



TOUR BOATS, WATER TAXIS, AND CHARTER BOATS

VERIFY LICENSED OPERATIONS

- Tour boats and water taxis are required to secure a City of Chicago issued Commercial Passenger Vessel license.
- Charter boats with captains are required to secure a City of Chicago issued Commercial Passenger Vessel license.
- Captains are licensed and regulated by the U.S. Coast Guard. Any individual captaining a boat for compensation must have been issued a U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner's Credential with passenger endorsement. The U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner's Credential looks similar in appear to a U.S. Passport.
- Water vessels/boats in Illinois are required to be registered with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Proof of current IDNR registration must be displayed in each water vessel.

PASSENGER SAFETY

- Boats which carry 6 passengers or more must pass a U.S. Coast Guard safety inspection. The U.S. Coast Guard certificate of inspection must be displayed on the boat.
- The number of life vests must match the potential occupancy number, including crew and passengers.
- Check weather and water conditions are conducive for safe boating.
- Call 911 if you do not feel safe during the trip or to report criminal activity.

AVOID FRAUD OR UNWARRANTED FEES

- Before signing a contract to purchase a service or product: read the fine print; look for overage charges and hidden fees; and make sure that the contract includes all of details of your event or trip, including time of pick-up and drop-off, your full itinerary, the name of the boat, name of the licensed captain, and the number of people traveling.
- Obtain a direct phone number for a company representative for emergencies.
- Request a receipt and a copy of the contract. Make sure you obtain and maintain receipts for all payments.
- Many companies require a deposit at the time of booking. Ask about the terms of the deposit, such as how much is required, and whether it is refundable in the event of cancellation.
- Check the refund and cancellation policies. Some companies have strict cancellation policies, so find refund policies and deadlines for cancellations.

RESOURCES

- Consumers are encouraged to use the CHI 311 system (call 3-1-1, use the CHI311 mobile app, or visit 311.chicago.gov) to report compliments, complaints, unlicensed operation, or fraudulent practices.
- Chapters 4-250 "COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS" of the Municipal Code of Chicago are available for free at amlegal.com.
- Licensing questions may be sent to BACPPV@cityofchicago.org.