

## Safety First!

It is imperative that motorboat operators take responsibility while sharing our float streams with manually powered watercraft and persons swimming or wading in our float streams. During peak usage periods, caution and patience may be required to pass through congested areas on these waterways. Motorboat operators have a responsibility to operate in a manner which ensures the safety of their passengers and others who are using our waterways. By state law, any person operating a vessel or watercraft must do so in a careful and prudent manner. A violation of this section is a misdemeanor. (Section 306.125 RSMo)

### Safety Tips:

- Protect yourself from the sun. Use sunscreen, and wear a hat and sunglasses.
- Wear water shoes. If your canoe/kayak/inner tube capsizes, water shoes will protect your feet. Walking in rivers can be dangerous.
- Be familiar with the river and its individual characteristics. Pair an experienced paddler/floater with someone of less experience.
- Learn to recognize river hazards such as strainers, dams with reverse hydraulics, boulders, barb wire across the river, eddies, etc.
- Know your limits and do not attempt a section of river beyond your skill level.
- Do not paddle or attempt to cross rivers in flood stage or after a heavy rain. Currents can become very swift, even in a normally shallow river.
- If you capsize, hold onto your craft and move immediately to the upstream side to avoid being trapped between the boat and an obstacle. Float on your back, feet together and pointed downstream. Gradually work your way to the shore. Release your craft only if it improves your safety.
- Carry the proper equipment, including dry clothing and a first aid kit. Store all extra gear in a secure watertight container.
- Tie all your gear into the boat, but never yourself, children, or pets. Do not stand up in swift water (feet can get caught in rocks) but swim with the current at a 45 degree angle toward the shore.
- Stay sober. Alcohol and drugs affect balance, judgment, coordination, swimming skills, and the body's ability to stay warm.
- Avoid being "too" — too tired, too drunk, too much sun, too far from safety, too much strenuous activity.
- Learn basic water rescue techniques. When attempting a rescue, remember the adage of "Reach - Throw - Row - Go for Help." Unprepared rescuers run the risk of being caught in the same dangerous situation and can become a victim themselves.

For the Missouri State Highway Patrol troop headquarters nearest you, consult your local phone directory.

**Emergency Hotline:**  
**1-800-525-5555**  
or **\*55 cellular**



### Missouri State Highway Patrol Water Patrol Division

1510 East Elm Street  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
(573) 751-5071  
[www.statepatrol.dps.mo.gov](http://www.statepatrol.dps.mo.gov)  
email: [boatinfo@mshp.dps.mo.gov](mailto:boatinfo@mshp.dps.mo.gov)

 [www.facebook.com/motrooper](https://www.facebook.com/motrooper)  [mshptrooper](https://www.instagram.com/mshptrooper)  
 [@MSHPTrooperGHQ](https://twitter.com/MSHPTrooperGHQ)  [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/)



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**Enjoying Missouri's Float Streams:**  
**Know The Law & Use Common Sense**



Each year, tens of thousands of visitors frequent the shallow water and gravel bars that make Missouri's float streams popular recreational locations. Unfortunately, many visitors have not prepared properly and find themselves and their activity in violation of state law. This brochure will provide information related to the lawful use of Missouri's float streams. There is no replacement for common sense and individual responsibility, so please be courteous and respectful to everyone you encounter on Missouri's waterways. The officers who patrol these streams provide zero tolerance for violations of alcohol and drug laws.

Knowing your "put in" and "take out" points by name, sharing your float plan with a friend or family member, realizing the importance of having an emergency plan including medical considerations, and being aware of the weather are all important aspects to ensuring a safe day on the water.

## Life Jackets

Wearing a life jacket is a smart decision. It's also the law in Missouri. Watercraft operators are required to have an appropriate personal flotation device for each person on board. All lifesaving devices required by state statute shall be United States Coast Guard approved, in serviceable condition, and so placed as to be readily accessible. Using a personal flotation device to lash or tie watercraft together would not be considered accessible. A violation of this section is considered an infraction. (Section 306.100 RSMo)

The law requires anyone under the age of seven who is on board any watercraft on the waters of this state to wear a personal flotation device approved by the United States Coast Guard. Any person who allows a person under the age of seven to be on board any watercraft on the waters of this state without wearing a personal flotation device would be guilty of a misdemeanor. (Section 306.220 RSMo)

Safety is important. Wear a life jacket when you are in or around water. Life jackets are lighter, less obtrusive, and more comfortable than ever, and they save lives. Wear it!

## Alcohol & Floating

Intoxicated people on the waterways can be a danger to themselves and those around them. Float trips should be fun for everyone. If alcohol is part of your float trip, make smart choices and obey the law as it pertains to alcohol and the enjoyment of Missouri's many waterways. The use of beer bongs or other drinking devices used to consume alcohol on the rivers of this state is prohibited. A 'beer bong' includes any device that is intended and designed for the rapid consumption or intake of an alcoholic beverage, including but not limited to funnels, tubes, hoses, and modified containers with additional vents. Additionally, no person shall possess or use any large volume alcohol containers which hold more than four gallons of an alcoholic beverage on Missouri's rivers. Any person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. (Section 306.109 RSMo)

Any person under the age of 21 years, who has in his or her possession any intoxicating liquor, or who is visibly in an intoxicated condition, or has a detectable blood alcohol content of more than .02 percent or more by weight of alcohol in such person's blood would be in violation of this section. A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. (Section 311.325)

Any person who procures for, sells, gives away, or otherwise supplies intoxicating liquor to any person under the age of 21 years, or to any intoxicated person, or any person appearing to be in a state of intoxication is in violation of this section. A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. (Section 311.310)

## Packing A Snack

It can take a lot of energy to navigate a canoe, kayak, or inner tube on your float trip. Packing snacks and beverages to help you refuel is a good idea. In order to protect our state's beautiful waterways, follow these restrictions. This law applies to any vessel or watercraft that is easily susceptible to swamping, tipping, or rolling (such as a canoe, kayak, or inner tube) and is carrying foodstuffs or beverages while operating on Missouri's waterways.

- Glass containers are NOT allowed for beverages.
- All persons using a cooler, icebox, or containers for foodstuffs and beverages must:
  - ✓ Ensure the container is sealed to prevent the contents from spilling into the water.
  - ✓ Affix to the vessel a container or bag, capable of being securely closed, to contain their trash.
  - ✓ Transport all of their trash to a place where the materials may be disposed of safely and lawfully.
  - ✓ Safely secure any glass containers (foodstuffs) to prevent breaking or falling overboard.

Any person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. (Section 306.325 RSMo)

## Take Your Trash With You

In the previous section, the law directs floaters to contain their trash and dispose of it safely and lawfully. When you're canoeing or floating, you want to enjoy nature as it should appear—without other people's trash. If everyone does their part and picks up after themselves Missouri's waterways will be a beautiful source of recreation for decades to come. Take your trash with you after your float. Don't litter!

A person commits the crime of littering if he throws or places garbage, trash, refuse, or rubbish of any kind, nature, or description on the right-of-way of any public road or state highway, or on or in any of the waters in this state or on the banks of any stream, or on any land or water owned, operated, or leased by the state, or on any private real property owned by another without his consent. A person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. (Section 577.070 RSMo)

## Illegal Drugs

Throughout our state, it is illegal for persons to possess a controlled substance, except as au-

thorized by law. This applies to our waterways as well. The Missouri State Highway Patrol has a zero tolerance approach to illegal drug use. Depending on the type and amount of the controlled substance in your possession, the penalty class could either be a misdemeanor or felony. (Section 579.015 RSMo)

It is also unlawful for any person to use, or to possess with intent to use drug paraphernalia in violation of state law. Depending on the type and intended use of the drug paraphernalia, the penalty class could either be a misdemeanor or felony. (Section 579.074 RSMo)

## Be Courteous

You're a guest on Missouri's rivers and streams. As you float along, be conscious of which areas are state owned and which properties are owned by private citizens. Respect these boundaries.

A person is considered trespassing by entering unlawfully upon the real property of another person. The class of penalty would depend on whether the trespassing notification was communicated to the violator or posted by the owner of the property. If notification was made of the trespassing to the violator through communication or posting of the property, the violation would be considered a misdemeanor; otherwise, simply entering upon the real property of another person would be an infraction. Posting may be accomplished by appropriate signage, or by placing identifying purple marks on trees or posts around the affected area. Depending on your behavior, the penalty for trespassing would be an infraction or a misdemeanor. (Sections 569.140, 569.145, & 569.150 RSMo)

Everyone floating on Missouri's rivers and streams needs to understand what is considered proper public behavior. Sexual misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated on Missouri's waterways. Improperly exposing yourself, or conducting yourself in violation of state sexual misconduct laws would be a misdemeanor, although other more serious violations of the state sexual offense statutes could be considered a felony. (Sections 566.093 & 566.095 RSMo)