ered a misdemeanor; otherwise, simply enter-
ing upon the real property of another person
would be an infraction. Posting may be accom-
plished 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 mis-
demeanor, although other more serious viola-
tions of the state sexual offense statutes could
be considered a felony. (Sections 566.093
& 566.095 RSMo.)

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. Motor-
boat operators have a responsibility to operate
in a manner which ensures the safety of their
passengers and others who are using our wa-
terways. By state law, any person operating
a vessel or watercraft must do so in a care-
ful and prudent manner. A violation of this
section is a misdemeanor. (Section 306.125
RSMo.)

Safety Tips:
- Protect yourself from the sun. Use sun-
screen, 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 individ-
ual characteristics. Pair an experienced
paddler/floater with someone of less ex-
perience.
- Learn to recognize river hazards such as
strainers, dams with reverse hydraulics,
boulders, barb wire across the river, ed-
dies, 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. Cur-
rents 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. Gradu-
ally 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 bal-
ance, 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 them-
selves.

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.mshp.mo.gov
email: boatinfo@mshp.dps.mo.gov

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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 306.109 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 at least 0.05 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 swamp ing, 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 authorized 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 communication was made for commencing to the violator through communication or posting of the property, the violation would be consid-