

## BOW REGISTRATION NUMBERS

One of the worst things I have encountered, as Harbormaster is to come upon a skiff/dinghy or powerboat circling or drifting with no one on board. This sends shivers down my spine! The first thing that comes to mind is, where are the occupant(s)? In all but a couple of cases the boat had simply drifted from its mooring for whatever reason. The others. Well, people were found to have drowned.

The first thing I need to do when being dispatched to or happening upon a boat adrift is call in the REGISTRATION NUMBERS FOUND ON THE BOW into the Sheriff's Office or State Police. These numbers tell Marine Patrol or myself who the boat belongs to. Then I can contact that person's residence, friends or relatives and find out if they were in the boat or not.

How many PFDs (personal floatation devices) do you need? PFDs must be readily available. They should not be stored away or kept in their original packaging. The US Coast Guard and Maine Law Require that you must have USCG approved PFDs on your boat! **Watercraft under 16 feet in length, canoes or kayaks of any length, you must have a wearable TYPE I, II, or III PFD for each person on board. Watercraft 16 feet or longer you must have a wearable TYPE I, II or III for each person on board, PLUS at least one throwable device (TYPE IV) on board. For Example: If you have three people on board your 16-foot boat, you need 4 PFDs-3 wearable PFDs and 1 throwable device. Children 10 years of age and under must wear a type I, II or III PFD while on board all watercraft!**

This brings me to the purpose of this column. The registration number and validation stickers must be displayed on each side of the bow of the boat, painted or permanently attached in a contrasting color to provide the highest degree of visibility. The number must read from left to right, and not less than 3 inches high. **SAMPLE ME 2578 T .**

State Registration and PFD's is not only the law but as you can see may save precious time and lives. Not to mention keep you out of court.

Enforcement of these laws will be strick. Enforcement just might save your life or the life of a loved one.