

Boating Safety

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As soon as summer approaches, all across the country families head out with their boats for some fun in the water. Sadly though, many deaths and serious injuries are caused due to improper boating practices. In most cases, these tragedies could have easily been avoided. Review the following resources for in-depth information on how to keep you and your family safe while boating.

Safety Checklist

One extremely helpful tactic is to keep a safety checklist on the boat. Each season, before heading out, give the boat a thorough inspection to ensure that all parts are working properly and that registration papers are still valid. Personal floatation devices, and emergency items such as flares, flashlights, and first aid kits should also be double-checked. Keep multiple copies of the checklist so that a new one can be used each time without any hassle.

- [The Online Boat Examiner Checklist](#)
- [Printable Safety Checklist to Keep On Board](#) (PDF)
- [Survival Checklist for Sailors](#) (PDF)
- [A Comprehensive Pre-Departure Safety Checklist](#)
- [A Downloadable Boat Safety Checklist](#) (PDF)

Safety Courses

Why take a boating safety course if you've already been boating for years? In actual fact, there are many safety aspects that even experienced boaters may not be aware of, or may have forgotten. Several organizations, including the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, provide various types of boating safety programs for all types of vessels and experience levels. Some of these are even free, while others can be completed online.

- [Types of Boating Safety Courses](#)
- [Free Online Boating Safety Course & Exam](#)
- [Reasons to Enroll in a Safety Course](#)
- [Learn About National Boat Safety Courses](#)
- [Boating Safety and Legal Resources](#)

Paddles and Oars

Paddlers have to take special care when they are out on the water. They face several dangers they need to be cautious of. This can include capsizing, hypothermia, injuries, or even not being seen by other boats. Even the most confident paddler should always wear a life jacket in the water. Stay observant and continually monitor your surroundings to avoid any dangerous situations.

- [Safety Tips for Canoeing or Paddle boating](#)
- [General Canoe Safety Information](#)
- [Stay Safe While Kayaking](#)
- [Safety Rules for Paddlers](#)
- [Observational Safety Tips for Paddlers](#)

Understanding BUI

We all know that drinking and driving is terribly dangerous, but what about drinking and boating? It may be tempting to have a drink while soaking up the sun and surf, but in fact it is even more risky. Drinking does not only affect the boat's operator. It can also impair passengers' judgment so that they may not act quickly or correctly in an emergency situation. Further exacerbating this issue is the fact that the constant motion, noise, and sun exposure cause impairment to occur even faster.

- [Legalities of Drinking on a Boat](#)
- [How Safe is Drinking and Boating?](#)
- [The Dangers of Boating and Alcohol](#) (PDF)
- [How Does Alcohol Affect Boat Operators?](#) (PDF)

Life Jackets

It is one thing to keep life jackets on the boat, but it is entirely another to actually wear them and know how to use them. Before setting out on the water, practice life jacket safety with the other passengers. In this way, everyone will know what to do if there is an emergency. Boat operators should also test the jackets each year. Any that are faulty should be replaced before the next trip.

- [Which Life Jacket to Wear](#)
- [Benefits of Wearing a Life Jacket](#)
- [Life Jacket Styles and Safety Tips](#)
- [A General Guide to Life Jackets](#)
- [Safety Features of Life Jackets](#) (PDF)

Kids and Pets

Children and pets can be particularly boisterous on a boat, reveling in the fun, new experience. Boat operators should pre-empt this by setting rules in advance. Make sure that children and animals alike are wearing life jackets. Children should already know how to swim. Make sure that there is no running, jumping or leaning over the side of the boat. Keep snacks, drinks, sunscreen, and an extra set of clothing on board, along with any medication that might be needed.

- [Boating Safety Guidelines for Parents](#)
- [Boating Safety Activity Book for Kids](#) (PDF)
- [Kids and Life Jackets](#)
- [Boating with a Dog on Board](#)
- [Boating Safety for Pets](#)

Reporting Accidents

Occasionally accidents do happen, and in this case it is required by federal law for the boat operator or owner to file an official report. This is mandatory if the accident involves the death, disappearance, or serious injury of any person, or if a boat sustains serious damage or total destruction. Keep a few copies of the report form on board for this reason. If an accident occurs, it has to be reported within forty-eight hours if there is a fatality, or within a span of ten days for all other cases.

- [When Should an Accident be Reported?](#)
- [Boating Accident Reporting Form](#) (PDF)
- [How to Deal with a Boating Accident](#)
- [Tips for Filing a Boating Accident Report](#)
- [Safe Boating State Laws](#)