



## Ohio Revised Code

### Section 1547.54 Applying for registration certificate.

Effective: January 1, 2027

Legislation: House Bill 96

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(A)(1) Except as otherwise provided in section 1547.542 of the Revised Code, the owner of every watercraft requiring registration under this chapter shall file an application for a triennial registration certificate with the chief of the division of parks and watercraft on forms that shall be provided by the chief or by an electronic means approved by the chief. The application shall be signed by the following:

(a) If the watercraft is owned by two persons under joint ownership with right of survivorship established under section 2131.12 of the Revised Code, by both of those persons as owners of the watercraft. The signatures may be done by electronic signature if the owners themselves are renewing the registration and there are no changes in the registration information since the issuance of the immediately preceding registration certificate. In all other instances, the signatures shall be done manually.

(b) If the watercraft is owned by a minor, by the minor and a parent or legal guardian. The signatures may be done by electronic signature if the parent or legal guardian and the minor themselves are renewing the registration and there are no changes in the registration information since the issuance of the immediately preceding registration certificate. In all other instances, the signatures shall be done manually.

(c) In all other cases, by the owner of the watercraft. The signature may be done by electronic signature if the owner is renewing the registration personally and there are no changes in the registration information since the issuance of the immediately preceding registration certificate. In all other instances, the signatures shall be done manually.

(2) An application for a triennial registration of a watercraft filed under division (A)(1) of this section shall be accompanied by the following fee:

(a) For canoes, rowboats, and inflatable watercraft that are numbered under section 1547.53 of the



Revised Code, twelve dollars;

(b) For canoes, row boats, and inflatable watercraft that are not numbered under section 1547.53 of the Revised Code, seventeen dollars;

(c) For class A watercraft, including motorized canoes, thirty dollars;

(d) For class 1 watercraft, forty-five dollars;

(e) For class 2 watercraft, sixty dollars;

(f) For class 3 watercraft, seventy-five dollars;

(g) For class 4 watercraft, ninety dollars.

(3) For the purpose of registration, any watercraft operated by means of power, sail, or any other mechanical or electrical means of propulsion, except motorized canoes, shall be registered by length as prescribed in this section.

(4) If an application for registration is filed by two persons as owners under division (A)(1)(a) of this section, the person who is listed first on the title shall serve as and perform the duties of the "owner" and shall be considered the person "in whose name the watercraft is registered" for purposes of divisions (B) to (R) of this section and for purposes of all other sections in this chapter.

(B) All registration certificates issued under this section are valid for three years and are renewable on a triennial basis unless sooner terminated or discontinued in accordance with this chapter. The renewal date shall be printed on the registration certificate. A registration certificate may be renewed by the owner in the manner prescribed by the chief. All fees shall be charged according to a proration of the time remaining in the registration cycle to the nearest year.

(C) In addition to the fees set forth in this section, the chief, or any authorized agent, shall charge an additional writing fee of three dollars for any registration certificate the chief or authorized agent issues. When the registration certificate is issued by an authorized agent, the additional writing fee of



three dollars shall be retained by the issuing agent. When the registration certificate is issued by the chief, the additional writing fee of three dollars shall be deposited to the credit of the waterways safety fund established in section 1547.75 of the Revised Code.

(D) In addition to the fees established in this section, watercraft that are not powercraft shall be charged a waterways conservation assessment fee of five dollars. The fee shall be collected at the time of the issuance of a triennial watercraft registration under division (A)(2) of this section and deposited in the state treasury and credited to a distinct account in the waterways safety fund created in section 1547.75 of the Revised Code.

(E)(1) Upon receipt of the application in approved form, the chief shall enter the same upon the records of the office of the division of parks and watercraft, assign a number to the watercraft if a number is required under section 1547.53 of the Revised Code, and issue to the applicant a registration certificate. If a number is assigned by the chief, it shall be set forth on the certificate. The registration certificate, in physical or digital form, shall be on the watercraft for which it is issued and available at all times for inspection whenever the watercraft is in operation, except that livery operators may retain the registration certificate at the livery where it shall remain available for inspection at all times and except as otherwise provided in division (E)(2) of this section.

(2) A person who is operating on the waters of this state a canoe, kayak, rowboat, or inflatable watercraft meeting the definition of a paddlecraft that has not been numbered under section 1547.53 of the Revised Code and who is stopped by a law enforcement officer in the enforcement of this chapter or rules shall present to the officer, not later than seventy-two hours after being stopped, a registration certificate, in physical or digital form. The registration certificate shall have been obtained under this section for the canoe, kayak, rowboat, or inflatable watercraft meeting the definition of a paddlecraft prior to the time that it was stopped. Failure of the person to present the registration certificate within seventy-two hours constitutes prima-facie evidence of a violation of this section.

(F) No person shall issue or be issued a registration certificate for a watercraft that is required to be issued a certificate of title under Chapter 1548. of the Revised Code except upon presentation of a certificate of title for the watercraft as provided in that chapter, proof of current documentation by the United States coast guard, a renewal registration form provided by the division of parks and



watercraft, or a certificate of registration issued under this section that has expired if there is no change in the ownership or description of the watercraft.

(G) Whenever the ownership of a watercraft changes, a new application form together with the prescribed fee shall be filed with the chief or the chief's agent and a new registration certificate shall be issued. The application shall be signed manually by the person or persons specified in divisions (A)(1)(a) to (c) of this section and shall be accompanied by a two-dollar transfer fee. Any remaining time on the registration shall be transferred. An authorized agent of the chief shall charge an additional writing fee of three dollars, which shall be retained by the issuing agent. If the certificate is issued by the chief, an additional writing fee of three dollars for each certificate issued shall be collected and deposited to the credit of the waterways safety fund.

(H) If an agency of the United States has in force an overall system of identification numbering for watercraft or certain types of watercraft within the United States, the numbering system employed by the division shall be in conformity with that system.

(I)(1) The chief may assign any registration certificates to any authorized agent for the assignment of the registration certificates. If a person accepts that authorization, the person may be assigned a block of numbers and certificates that upon assignment, in conformity with this chapter and Chapter 1548. of the Revised Code and with rules, shall be valid as if assigned directly by the division. Any person so designated as an agent by the chief shall post with the division security as may be required by the director of natural resources. The chief may issue an order temporarily or permanently restricting or suspending an agent's authorization without a hearing if the chief finds that the agent has violated this chapter or Chapter 1548. of the Revised Code, rules, or any agreements prescribed by the chief.

(2) A clerk of the court of common pleas may apply for designation as an authorized agent of the chief. The division shall accept the clerk's bond that is required under section 2303.02 of the Revised Code for any security that is required for agents under this division, provided that the bond includes a rider or other provision specifically covering the clerk's duties as an authorized agent of the chief.

(J) All records of the division made or kept pursuant to this section shall be public records. Those records shall be available for inspection at reasonable hours and in a manner compatible with normal operations of the division.



(K) The owner shall furnish the division notice within fifteen days of the following:

(1) The transfer, other than through the creation of a security interest in any watercraft, of all or any part of the owner's interest or, if the watercraft is owned by two persons under joint ownership with right of survivorship established under section 2131.12 of the Revised Code, of all or any part of the joint interest of either of the two persons. The transfer shall not terminate the registration certificate.

(2) Any change in the address appearing on the certificate. As a part of the notification, the owner shall furnish the chief with the owner's new address.

(3) The destruction or abandonment of the watercraft.

(L) The chief may issue duplicate registration certificates or duplicate tags to owners of currently registered watercraft, the fee for which shall be four dollars.

(M) If the chief finds that a registration certificate previously issued to an owner is in error to a degree that would impair its basic purpose and use, the chief may issue a corrected certificate to the owner without charge.

(N) No authorized agent shall issue and no person shall receive or accept from an authorized agent a registration certificate assigned to the authorized agent under division (I) of this section unless the exact month, day, and year of issue are plainly written on the certificate by the agent. Certificates issued with incorrect dates of issue are void from the time they are issued.

(O) The chief, in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, shall adopt rules governing the renewal of watercraft registrations by electronic means.

(P) As used in this section:

(1) "Disabled veteran" means a person who is included in either of the following categories:

(a) Because of a service-connected disability, has been or is awarded funds for the purchase of a



motor vehicle under the "Disabled Veterans' and Servicemen's Automobile Assistance Act of 1970," 84 Stat. 1998, 38 U.S.C. 1901, and amendments thereto;

(b) Has a service-connected disability rated at one hundred per cent by the veterans administration.

(2) "Prisoner of war" means any regularly appointed, enrolled, enlisted, or inducted member of the military forces of the United States who was captured, separated, and incarcerated by an enemy of the United States at any time, and any regularly appointed, enrolled, or enlisted member of the military forces of Great Britain, France, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, or the republics formerly associated with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or Yugoslavia who was a citizen of the United States at the time of the appointment, enrollment, or enlistment, and was captured, separated, and incarcerated by an enemy of this country during World War II.

(Q) Any disabled veteran, congressional medal of honor awardee, or prisoner of war may apply to the chief for a certificate of registration, or for a renewal of the certificate of registration, without the payment of any fee required by this section. The application for a certificate of registration shall be accompanied by evidence of disability or by documentary evidence in support of a congressional medal of honor that the chief requires by rule. The application for a certificate of registration by any person who has been a prisoner of war shall be accompanied by written evidence in the form of a record of separation, a letter from one of the armed forces of a country listed in division (P)(2) of this section, or other evidence that the chief may require by rule, that the person was honorably discharged or is currently residing in this state on active duty with one of the branches of the armed forces of the United States, or was a prisoner of war and was honorably discharged or received an equivalent discharge or release from one of the armed forces of a country listed in division (P)(2) of this section.

(R) Annually by the fifteenth day of January, the director of natural resources shall determine the amount of fees that would have been collected in the prior calendar year for each certificate of registration issued or renewed pursuant to division (Q) of this section and shall certify the total amount of foregone revenue to the director of budget and management for reimbursement. The director of budget and management shall transfer the amount certified from the general revenue fund to the waterways safety fund.