

Operation Manual for 16' Northwoods Pontoon with 25HP Mercury 4-Stroke Outboard

Boater Safety

Operating a pontoon boat safely is critical to protect yourself, your passengers, and others on the water. The following safety guidelines are essential for responsible boating and comply with general boating regulations.

Boater's Responsibilities

- **Read and Understand This Manual:** Before operating the boat, read this entire manual to familiarize yourself with the boat and outboard motor's operation, controls, and safety features.
- **Know Local Regulations:** Familiarize yourself with local and governmental boating laws, including speed limits, navigation rules, and restricted areas.
- **Designate a Secondary Operator:** Ensure at least one other person on board is trained in basic boat operation and emergency procedures in case the primary operator is incapacitated.
- **Use a Lanyard Stop Switch:** The operator should always wear the lanyard stop switch, which shuts off the engine if the operator moves too far from the controls (e.g., in case of ejection).
- **Passenger Safety:** Ensure all passengers remain seated in designated areas while the boat is in motion. Sudden changes in speed or direction can cause passengers to be thrown forward or overboard.
- **Avoid Overloading:** Do not exceed the boat's maximum capacity (typically 6–8 people or 1,200 lbs for a 16' pontoon, including gear). Check the boat's capacity plate for specific limits.
- **Life Jackets:** Ensure all passengers have properly fitting, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets. Children under 13 and non-swimmers must wear life jackets at all times.
- **No Alcohol or Drugs:** Never operate the boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs, as this impairs judgment and reaction time.
- **Check Weather Conditions:** Avoid boating in hazardous conditions such as high winds, storms, or rough waters. A 16' pontoon is best suited for calm inland waters.
- **Maintain Situational Awareness:** Always monitor your surroundings for other boats, swimmers, and obstacles. Avoid running the boat with the bow too high, as this reduces visibility.

Emergency Preparedness

- **Carry Safety Equipment:** Equip the boat with a fire extinguisher, sound-producing device (e.g., whistle or horn), visual distress signals, and a first-aid kit.

- **Know Emergency Procedures:** Be prepared to handle emergencies such as engine failure, collisions, or man-overboard situations. Practice using the lanyard stop switch and restarting the engine.
- **Communication:** Carry a VHF radio or fully charged mobile phone in a waterproof case for emergencies.

For additional safety information, obtain a copy of Mercury Marine's *Hi-Performance Boat Operation* booklet from your dealer or Mercury Marine.

General Information

The 16' Northwoods pontoon is a compact, versatile vessel designed for recreational use on calm waters such as lakes and slow-moving rivers. Paired with a 25HP Mercury 4-stroke outboard motor, it offers reliable performance, fuel efficiency, and ease of use. This manual provides instructions for operating, maintaining, and troubleshooting the boat and motor.

Specifications

- **Boat:**
 - Length: 16 feet
 - Beam: Approximately 8 feet
 - Weight: Approximately 1,000–1,200 lbs (dry weight)
 - Maximum Capacity: Typically 6–8 persons or 1,200 lbs (refer to capacity plate)
 - Hull Material: Aluminum pontoons
- **Mercury 25HP 4-Stroke Outboard:**
 - Horsepower: 25 HP (18.6 kW)
 - Full Throttle RPM Range: 5,000–6,000 RPM
 - Idle Speed in Forward Gear: 775 ± 25 RPM
 - Number of Cylinders: 3
 - Piston Displacement: 526 cc (32.1 cu. in.)
 - Starter Battery: 350 Cold Cranking Amps (CCA)
 - Serial Number Format: Located on the transom bracket (e.g., 0G112233)

Pre-Operation Checklist

Before each trip, perform the following checks:

1. **Fuel:** Verify sufficient fuel in the tank and ensure the fuel line is securely connected. Use clean, unleaded gasoline with a minimum octane rating of 87.
2. **Battery:** Check battery connections for tightness and ensure the battery is fully charged (350 CCA minimum).
3. **Propeller:** Inspect the propeller for damage or debris. Ensure the correct propeller is installed (consult your dealer for proper size).
4. **Steering and Controls:** Confirm the steering link rod is secured with self-locking nuts and the remote control is equipped with a start-in-neutral-only device.

5. **Safety Equipment:** Verify all required safety gear is on board and in good condition.
6. **Hull and Pontoons:** Inspect for leaks, dents, or damage to the aluminum pontoons.
7. **Serial Number:** Locate and record the outboard's serial number for reference when ordering parts or manuals.

Operating the Pontoon Boat

Starting the Outboard

1. **Preparation:**
 - Ensure the boat is in neutral and the lanyard stop switch is attached to the operator.
 - Check that the kill switch is in the "ON" position.
 - Open the fuel tank vent (if equipped).
2. **Electric Start Models:**
 - Turn the ignition key to the "START" position. Release once the engine starts.
 - If the engine does not start, engage the choke (or primer) and try again. Avoid excessive cranking to prevent battery drain.
3. **Manual Start Models:**
 - Pull the starter cord slowly until resistance is felt, then pull sharply.
 - Engage the choke if the engine is cold, and adjust as it warms up.
4. **Warm-Up:** Allow the engine to idle for 1–2 minutes before engaging the throttle.

Steering and Throttle Control

- **Steering:** Use the helm to control direction. The pontoon's dual-hull design provides stability but may respond more slowly than single-hull boats. Avoid sharp turns at high speeds.
- **Throttle:** Gradually increase throttle to avoid sudden acceleration. The 25HP motor is designed for smooth, steady power suitable for cruising.
- **Trim:** Adjust the motor's trim angle to keep the bow level. Running with the bow too high reduces visibility and efficiency.

Stopping the Engine

1. Shift to neutral and allow the engine to idle for 30 seconds.
2. Turn the ignition key to "OFF" or pull the lanyard stop switch.
3. Close the fuel tank vent to prevent fuel evaporation.

Trailer and Transporting

- **Trailer:** Secure the boat to a trailer rated for at least 1,500 lbs. Ensure the motor is tilted up to avoid damage.
- **Carrying the Outboard:** If removing the motor, use the designated carrying handle and ensure two people handle it due to its weight (approximately 130 lbs).

Maintenance

Proper maintenance ensures the longevity and performance of your pontoon and outboard motor. Refer to the Mercury 25 4-Stroke user manual for detailed procedures.

Routine Maintenance

- **Before Each Use:**
 - Check fuel lines for leaks or cracks.
 - Inspect the propeller and spark plugs for wear.
 - Verify oil level (use Mercury-recommended 4-stroke outboard oil).
- **Every 100 Hours or Annually:**
 - Change engine oil and filter.
 - Inspect and replace the fuel filter if needed.
 - Check anode for corrosion and replace if worn.
- **Every 300 Hours or Every 3 Years:**
 - Replace spark plugs.
 - Inspect timing belt and replace if worn.
 - Flush cooling system to remove debris.

Winterization (Cold Climates)

1. Drain and flush the cooling system to prevent freezing.
2. Fog the engine with storage oil to protect internal components.
3. Store the boat and motor in a dry, covered area. Disconnect the battery and store it in a cool, dry place.

Troubleshooting

- **Engine Won't Start:**
 - Check fuel level and connections.
 - Verify the kill switch is in the "ON" position.
 - Inspect spark plug wires for loose connections.
- **Engine Accelerates Wildly:**
 - Check choke position; disengaging the choke prematurely can cause surging.
 - Consult a Mercury dealer if the issue persists.
- **Poor Performance:**
 - Inspect propeller for damage or incorrect size.
 - Check for fouled spark plugs or clogged fuel lines.

For detailed troubleshooting, consult the Mercury 25 4-Stroke service manual or contact Mercury Support at 920-929-5110.

Accessing the Mercury Owner's Manual

To obtain a digital copy of the Mercury 25 4-Stroke Owner's Manual:

1. Locate the serial number on the transom bracket (format: e.g., 0G112233).
2. Visit www.mercurymarine.com, agree to the terms, and fill out the online form.
3. For a printed service manual, order through Mercury Marine's website or contact your dealer.

Warranty Information

The Mercury 25 4-Stroke outboard comes with a limited warranty (typically 1–3 years, depending on region and use). Register your product using the Owner's Registration Card to activate warranty coverage. For details, refer to the Mercury Marine warranty section in the owner's manual or contact your dealer.

Accessories

Use only Mercury Precision or Quicksilver accessories designed for your outboard to ensure compatibility and safety. Consult your dealer for installation and operation manuals for accessories.