

BOATING SAFETY TIPS

Boating Safety Course

Taking a boating safety course is simple and convenient. Many different organizations and agencies offer them, so boaters can find one that works best for them. Boaters can even take courses at home or online. A boating safety course can save boaters money. That's because many boat insurance providers offer discounts to people who have successfully completed a boating safety course.

Life Jacket

Each year there are more than 550 boating fatalities from boating accidents. When boaters are wearing one, chances of survival from capsizing or a fall overboard will dramatically increase. The same is true for passengers, which is why it's critical for the boat operator to make sure everyone on the boat, including the operator, wears a life jacket. Don't just store life jackets for a "what-if" situation, always wear a life jacket while boating. Life jackets save lives!

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a tough opponent to spot, even for an experienced boater. Carbon monoxide has no color, no odor and no taste – but it can be deadly if breathed too much of it. Don't "teak surf!" Teak surfing is the (extremely dangerous) practice of being towed immediately behind a boat, where the towed person can be exposed to deadly levels of carbon monoxide from the boat's motor.

Alcohol

In most of the States, if a boater is operating a boat or water ski with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or more, they are breaking the law—something no self-respecting boater would do. A boater can even be arrested when their BAC is less than 0.08% if the conditions aren't safe. Boating can magnify the side effects of alcohol use. Effects include impaired judgment, reduced balance and poor coordination. See "[*Almost A Perfect Day.*](#)"

Having a "designated operator" operate the boat may not necessarily increase safety during the voyage. That's because intoxicated passengers in a boat are also a safety risk. They can (and do) fall or jump overboard, swim too close to running propellers and capsize boats by standing up.

Propeller Safety

Don't swim near or under the back deck or swim platform of a boat while its motor is running. In addition to the risk that comes from swimming near a rotating blade, this activity can expose a boater to deadly amounts of carbon monoxide.

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