



Boating Safety Tips

Life Jacket Safety Tips

1. No matter what activity you have planned – boating, fishing, paddling and more – always remember to wear a life jacket every time you are on the water. Accidents on the water can happen much too fast to reach and put on a stowed life jacket. Drowning is the cause of death in almost three-fourths of boating fatalities and approximately 85 percent of those who drown are not wearing life jackets.
2. Make sure your life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved. Double-check that your life jacket is appropriate for your favorite water activities.
3. Take the time to ensure a proper fit. A life jacket that is too large or too small can cause different situational problems.
4. Life jackets meant for adults do not work for children. If you are boating with children, make sure they are wearing properly fitted, child-sized life jackets. Do not buy a life jacket for your child to “grow into.”
5. On recreational boats underway, children under 13 years old must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket unless they are below decks or in an enclosed cabin. Some state laws vary – check with your local Marine Law Enforcement Authorities.

Additional Safe Boating Tips

1. Don't drink while you boat. Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; it was listed as the leading factor in 19 percent of deaths. For more information on boating under the influence, visit OperationDryWater.org.
2. Know your state's boating laws before you get out on the water. Rules and laws can differ from state to state and violations can result in ticketing, fines or jail time.
3. Make sure your boat is as prepared as you are. There are many items that need to be checked and re-checked on any boat. Schedule a Vessel Safety Check with your local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadrons before you hit the water.
4. Check the weather. Know the latest marine weather forecast prior to going out, and keep a regular check for changing conditions.
5. Keep in touch. Communication devices can be the most important piece of emergency equipment on board a vessel, especially in case of emergency. Cell phones, satellite phones, emergency position indicating radio beacons, VHF radios and personal locator beacons can all contribute in an emergency situation.