

## BOAT WITH CAUTION

**File a float plan! A written float plan records where you are going and when you plan to return. It contains information that could prove useful if you do not check in at your estimated time of return. Complete the information below and leave it with a responsible person prior to launching. Remember to contact that individual when you safely return.**

### TRIP LEADER OR PERSON FILING PLAN

Name:

Address:

Phone:

### ADDITIONAL PASSENGERS

Total:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

### BOAT INFORMATION

Type:

Color:

Length:

Motor:

Registration Number:

### TOWING VEHICLE

Make/model:

Year:

Color:

License plate:

Will be parked at:

### TRAILER

Make/model:

Color:

License plate:

Will be parked at:



### TRIP INFORMATION

Leaving from:

Date and time:

Anticipated stop(s):

Date and time:

### COMMUNICATION OR SIGNAL EQUIPMENT

Radio or cell phone

Yes No Type

Call name or phone numbers:

Type of signal devices on board:

### EMERGENCY INFORMATION

If not returned by:

Date: Time:

Contact:

Phone Number

We have proper life jackets and safety equipment aboard!

Signature

Date

## BOAT WITH JUDGEMENT

Boat sober! Waterways are second only to highways when it comes to accidental deaths. Many factors impact an individual when underway. Sun, wind, noise, vibration from the boat, motion and dehydration all act as stressors to the body when boating. These stressors can negatively impact a person's balance, vision, coordination and judgement. When alcohol is added to the mix, all of the negative impacts can be seriously magnified.

Not only is it important for the operator to boat sober, passengers also have an obligation to act responsibly. Erratic behavior or sudden, unexpected movements can result in injury, capsizing or a fall overboard. Alcohol can cause even greater disorientation to a person thrown into the water. So for captain and crew, boat safe, boat sober.

**Let sober judgement follow you from ship to shore.**

**BOAT SMART, BOAT SAFE, BOAT SOBER.**



National Safe Boating Council

P.O. Box 509

Bristow, VA 20136

Phone: (703) 361-4294 or e-mail

[outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org](mailto:outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org)

Visit our Web site at: [www.safeboatingcouncil.org](http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org)



# CHOOSE TO BOAT SAFELY



## CHOOSE TO BOAT SAFELY

Choosing to boat safely goes a long way in minimizing risks and liability, while maximizing enjoyment on waterways. It is important to act responsibly to protect lives and property. The best insurance policy for a great boating experience is to incorporate knowledge, wisdom, preparedness, precaution, experience, discretion and judgement. Provide protection for those with whom you boat by following these tips endorsed by the National Safe Boating Council.

## BOAT WITH KNOWLEDGE

Take a boating course! Learn the basics about this leisure activity and pay close attention to the laws that pertain to the area where you boat. Some states require a boating course when operating certain powerboats. Inquire to make sure what courses will meet the requirement. An excellent array of courses is offered through the state, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadrons, as well as other local agencies and commercial providers. Visit the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) Web site at [www.safeboatingcouncil.org](http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org) for links to several approved courses offered over the Internet.

**Participating in a boating course is in a class of its own for learning how to avoid trouble on the water.**

## BOAT WITH WISDOM

Wear a life jacket! Bass tournament participants, whitewater thrill-seekers and top boaters wear theirs, and so should you and your crew. If unexpectedly thrown into the water, it is much more difficult to put on a life jacket. Don't take that risk!

Life jackets come in many styles designed for a variety of activities, are colorful, comfortable and will provide the protection needed if capsizing or falling overboard occurs. The majority of fatalities from these types of mishaps could have been avoided by simply wearing a life jacket. Make sure that each person's device is size appropriate, U.S. Coast Guard approved and in good condition. Know who is required to wear a life jacket where you boat.

**Heads up! Boat smart from the start...wear your life jacket!**

## BOAT WITH PREPAREDNESS

Carry the proper safety equipment! The type of required equipment will vary with different types of boats. This equipment will be important in an emergency situation where help is at a distance. Be prepared for self-rescue or to assist others with these devices.



**Having all the "right stuff" can make a big difference in an emergency situation.**

### Powerboats should carry:

- A life jacket for each person on board, a throwable personal flotation device, as well as extra wearable
- Fire extinguisher of appropriate size and type
- Running lights for nighttime or poor visibility operation
- Sound signaling device
- Visual distress signals such as flares or a flag
- Anchor and line

### Additional items for rescue, protection and comfort:

- Tool kit
- First aid kit
- Weather radio
- Cell phone or VHF marine band radio
- Bailing device
- Throw line for rescue
- Charts or a map of the area
- Extra Fuel
- Sun protection such as a hat, sunglasses and sun block
- Extra set of warm, dry clothing
- Foul weather gear
- Insect repellent
- Drinking water for protection against dehydration

A Vessel Safety Check (VSC) from a U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, member of the U.S. Power Squadrons, state or local marine safety officers can help determine what equipment is needed. These inspections are free of charge.

## BOAT WITH EXPERIENCE

Know and follow the "rules of the road." As a boat operator you have the responsibility to maneuver your boat in a safe manner and take appropriate action to avoid collision, in accordance with navigation rules. Learn these rules and observe them.

Boats typically meet each other in the following situations.

**Head-on:** When two boats meet bow to bow, both boats should alter course to the starboard (right) to avoid the other.

**Overtaking:** A boat being passed by another must maintain its course and speed while the overtaking vessel passes. The overtaking boat may pass on either side.

**Crossing:** All boats have a danger zone. This zone is approximately from 12:00 o'clock to the four o'clock range, if the bow of the boat is at 12 o'clock. In a crossing situation, the boat in the danger zone (ahead and to the right) continues on course while the other boats stays clear by slowing down or altering course to pass behind.

When boating it is critical to maintain a proper lookout to avoid collisions with other boats and objects. Operating at a safe speed is also important and is impacted by visibility, wind, water conditions, currents, boat maneuverability, traffic density and proximity of hazards or objects in the water. When considering speed, an operator must be aware of the boat's wake and is responsible for any damage or harm the wake may cause. Wake from a boat can potentially harm other boats, shorelines, docks and other users of the waterways.

**Rule of Good Seamanship:** Nothing in the navigation rules excuses a boat operator from following the rules or from practicing good seamanship.

**General Prudential Rule:** When applying the rules, consider all the dangers to navigation and any circumstance that may make you alter your actions from these rules to avoid immediate danger.

**Avoid that sinking sensation. Follow the navigation rules.**

## BOAT WITH DISCRETION

Be aware of weather conditions! To the boater, weather is a primary consideration. Conditions can quickly change. Early and late season boating can cause additional concern with colder water and air temperatures. Extra caution must be exercised during these periods.

Check weather conditions for the area in which you plan to boat before leaving for the destination. There are several resources available to assist you.

Newspapers can provide an excellent account of weather by issuing one to three day reports. Radio and television broadcasts include weather reports with short and long range forecasts. Many stations even offer a report on boating conditions during the peak season. The Internet provides another reliable source of weather information. The National Weather Service broadcasts reports 24 hours a day. Transmitters are placed across the country, providing the latest weather information directly for the service. This information can be accessed through a radio with a weather band.

Always keep an eye to the sky when on the water. Forecasts, although helpful, can sometimes change. Squalls and thunderstorms can quickly approach and create a dangerous situation. If trapped on the water during a storm, make sure all passengers are wearing a life jacket. Reduce the boat's speed and head toward the nearest safe shore or harbor.

Use discretion and delay plans for a day on the water if weather is questionable. If underway, use discretion and head for shore if conditions appear to be changing for the worse.

**Don't cast your fate to the wind. Monitor weather conditions continuously.**

