



101 Critical Days of Summer

Safety Tip #12 – Boating



No matter how much experience you have, it's always a good idea for everyone to review boating safety rules before departures. Most of these basic safety tips seem like common sense, but countless boaters don't take the time to put safety first in their rush to be the first out on the water. Take some extra time and avoid becoming a tragic statistic.

These tips are:

- + Leave a float plan with someone at home, describing where you are going, who you are with and when you expect to return.
- + Always wear an approved and properly fitted Personal Flotation Device when in a boat.
- + **Make sure you have enough life vests of the appropriate size and type for all adults and children on board and use them.**
- + Check all your first aid and emergencies supplies.
- + Inspect all life vests, safety floats and cushions. Replenish necessary items, change batteries, and replace worn or damaged PFDs.
- + Carry a throwable flotation device in case someone falls overboard.
- + Check your boat, whether it's a rubber dingy, canoe or a yacht and ensure that all equipment is there and working before launching.
- + Dress in layers that can be peeled off and put back on as the temperature dictates.
- + Watch carefully for branches and other debris carried into the water by snowmelt or runoff and avoid anything that appears to be floating on the water.
- + If you are hunting, transport firearms to the boat unloaded, cased, muzzle first, with the action open.
- + Take these safety precautions when around dams:
 - o Observe all barriers, flashing lights, horns and sirens.
 - o Leave your boat motor running to provide maneuvering power.
 - o Stay clear of spillways; changing currents and "boiling" waves can make boat control difficult near dams.
 - o Never anchor boats below a dam because water levels can change rapidly.
- + Know the weather forecast for the area. High winds can be dangerous. Cancel trip if water conditions aren't safe. Keep an AM radio handy for the latest updates.
- + Never overload your boat. Load gear low in the boat and distribute the weight evenly.
- + Never anchor from the stern.
- + At the first sign of a storm, head for shore.
- + If an accident occurs, **STAY WITH THE BOAT** and use distress signals.
- + Unless your clothing is creating a hazard, do not remove extra clothing. It can help prevent hypothermia.
- + All accidents cannot be prevented, but by following these few simple rules, you can greatly improve your chances of survival should an accident occur.



Carbon monoxide (CO) can harm and even kill you inside or outside your boat!

Did you also know.....

- CO symptoms are similar to seasickness or alcohol intoxication?
- CO can affect you whether you're underway, moored, or anchored?
- You cannot see, smell, or taste CO?
- CO can make you sick in seconds. In high enough concentrations, even a few breaths can be fatal?

Most important of all, did you know carbon monoxide poisonings are **preventable**? Every boater should be aware of the risks associated with carbon monoxide - what it is; where it may accumulate; and the symptoms of CO poisoning. To protect yourself, your passengers, and those around you, learn all you can about CO.

Alcohol and Boating Just Don't Mix

Alcohol impairs your judgment and your ability to operate a vessel safely. Dehydration and the motion and vibration of the boat add to the intensity of your impairment when on the water.

Balance is one of the first things you lose when you consume alcohol. When you combine loss of balance with the rocking of a boat, the chance of falling overboard increases. The sun causes you to perspire, which removes the water from your body but leaves the alcohol in. This can cause a quicker and higher level of impairment.

Alcohol - Sobering Facts

- Beer is NOT less intoxicating than any other alcoholic beverage.
- Only time will sober a person, NOT black coffee or a cold shower.
- It is NOT easy to tell if someone is impaired. Many experienced drinkers can hide their impairment, but the effect alcohol has on the body remains.
- You are NOT the best person to judge if you are fit to operate a vessel. Your judgment is one of the first things you lose when you drink.

Boating doesn't need any stimulus to make it fun! Fishing doesn't need any liquid bait to improve the catch.

Fun Ways to Avoid the Hazards of Alcohol

- Take along a variety of sodas, a jug of water, iced tea, lemonade, or take along nonalcoholic beer.
- Take along plenty of food.
- Wear clothes that keep you cool.
- Plan to limit your trip to the number of hours you can spend on the water without becoming tired.
- Enjoy your outing more by having a party ashore - in the picnic area, in the Yacht Club, in your backyard - where you will have time between the fun and getting back into your boat or your car.
- If you dock somewhere for lunch or dinner and drink alcohol, wait a reasonable time before getting in your boat or car.
- Be sure to have a sober designated driver as the boat operator.
- No alcohol aboard is the safe way to go - remember, intoxicated passengers can fall overboard too.

Another site to visit for more tips.....

- <http://boatsafe.com/nauticalknowhow/safetips.htm>

***Stay Safe While Boating - Don't
Become a Coast Guard Statistic –
Your Risk Management Staff***



**This document was derived
from multiple sources. Sources
are available upon request in
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