

PRE-LAUNCH CHECKLIST

Before heading out on the water for a day of boating or other water sport activity, review this checklist to ensure a fun & safe adventure!

- Prepare your gear.** Before leaving the dock, make sure you and your guests have the safety equipment required for the day ahead. Review our list “What to Pack” on the inside of this brochure.
- Check the forecast.** The weather can change quickly, so it is important to look at the forecast, not to just look at the current state of the weather.
- File a float plan.** A written statement including a description of your boat, who is on board, a list of safety equipment you’re carrying, where you expect to be, and when you expect to return. Leave your float plan with a friend, family member or even the dock master at your marina.
- Complete a passenger briefing.** Acquaint your passengers with the location of safety information and equipment on board, including life jackets. Ensure a properly fitted life jacket is worn by each passenger.
- Check your lines.** Inspect the dock lines to make sure they are in good condition, carry two or three extra dock lines and have at least one anchor set-up and bent-on to your anchor line.
- Have a safety plan for re-boarding your vessel.** What’s your plan for bad weather or other emergencies? Be sure to have either a swim ladder, platform or lifting harness on board.



RESOURCES

- uscgboating.org
- safeboatingcouncil.org
- safeboatingcampaign.com
- boatoncourse.com
- boatusfoundation.org
- boaterexam.com
- boat-ed.com
- Free Vessel Safety Check: cgaux.org/vsc/

TAKE A COURSE

Find online training videos and on-water classes at boatoncourse.com.



The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) was organized in September 1958. The NSBC serves as a national catalyst for developing a safe boating culture by providing educational resources, outreach programming, and training opportunities for industry partners and the boating community to influence safe, secure, and responsible boating.

National Safe Boating Council
8140 Flannery Court
Manassas, VA 20109
Phone: 703.361.4294

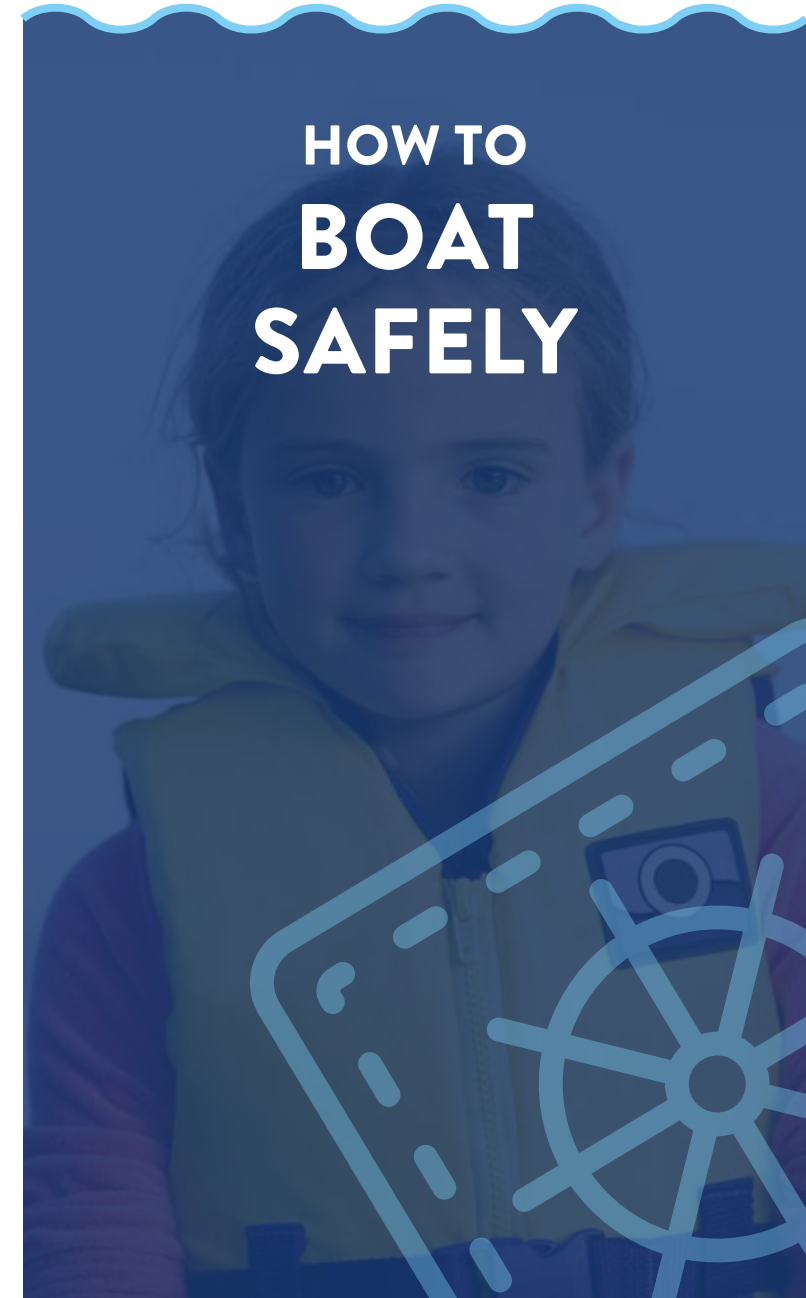
SAFEBOATINGCOUNCIL.ORG



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HOW TO BOAT SAFELY





A REAL BOATER IS RESPONSIBLE

- **Wear a life jacket!** Ensure a properly fitted life jacket is worn by each passenger.
- **Attach a safety lanyard** to your vessel. Operators should attach a lanyard or wireless device that cuts the engine should they become separated from the boat. This avoids the boat from driving in circles out of control.
- **Keep a proper look out.** This includes sight and sound. Everyone on board can help with this.
- **Maintain 3 points of contact with the boat.** Two hands holding on while being seated, two feet, and a hand holding on when moving about the boat. Always maintain balance to avoid injury to yourself or someone else.
- **Don't boat under the influence.** Sun, wind and noise can impair balance, coordination and concentration. These same issues are intensified when combined with drinking alcohol, taking drugs or even some medications. Don't drink alcohol or take drugs.
- **Check the weather before launch and while on the water** to make sure conditions haven't changed. Never try to outrun a storm.
- **Don't run out of gas** by following the rule of thirds. 1/3 of your fuel to be used outbound, 1/3 inbound, 1/3 reserve.
- **Know how to use your VHF Radio.** Monitor Channel 16 for emergency traffic and weather alerts.
- **Know the waters you are navigating.** Refer to local charts, stay within marked channels and be aware of tides and currents.

WEAR AND PACK THE RIGHT GEAR

Life Jackets and Emergency Communications

Wear It Like a Pro

- Ensure life jackets are U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Wear the life jacket approved for the boating activity or water sport. The label will indicate the life jackets accredited use by craft, sport and/or age.
- If wearing an inflatable life jacket, read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Be honest about your swimming ability. If you are a poor swimmer, you may opt for a higher performance level life jacket to ensure you can tread water and keep upright if needed during an emergency.

Fit + Care

- Always check for proper fit of the life jacket. Pull up on straps to check for a snug and comfortable fit.
- Inspect the life jacket to be in good working order. Make sure the life jacket is not ripped, torn or defective in any way.



KEEPING YOU SAFE AND INFORMED.

Find life jacket resources, fitting guides, and more at: safeboatingcampaign.com.

Emergency Communication Devices

Emergency Communication Devices are your first line of defense in an emergency as they alert authorities you are in need. The devices can be installed on your boat including a VHF Radio, Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) and Satellite Phones, or these devices can be worn on your person, like a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB).



Cell phones should not be considered an Emergency Communication Device as cell service is not reliable.

Know how to use your VHF Radio

Monitor Channel 16 for emergency traffic and weather alerts. If your VHF radio has Digital Selective Calling, be sure it has a registered MMSI number and is properly connected to your boat's GPS.

Visual & Sound Distress Signaling Devices

Distress Signaling Devices can aid in the search and rescue efforts of local authorities or Good Samaritans by pinpointing your location visually.

These aids include:

- flares
- personal locator beacon
- electronic distress lights
- a flag
- whistles
- signaling mirrors

Carrying at least one of these items on your person in the event of a sudden fall overboard or should you get disconnected from your craft, can save your life.

Check your state marine law enforcement rules to ensure you meet the requirements of required safety equipment for your craft.

WHAT TO PACK FOR A DAY ON THE WATER

