

Boating Safety

Safety is a shared responsibility.

Recreational boaters must take an active role in ensuring our waterways are safer for everyone.

A boating safety course makes sense.

Educating yourself on your craft and its limits, the nautical rules of the road and safe boating techniques will improve safety on the waterways.

To go boating, you need proof of competency.

Did you know that all operators of vessels fitted with a motor and under four metres in length (including personal watercraft) are required to have an Operator Competency Card for this boating season?

The Coast Guard strongly recommends that all operators take an accredited boating safety course to get their cards.

For a list of accredited course providers and more information, visit www.boatingsafety.gc.ca or call 1-800-267-6687.

Save a life. Wear your flotation device.

Every year more than 600 lives are lost due to drowning.

According to the Canadian Red Cross, 70 per cent of boaters who drowned were not wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) or lifejacket.

If they had, many of these fatalities could have been avoided.

It's simple - it's your life, preserve it.

Don't cruise with booze.

At least 40 per cent of all power-boating fatality victims had a blood alcohol level above the legal driving limit.

Mixing alcohol and boating is far more dangerous than most people realize.

Fatigue, sun, wind and the motion of the boat dull the senses and alcohol intensifies these effects.

Booze and boats simply don't mix.

Operating a vessel while impaired is illegal and an offense under the Criminal Code.

Convictions, even for a first offense, can result in heavy punishment.

Careless operation of a vessel can lead to fines.

Operating a vessel in a careless and inconsiderate manner is against the law.

Know the risks, and play by the rules

If you:

- **jump waves**
- **come unreasonably close to other vessels**
- **disturb the peace**
- **speed near swimmers**
- **play chicken**
- **weave through congested traffic at high speed**

you risk receiving a hefty fine and possibly ending up in front of a judge.

Boaters beware - carbon monoxide can kill.

In the last year, an alarming number of boating fatalities were caused by carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Such deaths can occur when swimming or diving around pontoons or platforms mounted on vessels or being in areas where engine exhaust gases may accumulate.

Cooking, heating or even leaving a motor on idle can result in a dangerous build-up of CO, a toxic, odourless, tasteless and non-irritating gas that can kill within

minutes.

Be aware of the hazards and take precautions.

Don't take a child under six on your personal watercraft

The Canadian Coast Guard is cautioning all personal watercraft operators not to carry passengers under the age of six.

Young children do not have the necessary skills to ride safely and tragic accidents could result.

All passengers should be seated behind the operator and everyone aboard should wear a personal flotation device or lifejacket of the appropriate size.

Age and horsepower restrictions save lives

It's everyone's responsibility to know the rules:

- Children under 16 can't operate a personal watercraft, either supervised or unsupervised.

- Children between 12 and 16 can't operate a pleasure craft fitted with a motor larger than 40 horsepower.

- Children under 12 can't operate a pleasure craft fitted with a motor larger than 10 horsepower.

Example of personal watercraft would be a Sea-Doo.