



For Immediate Release

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NMMA ISSUES ACTION ALERT ON PROP GUARD PROPOSAL

Chicago, IL

The United States Coast Guard has extended the deadline for submitting comment on a proposal regarding mandatory propeller protection devices on houseboats until May. National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) is taking advantage of the extra time to issue an action alert to members of the recreational marine industry to voice their objections to the proposal.

The proposal requires owners who lease, rent, or charter non-planing recreational houseboats to install either a jet drive system, propeller guards or three combined measures. The three combined measures include installing swim ladder interlocks, a clear visibility aft device, and an ignition cut-off switch. Owners of non-planing, non-rental houseboats would be required to install the interlocks and the clear visibility aft device, but not the ignition cutoff switch.

John McKnight, NMMA director of Environmental & Safety Compliance, says that this proposal is not only about houseboats, but about engines as well, and in the future it could spread to all types of boats.

"NMMA clearly supports steps to reduce boating accidents and fatalities, but this proposal raises the question as to whether in this case the risk justifies the cost of regulation," says McKnight. McKnight points to statistics that the USCG bases the need for this rule on. From 1990 to 1999, there were a total of 18 propeller-related injuries and two deaths. The proposal estimates the total cost to rental operations to upgrade each boat would be \$440; costs NMMA believes are underestimated.

NMMA is making it easy for the industry to voice their objections. A sample letter opposing the proposal can be accessed on NMMA's website at www.nmma.org. On the site, click on "Making Waves" and follow the steps to send an industry letter.

"Based on the volume of responses the USCG has currently received, the recreational marine industry is outnumbered five to one by those in favor of propeller protection devices. The industry has to make their voice heard before it's too late," says Kelly Bobek, NMMA director of Federal Government Relations.

For more information on the prop guard proposal, contact McKnight at (202) 721-1604; jmcknight@nmma.org.

NMMA is sponsor of two outstanding trade events for the marine industry-MAATS, taking place June 3-6, 2002 at the Las Vegas Hilton and BoatBuilding 2002, being held September 25-27, 2002 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

NMMA members, nearly 1,400 companies, produce approximately 80% of the marine products used by recreational boaters and anglers in the United States. The North American pleasure boat market represents fully half of the global demand for these products and services. Retail sales of boats and related products and services amount to an estimated \$25 billion annually in the U.S.

[Back to Previous Page](#)

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