

BOATING SAFETY GUIDE

F O R R E C R E A T I O N A L B O A T E R S



SAFE BOATING
M A G A Z I N E

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BEFORE YOU GO BOATING





Boating Should be Enjoyable and Safe for Everyone

The number one priority for every boater should be safety. Make sure you are prepared for any event that could take place while out on the water. No matter how much experience you have, it's always important for everyone to review boating safety rules and practices before leaving the dock. This guide has a few safety tips to help you boat responsibly and enjoy your time on the water.



Take a Boating Safety Course

Boater education can save lives and reduce accidents and injuries on the water. Boating Safety courses cover state boating laws, navigation rules, what to do before you get underway, and other useful and important information to enhance your boating experience. Visit

www.nasbla.org/education/taking-a-boat-course to find courses in your state.

Get a Free Vessel Safety Check

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadrons offer complimentary boat examinations to verify the presence and condition of certain safety equipment required by state and federal regulations.



BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE DOCK





Be Prepared for a Fun and Safe Time on the Water

Before you leave the dock, you'll need to ensure you have the right safety gear and equipment on your boat. We have put together a pre-departure checklist to ensure proper safety equipment is onboard.

Be weather wise, plan your boating activity, destination and route ahead, check for weather and water conditions, and let someone on land know where you are headed.



Four **Must-Have** Safety Equipment

1

Lifejackets & Throwable Floatation Device

Have onboard one PFD per passenger
Discuss proper use and location of PFDs
Have onboard a throwable device

2

Fire Extinguishers

Fully charged and accessible
Discuss location with passengers and crew

3

Visual Distress Signals

Ensure that flares, day signals are accessible and stored in a dry location
Ensure Flares are not expired

4

Sound Producing Device

Have onboard a horn that can emit a four-second blast audible for 1/2 mile
Bring a spare can of air or an alternate device
Attach a whistle to each PFD



Recommended **Safety** Equipment

VHF Marine Radio

Make sure to have a VHF marine radio on board and know how to use in case of emergency.

Anchor and Dock Lines

Have at least one anchor setup and ready to use, and two three extra dock lines.

Emergency Locator Device

Emergency locator devices are used to alert search and rescue services to your location in case of an emergency.

Emergency Boating Kit

Keep an Emergency Boating first aid kit onboard.

Engine Cut-off Switch

An engine cut-off switch will stop the engine if a boat operator or passenger falls overboard.



What to Check Before You Launch

- 1 Weather & Water Conditions
- 2 Tide Charts
- 3 Fuel Level
- 4 Engine Fluids
- 5 Bilge Pump
- 6 Navigation Lights



Plan Your Route

Know your destination, plan how you will get there, and how you will come back!

Plan your route, review your navigation tools and charts, and file a float plan.

Smart phone navigation apps are widely available, but also make sure to have paper charts and a magnetic compass, phones might lose network connectivity or might lose power at the end of a long day!

Pre-Departure Checklist

State Registration & Documents

Lifejackets & Throwable Devices

Visual Distress signals

Navigation Tools & Maps

Magnetic Compass

Fire Extinguisher

Sound Producing Deice

Navigation Lights and Day Shapes

VHF Marine Radio

Flashlight and Batteries

Anchor and Dock Lines

Emergency Boating Kit

Check Fuel Amount & Engine Fluids

Check the Weather

File a Float Plan

Assign a Designated Lookout

WHILE ON THE WATER





Enjoy Your time on the Water and Use Common Sense

- Always stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.
- Operate at a safe speed at all times.
- Steer clear of large vessels.
- Be extra careful in crowded areas and marinas.
- Be respectful of buoys and other navigational aids.
- Avoid hazardous practices.
- Respect other boaters and the environment.



Always Wear Your Lifejacket

Accidents on the water happen too fast to reach and put on a stowed life jacket. Close to two-thirds of drowning victims are good swimmers.

Never Overload Your Boat

Overloading your boat – with people or gear – can cause it to swamp, capsize or be difficult to control. Do not exceed the maximum weight or number of people allowed on this boat.

Avoid Alcohol

Alcohol, drugs and certain prescription medications can impair a boater's judgment, balance, vision and reaction time. It is illegal to boat while intoxicated.

Be Aware of Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. Carbon monoxide can accumulate anywhere in or around your boat, and it can be deadly.

Remember that Boats have no Breaks

The boat with its passengers is heavy and has momentum. It takes time to reverse the motor to slow or stop.

By law, it is your responsibility to avoid collisions – and it is much easier to avoid collisions if you are not going too fast.

Always operate your boat at a speed where you can maintain control at all times

Know Navigation Rules of the Road

Learn the basic navigation principles for crossing, overtaking or passing another boat.

Understand the meaning of the Navigation Aids and the different buoys.

Be aware of local hazards, submerged objects.

Know the specific local laws and regulations that apply to boating in your area that you must follow.

A Boating Safety Class will teach you these principles.





Stay Clear From Propellers

Keep watch around the engine area when people are in the water. Never allow passengers to board or exit your boat from the water when engines are on.

Use an Engine Cut-off Switch

If a boat operator or passenger falls overboard, the boat may continue across the water, leaving the person stranded and striking others in the water.

Children Deserve Special Attention

Assign a responsible adult or adults to keep track of the whereabouts and safety of each child on board. Assign each child a specific seat on the boat and make sure they are in that seat before the boat moves.

Always do a head count to make sure all passengers are safely inside the boat before starting the motor and post a lookout to make sure there is no one around or behind the boat.

Stay Hydrated

The heat and sun can dehydrate your body very quickly, which can affect your alertness. Make sure you have enough water for everyone on board.

Be Aware of Cold-Water Immersion

Even expert swimmers who fall into cold water may experience a sudden gasp reflex, inhale frigid water and drown. Wear a life jacket or flotation jacket at all times while boating, dress appropriately for the air and water temperature, carefully stow all gear and equipment to avoid slips and falls... stay seated while the boat is in motion... and maintain a good grip on the boat if you must move about.

Anchor Safely

always anchor in a place where you can be seen clearly by the operators of other boats.

Always anchor from the bow – not the stern or any other part of the boat. Anchoring from the stern can cause the boat to swamp and sink.

You must turn on the anchor light if you are anchored at night.





Avoid Hazardous Practices

Never sit on the bow, seatback, gunwales, stern or swim platform while the boat is moving. Avoid diving or jumping off a moving boat. Avoid excessive speed near other boats or marinas. Never try to stop a boat by putting your arms or legs between the boat and a dock – this can result in severe injuries. Don't engage in tow sports at night

Respect Other Boaters and The Environment

Always be courteous to other boaters, learn about the boating etiquette, and respect the environment and wildlife.

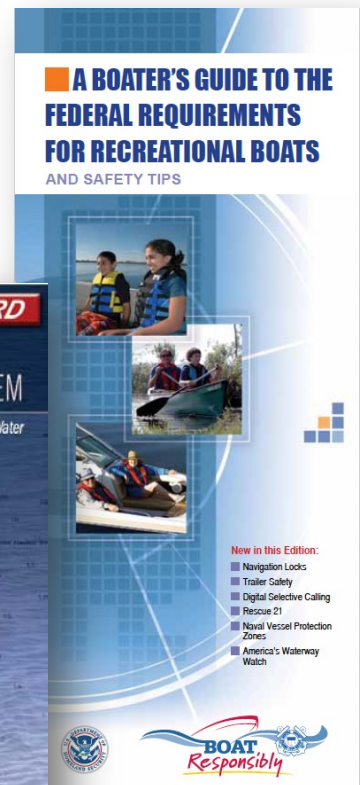
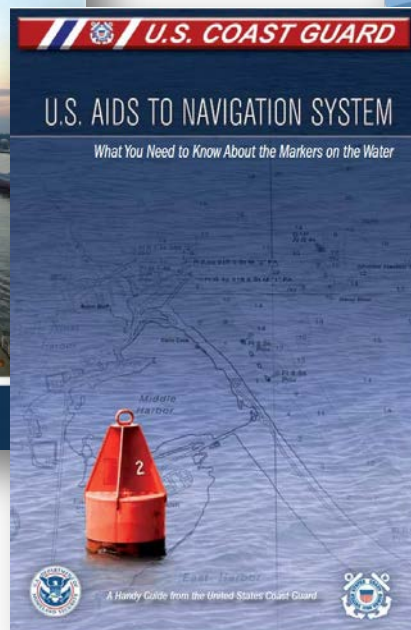
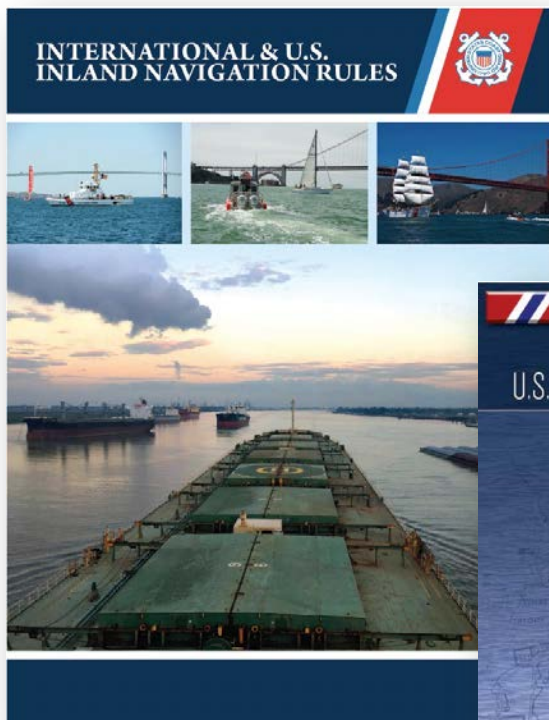
Have Fun!

Boating is a fun activity for all ages, make the most out of your time on the water, and make sure everyone around you is having a good time.

Navigation Rules and Laws

It is your responsibility as a boater to understand and follow your local laws and navigation rules.

- Visit The Official Website of the U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division <https://www.uscgboating.org/>
- NASBLA has developed several Boating Safety Dashboards <https://www.nasbla.org/nasblamain/nasbla-resources/statelawdashboards>





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