

# Stay Safe on the Water

## 1. The minimum gear required by the USCG is just that... the minimum

- Many factors can determine what type and quantity of safety gear is appropriate for different emergency situations including: type and size of vessel, number of passengers, time of year/day of week, length of departure, and weather.
- Some boaters may require more than the USCG minimum equipment to be properly prepared for incidents on the water.
- Be sure you have the appropriate gear for your intended activity and boating conditions. Your preparedness may save the lives of you and your passengers.



## 2. Wear your life jacket!

- The best life jacket is one you will wear.
- Manufacturers are continuously designing life jackets that are stylish, comfortable, and loaded with safety features. There is no excuse not to wear one.
- Focus on fit, especially for children and non-swimmers.
- 80% of fatal boat accident victims drowned, and 83% of them were not wearing life jackets.



## 3. Own your role as owner/Captain

- Take responsibility to ensure that your boat is equipped with appropriate safety equipment and inform your guests of its location and use.



- Inform your passengers of boating hazards before you embark.

## 4. Know how to call for help

- Consider keeping a VHF radio on board and learn how to use it.
- Cell phones can also be helpful. Use apps from USCG, Boat U.S., and Sea Tow to reach out for help during emergencies.



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## 5. Drive Sober

- Wind, waves, noise, and sun can all be fatiguing and disorienting. Adding alcohol to the mix is a recipe for disaster.
- It is illegal in all states to operate a vessel under the influence of alcohol.
- Designate a sober driver when you expect to be serving alcohol on board.

## 6. Know the rules of the road

- Stay alert when operating near other moving vessels and know when to yield right of way.
- Consider keeping a copy of the official rules on board.

## 7. Understand Navigation lights

- When boating during times of low visibility, being able to understand other vessel's navigation lights can be crucial to avoid collisions.
- Make sure your own vessel's navigation lights are functional and appropriate for your vessel size and type.

## 8. File a float plan

- Prepare a written statement to friends or family members that describes your planned boating activity.
- The Coast Guard Mobile App is a convenient way to file float plans to be sent to email addresses of your choice.

## 9. Take a Boating Safety Course

- Check with your state boating agency for a listing of local courses offered.
- Check for classes offered by the Coast Guard Auxiliary at [http://www.cgaux.org/boatinged/class\\_finder/index.php](http://www.cgaux.org/boatinged/class_finder/index.php)



## NEW LAW FOR 2021 ENGINE CUT-OFF SWITCH

Starting April 1, 2021 a new law went into effect that requires the boat operator of a boat with an installed Engine Cut-Off Switch (ECOS) to use the ECOS link. This law applies to motorized boats with 3 or more horsepower that are less than 26ft in length and operating on plane or above displacement speed. See the full details here: <https://uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/engine-cut-off-devices.php>

## BOATING SAFETY LINKS

### [Boat Responsibility: US Coast Guard Boating Safety Division](#)

This website is a significant resource for anyone looking to spend time on the water. Whether you're looking to read federal regulations, access national boating survey data, figure out what life jacket to purchase, it all can be found on [uscgboating.org](http://uscgboating.org)



## SAFETY PAMPHLETS

### **Defender PFD Guide**

<https://www.defender.com/life-jacket.jsp>

### **U.S. Aids to Navigation System:**

<https://www.uscgboating.org/images/486.PDF>

### **Boater's Guide to the Federal Requirements for recreational boats:**

<https://www.uscgboating.org/images/420.PDF>

### **How to Choose the Right Life Jacket Guide:**

[https://uscgboating.org/images/howtochoosetherightlifejacket\\_brochure.pdf](https://uscgboating.org/images/howtochoosetherightlifejacket_brochure.pdf)



## The US Coast Guard has a Mobile App!

- Find the latest safety regulations
- Request a vessel safety check
- Check your safety equipment
- File a float plan
- Navigation Rules
- Find the nearest NOAA buoy
- Report a hazard
- Report pollution
- Report suspicious activity
- Request emergency assistance

