

Boat Safety tips

In 2008, there were 4,789 reported boat accidents across the country resulting in 709 deaths and 3,331 injuries. Here are some facts and tips from the Coast Guard to keep you and your family safe this boating season.

90
PERCENT

of drowning victims were not wearing a life jacket

10
PERCENT

of fatalities occurred on boats where the operator had received safety training

+66
PERCENT

of all fatal boating accident victims drowned

Before the season starts

Be sure your watercraft is safe by arranging with the Coast Guard Auxiliary for a courtesy vessel examination. Call 262-857-2181 in the Kenosha area to set up a vessel examination.

Before you leave the dock

Have a boater's checklist and run through it prior to embarking. Have a life jacket (personal flotation device, PFD) for each person on board. By law, children 12 and under must be wearing a life jacket at all times. Review emergency procedures with all passengers.

Once under way

Never drink alcohol and pilot a boat; it is illegal and carries a hefty fine. Alcohol is the leading factor in deadly boating accidents. Maintain a safe speed, be aware of other boaters and swimmers. Know the right of way while on the water. Be familiar with the waters you are navigating.

Be smart

The top five contributing factors in boat accidents are careless or reckless operation, operating inattention, no proper lookout, operator inexperience and improper passenger or skier behavior.

Be prepared and informed

The Coast Guard Auxiliary offers affordable ABC-Safe Boating classes throughout the year. The nine hour course, divided over three sessions, include in-depth training on many pertinent boat safety topics. Wisconsin DNR hold one more class this season starting June 10. This course will qualify the attendee to operate a PWC without adult supervision for ages 12-18 and those born after Jan. 1, 1989 (this is a new law in Wisconsin this year). The classes are three consecutive Thursday from 6-9 p.m. at Gander Mountain in Kenosha. Course registration is required and may be made by calling 262-492-6479.



Throwable PFD

Must have at least one approved PFD on board and easily accessible

Registration stickers

By law, state validation and number stickers must be affixed to front of boat



Sound producing device

Must carry a horn, whistle or have a bell on board



Fire extinguisher

Fire extinguishers are required on boats with a motor



Life vest (PFD)

One for each person on board. Children 12 and under must be wearing life vest at all times.



Visible Distress Signal (VDS)

Must have on board a light producing (for night time) and one daytime smoke producing visible distress signal. Example: Daytime flare (smoke) night time flashlight.

On board safety checklist

