



Rev Up For A Safe Boating Season

Approximately seventy million Americans enjoy recreational boating each year. Boating provides the perfect opportunity to spend quality time outdoors with family and friends.

To ensure a fun, positive experience, it's important to always boat safely. Without caution, your pleasure trip can quickly turn disastrous.

The following are several basic boating tips designed to help keep everyone safe:

- Learn to swim. To stay safe in and around the water, it is important that anyone participating in a boating activity knows how to swim.
- Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD). U.S. Coast Guard-approved PFDs can be effective in drowning prevention. One size does not fit all. Look at the label for weight, size and use information. Check the fit—with straps and buckles secured, the life jacket should not slip over your head or come over your ears.
- Know the weather forecast. Keep an eye out for changing conditions and act accordingly. Access weather information from the television, radio, newspaper or Internet. The National Weather Service also broadcasts marine weather forecasts regularly—tune your VHF marine radio to 162.4 Mhz or log onto the NWS website at www.nws.noaa.gov.
- Tell someone where you're going. If you have a change of plans, make it known.
- Have the proper equipment. Make sure your boat has a radio, lifejackets, air horn, first aid kit, VHF radio and fire extinguishers. Know how to properly use them.
- Avoid alcohol. It affects your judgment, vision, balance and coordination.
- Know your boat. Understand the operation and handling characteristics of your boat. Be aware of its passenger capacity and whether your passengers can swim.
- Be compliant. Practice the Rules of the Road (Navigational Rules). Know and obey Federal and state regulations and waterway markers.
- Shut off your engines when approaching swimmers.
- Keep updated navigational charts on your boat and use them.
- Be observant. Be watchful of anyone being towed behind your boat (water skiers, tubers, etc.)
- Take at least one certified boating safety course.

Adapted from National Safe Boating Campaign and U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety.

The USCG also suggests participating in the Vessel Safety Check (VSC) Program, a free public service provided by the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadron volunteer organizations. Volunteer personnel check safety equipment and provide information about equipment purposes, safety procedures and applicable regulations. Visit <http://www.usps.org> for details.

For additional information: Safe Boating Campaign, <http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com> U.S. Coast Guard—Office of Boating Safety, <http://www.uscgboating.org>.

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