) [Recovery of Simulated Person in the Water](#)

- a) Approach from downwind if conditions allow. If not, approach in such a way so that the safety boat does not drift over the person in the water.
- b) Approach slowly and maneuver the safety boat to come alongside the person but not come in direct contact with them.
- c) Shift transmission to Neutral and prepare to shut off engine if anyone in the water gets close to the propeller or the stern of the safety boat.
- d) Bring person aboard using ladder or assist by lifting the shoulder sections of their pfd to help them climb in. Avoid pulling directly on arms.

8) [Docking](#): the standard is to bring the boat to a full gentle stop alongside a dock within 3 feet of a previously designated spot. Ideally, two fenders positioned several feet apart alongside the hull will touch the edge of the dock simultaneously.

- a. Upwind approach – alongside dock.
- b. Downwind approach – alongside dock.
- c.1. Crosswind approach - alongside dock.

d. Secure boat to dock.