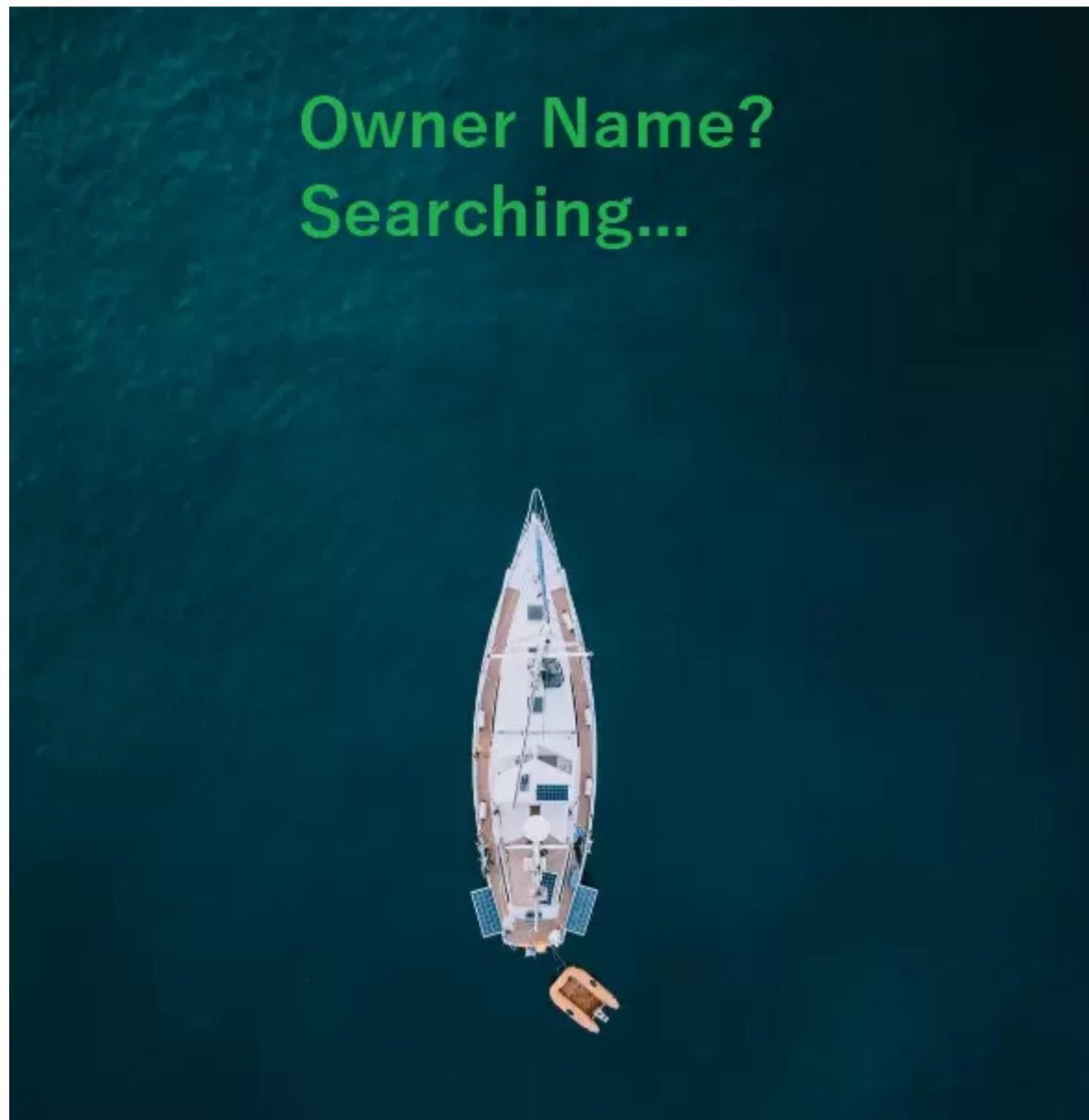


# How to Find The Owner Of A Boat by HIN

There are many reasons may you might want to find out who owns a boat. For **companies** wanting to search many boats on a recurring basis, check out the **Boat Alert** [vessel owner search service here](#).

Maybe you found a boat adrift, abandoned on your property, maybe you would like to speak with a current owner of a boat that you are considering, or maybe a boat has been damaged and you need to talk to the owner. Some times people want to find a boat for a mandatory recall!



Boat Owner Name Search

Whatever the reason, it might be very hard to do this today with all privacy laws and the Family Act in many states.

Remember, vehicle identification numbers (VINs) apply to many types of vehicles such as cars, trucks, RVs, and motorcycles. **But VINs do not apply to boats. Instead, they use a 12-digit HIN (Hull Identification number)**

In this article, we will look at a few ways of finding a boat's owner and point you in the right direction. Then we will discuss the services offered by Boat-Alert.com to companies looking to search our database.

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## **First, What are the Ways to Identify a specific Boat?**

**The initial step in identifying the owner is to identify the *boat*.** Boats have many identifying features including registration numbers, names, and hull identification numbers (HIN). The most visible feature will be the name or registration number. We have an article that discusses [all you wanted to know about Hull ID Numbers](#).

Documented vessels, normally found on navigable waters like oceans, large rivers, or the Great Lakes, are usually larger (at least 5-ton displacement) and are **federally registered**. For those, you would want the USCG official number as well as the Hull ID Number.

They are identified at a distance by their name, which will be on the stern in at least 4-inch block letters. Most will have the name on either side of the bow above the waterline as well, although this is not required for recreational vessels.

## Finding the Boat Registration Number & HIN:

In the United States, if the vessel is not a named vessel, most motor-driven craft and sailboats will have a **registration number on the bow**.

This number will be **a combination of numbers and letters following the format XX 1234 XX**. The first two letters will usually be the state abbreviation. The numbers and following letters are unique to the boat.

The one absolute way to identify a boat is by the Hull Identification Number (**HIN**). Since 1972, boats manufactured in the U.S. must have a permanently affixed HIN. The number is normally found on the stern or lower corner of the transom on the outside. HINs will be on any manufacturing certificates, titles, registrations, or federal documents associated with the boat. You can use the number to check and see if the boat is stolen or if any other problems have been reported.

HINs have a format dictated by law. They are 12 characters long and include both letters and numbers. For a full description of the HIN formats lookup our [hin types](#) page

## Tracking down owner of dumped boat

If there is no registration number, name, or HIN, then things get tricky. This happens on abandoned boats where the owner scratched out all the numbers. Tip: If you live in a state where motors are titled, then you have a chance of finding the owner through the serial number of the motor. If the boat is trailered, you might also be able to use the trailer serial number or tag number.

## How do you find the owner of a boat?

If the boat is at a marina, you can ask the patrons or employees, and chances are someone will know to whom the boat belongs. For boats at private docks, never approach the property owner from the water unless there has been an accident or other emergency.

If you find a lost boat, there has been property damage, or you suspect a boat is stolen it is best to alert the authorities. You can also check the NICB database using the HIN.

## Spring: boat dumping season

Smugglers often use stolen boats and, in the U.S., you never know if someone is armed. If you want to find the owner yourself, then you can try an online search of the HIN. You can also try the state office responsible for issuing registration numbers, but they are unlikely to give out personal contact information.

## How Do I Check a VIN Number on a Boat?

As previously mentioned, boats have a unique identification number called a Hull Identification Number(HIN).

Boats do not have a VIN. HINs are normally located aft on the stern or transom and will be permanently affixed to the hull. You can run the HIN on VinAlert.com in case it is in the NMVTIS database or run a [Boat Alert History Report](#).

## Can you find out who owns a boat by hull number?

### What do I Use the HIN for on a boat?

HINs are a way to identify a boat, like a serial number. It can match many databases and some might have the owner of the boat. You can also try contacting the Secretary of State, DNR, parks, or other DMV titling agency.

***How to find out who owns a boat & How to find previous boat owner***

## How to Find a Boat's Owner by the VIN Number

To find information about a particular HIN you can use an online service or check with local authorities.

## Will the Owner's Name Always be Attached to a Boat?

In almost all cases, yes. There may be a few unusual instances when a boat will not have the actual owner listed, but these are rare. Homemade boats, small human-powered craft like canoes and kayaks, and government-owned boats may not have a specific owner listed or have no documentation at all. On the other hand if a boat is homemade but is registered, then the HIN number will start with the XXZ, where xx are the state codes.

# How to Find Out Who Is on a Title for a Boat?

## Step 1

Check the boat's registration. Look on either side of the bow for a registration sticker. This will tell you if the boat is documented with the Coast Guard or if it is registered with the state. The sticker is usually a small square or rectangle.

## Step 2

Write down the boat's identifying information. Write down any information on the boat's registration sticker. Find the hull identification number (HIN). Write down the **name** and port of hail of the boat. This is usually located on the stern, too.

## Step 3

Enter the boat into the [Coast Guard-documented database](#). However, if the boat is registered with a state, skip to this step and use the boat-alert.com database then contact the relevant state agency.

## Tips for Finding a Boat Owner by Hull #

- Ask the marina owner and neighboring boat owners if they know who owns the boat. If they do not know, perhaps they can pass along a message for you.
- Post a notice at the site where the boat is located, stating that you are searching for the owner of a specific boat. In addition to your contact information, you may wish to include a picture of the boat.
- Use Facebook lost and found groups
- Enter the name of the boat into an Internet search engine like Google to see if there is a website that mentions the boat and its owner. This is a good way to track an owner of a boat that is linked to a business with its own website.
- Post an ad with a picture of the boat in the local newspaper or on a website with a Lost and Found section.
- Visit the Vessel Registration of your State or province
- Contact the secretary of state

Since states require the HIN to appear on registration certificates, you can find the boat's owner by purchasing a boat history report online and paying with a credit card. Not all States will disclose this information so it is **not guaranteed** in the Boat Alert report.

## Steps to find a vessel owner using the Hull ID Number and a boat history lookup:

### Step 1

Copy the HIN from the upper right hand corner of the stern of the boat. You can also find the HIN on the boat registration certificate or bill of sale.

### Step 2

Go to a website that sells boat history reports. Examples are [boatfax.com](#) and **Boat-Alert.com**. Read the disclaimers since owner names are not guaranteed.

### Step 3

Enter the HIN in the space provided and follow instructions to proceed. You may be asked to select additional reports or pricing options. If you enter a valid HIN into the search, you get basic information on the boat for free, but not the name of the owner. Prices vary.

Follow instructions to enter your credit card information to pay for the report. You "should" download it instantly and it "should" show registered owners..

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## PAID SERVICE: Ownership search for boats in the USA using Hull #

### Q) Which States are covered in the [Boat Alert Owner Search Search?](#)

This tool is **NOT** the same thing as the full [Boat Alert History report](#). It only searches for owner names and addresses and **is meant for companies** wanting to search multiple boats on a monthly basis. Consumers looking at just one or a few boats should run the regular Boat Alert History Report purchased on our home page as it will check all database for hidden problems.

Not all states and federal databases will disclose owner name information due to privacy laws. The owner search **subscription covers only the following:**

- [Wyoming] owner name + address
- [Virginia] owner name + address
- [Texas] owner name + address
- [Oregon] owner name ONLY
- [NY] Zip and county only
- [North Dakota] owner name + address

- [North Carolina] owner name + county only
- [Nevada] owner name + address
- [Mississippi] owner name + address
- [Massachusetts] owner name + address
- [Maine] owner name + address
- [Kansas] owner name + address
- [Hawaii] owner name ONLY
- [Georgia] owner name + address

## Q) How much does the vessel owner search subscription cost?

You get unlimited monthly searches for \$100 USD, paid via PayPal on a recurring basis. Cancel any time. It allows lookups by HIN only and does not cover the entire Boat Alert database, just the owner information search above. Already subscribed? [login here](#).

Desired Password:

Subscribe



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