

Boating Guide



Importance of an Anchor

Recreational boaters may overlook the need for an efficient anchoring system. Even if you mostly park your vessel in calm waters, unpredictable weather can cause serious safety issues when conditions become dangerous.

Engine failure is another risk for a non-anchored boat. While you wait for help, it's imperative to remain still rather than putting yourself and rescuing crews in danger by traveling with the current. Improper anchoring techniques can cause boats to capsize, passengers to be swept in the water by tangled rope, and damage your boat.

If you're unfamiliar with the process and maintenance of anchors, make sure to brush up your skills before heading to the water. Consider these essential tips when choosing and utilizing an anchor from the BoatUS Foundation.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT ANCHOR

Take the time to speak with a professional at your local marina about water conditions and anchorages. They can ensure your vessel is held securely when it's most important. You will likely find many different types of anchors during your search. BoatUS recommends Danforth anchors for small recreational boats and plow-style tools for cruising boaters as they are efficient on numerous ocean floor types.

THE SCOPE RULE

Choosing the right anchor for your boat is only effective when it is used properly. The American Boating Association recommends using the scope rule. They define scope as the ratio of length of rope paid out to the depth of the water. To gain a strong hold, the lower end of the rope or chain must form an eight-degree angle. For calm water, they recommend using a 7:1 ratio, which means for every foot of water depth, use seven feet of rope. Conditions with dangerous currents or active weather should use a ratio of 10:1.



Train a Co-Captain

A safe boating experience is the responsibility of everyone along for the ride. Before heading out on an excursion, ensure your passengers are familiar with how your boat operates. They don't have to be a master of the water to return to safety in case an emergency leaves you unable.

If your local legislation requires boaters to carry a license, encourage your chosen co-pilot to take the courses. However, if you are in an area where waterways are less regulated, consider inviting a friend for your own training lessons.

CHOOSING A CO-CAPTAIN

When deciding on a candidate as your co-captain, make sure to ask yourself who will take the role seriously. Choosing a friend who is knowledgeable about boating is a good idea, but finding someone who is responsible is just as important.

Go over your vessel's emergency plans. This should cover situations involving an overboard passenger, unexpected fire and signaling for help in times of distress. Be sure to practice different strategies to ensure you're both prepared for danger.

HANDLING THE BOAT

While each boat may operate in a similar way, there are likely minute differences that someone expected to take over should know about. Drive your vessel to an open part of the water and allow your co-pilot to become accustomed to the way it handles and accelerates. Having a good grip on the boat's tendencies will make it easier to navigate through crowded waterways in times of



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emergency.

DISCLOSE SAFETY GEAR LOCATION

Most states have strict laws in place to ensure boats are

stocked with lifesaving equipment. Make sure to show your co-captain and all passengers of its whereabouts.

Here are some items to keep on hand:

- Enough safety vests for everyone on board;
- A first-aid kit; and
- Distress tools like flares and air horns.

Before going onto the water,

encourage your passengers to adjust their United States Coast Guard-approved safety vests for comfort as the need for one can occur without warning.

Amazing Boating Destinations

The waterways in America can provide boaters with incredible wildlife encounters, monumental views and the chance to create lifelong memories. If you're in the beginning stages of planning an epic vacation, consider ditching the road trip and setting sail to one of the top spots in the country.

Whether you plan to haul your own boat or take advantage of a professional charter service, consider traveling to one of these breathtaking destinations, as recommended by the Travel Channel.

MARINA DEL REY, CALIFORNIA

This incredible location is located just outside of Santa Monica and is a short drive away from Los Angeles. It is the country's largest man-made small craft harbor. For those traveling cross-country, hauling your vessel may not be in the cards. However, you can easily hire a certified skipper to show you around the area or rent a Duffy boat and be your own captain. Don't be surprised if you share the water with the yachts of your favorite celebrities.

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Taking a trip to this seaside town means visiting a piece of history in water sports. Newport was the home of America's Cup, a historic sailboat race, for more than 50 years. Whether you bring your own rig or tag along on an incredible tour of the area, plan to witness seaside estates, famous yachts and a picture-perfect backdrop provided by the rocky shoreline.



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KEY WEST, FLORIDA

Of course, no list of extraordinary boating adventures would be complete without this setting in the Sunshine State. Key West is the pinnacle island of the Florida Keys and proudly receives praise

for some of the most spectacular sunsets on Earth. The popular Conch Harbor Marina is large enough to allow vessels up to 195 feet. Bring along your favorite boat or book a ride with a professional charter service to see

the country with a new perspective.

SEATTLE

Sometimes considered a hidden gem in boating experiences, Seattle is known for hundreds of miles of protect-

ed saltwater and gorgeous views of mountains. The city has more pleasure boats per capita than anywhere else in the United States and hosts sailing as one of the most popular recreational activities in the nation.



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Boating by the Numbers

Recreational boating in the United States is a booming industry that shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, the National Marine Manufacturing Association trade association reports that sales of new powerboats were up about four percent in 2018, at about 280,000 units.

It also says the industry contributes about \$170.3 billion to the United States economy.

Check out these other fascinating stats from the NMMA:

- Sales of freshwater fishing boats were up about four percent in 2018, at 750,000 units.
- The top three states for recreational boating economic activity are Florida, California and New York.

- Ninety-five percent of recreational boats sold in the United States are made there.

- Boating supports an estimated 35,000 marine businesses and 691,000 direct and indirect American jobs.

- One of the busiest selling seasons is during cooler temperatures as boating manufacturers and dealers hold winter boat shows to showcase new models.

- Sales of new boats, marine products and services were estimated at \$41 billion in 2018, an increase of five percent from 2017.

- There were an estimated 998,000 preowned boats sold in 2018.

- Ninety-five percent of boats on the water in the United States are less than 26 feet in length and can be pulled by passenger vehicles. The versatility of modern pontoon boats led

to an increase of about six percent in sales, adding up to 58,000 units sold.

- Estimates for 2019 expect an increase of three to four percent in new powerboat retail sales.

- Wake-sport boats saw an increase of an estimated eleven percent in sales, to 10,000 in 2018.

- There were an estimated 12 million registered boats in the United States in 2018.

Electrical Safety

Many boaters know how following the rules of the water enhances the safety and enjoyment of everyone involved. One concern that may not be at the forefront of your mind can occur at the dock. Learn how to protect your vessel and those in the water by understanding the electrical dangers aboard boats.

According to the Electric Shock Drowning Prevention Association, ESD is defined as the result of passage of a typically low-level AC current through the body with enough force to cause skeletal muscular paralysis, rendering the victim unable to help himself, eventually resulting in drowning.

While the chances of this catastrophe are possible anywhere electricity is near water, it is more of a danger near docks or marinas, where boaters rely on a current to charge their batteries.

The BoatUS Foundation urges swimmers to avoid being in the water within 150 feet of any electrical equipment or wiring. It's imperative to follow the rules and avoid areas where no swimming signs are present.

Read on for some other tips to remember to promote safer waterways.

DON'T DIY REPAIRS

While the causes of electrical currents entering the water isn't always clear, a major contributor is when boat owners attempt their own repairs. If your vessel needs an electrical upgrade or improvement, it's crucial to hire the expertise of a qualified marine mechanic.

You can easily find a repairman certified by the American



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Boat and Yacht Council by searching online or asking for referrals through your local marina. Even if you are familiar with in-home wiring, boats are a different story and require specialized knowledge to ensure alterations are done safe and correctly.

KNOW YOUR MARINA'S MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Ensuring your local marina is as concerned with electrical safety as those who frequent their dock is important. Begin by asking their representative if ground-fault protection systems are in place and how

often they are inspected. If you ever feel their efforts to ensure safety is questionable, don't hesitate to find a new place to do business with.

REACTING TO AN EMERGENCY

If you ever notice someone

who appears to be suffering from an electric shock while in the water, the ESDA urges you not to jump in water that is already charged. Instead, they suggest disconnecting the source of power if possible and throw a flotation device to an able victim.

Family Fun on the Boat

As the weather warms up, beaches will soon be full of outdoor enthusiasts enjoying time with friends and family. Don't miss out on awesome activities that can be achieved from the comfort of your boat.

The National Marine Manufacturers Association says fishing is the most popular activity done on boats. It's a great way to bond with children while teaching them the value of nature. Don't forget to incorporate these other great experiences which can be enjoyed on the water.

GO EXPLORING

With your GPS device fully charged, spend a day trekking to a part of the lake you haven't explored before. Encourage children to point out wildlife and different sights. Of course, if you feel like hiking a new area, try and avoid overgrown areas as dangerous animals may be using it as a habitat. If you will be traveling to a desolate part of the lake, be sure to disclose your location to friends or family and ensure your boat is fully fueled and in peak condition.

FIND A PARADE

If you are fortunate enough to live near a waterfront town or marina, you may have the opportunity to join a boat parade. Children of all ages will get excited to decorate their vessel and showcase it around the water to other boating enthusiasts.

GO TUBING

It's fun for all ages and much easier to master than waterskiing as requirements for agility



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and balance aren't as necessary. You can find tubes in multiple sizes. Some are large enough to safely hold mom or dad and a little one to experience an

exciting activity together. Don't forget to wear your safety vests.

BOAT ON THE WILD SIDE

Plan a trip to a waterway

that offers adventures like deep-sea fishing or kite surfing.

If you are a novice boater, you can benefit from hiring a

certified skipper to show you the ropes in navigating to unfamiliar waterways.

Before you know it, you may be an expert yourself.

Self-Propelled Boating

Recreational boats with motors get a lot of attention thanks to their amenities and speed. If you can't get enough of the water, consider traveling in a more traditional way. Paddling from the seat of a self-propelled boat can give you a deeper appreciation for nature while providing you with awesome health benefits.

Traveling with canoes or kayaks is much easier than towing larger vessels with a trailer. With a professionally installed rack on the roof, even passenger cars can safely transport these compact boats from storage to the lake.

When deciding to hop into the world of kayaking, here are some important factors to consider.

SAFETY TIPS

If you are unfamiliar with navigating water in a unique boat like a canoe or kayak, you can benefit from taking safety or development courses. Here, you will learn the correct paddling techniques through calm waters and how to handle emergencies you encounter. Consider these other safety tips from the American Canoe Organization.

Wear a life jacket. Plan to capsize while boating, sometimes rough conditions can overturn you without notice.

Make sure to dress in thermal wear when paddling in cool water. Frigid temperatures can be deadly if unprepared.

Make a path of your expected route and plan for intermediate rest stops to refuel yourself.

THE RIGHT GEAR

Finding the correct gear for your new hobby includes



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more than choosing a suitable boat. Bringing along the right equipment will enhance the comfort and safety of the experience. Here are some items to invest in.

Find a waterproof bag to store dry clothes, foods and other important items. Make sure to secure it to your boat in case of a capsize.

A weather radio will keep

you updated on possible threats along your path. Give yourself plenty of time to reach shore if you are threatened by severe conditions.

Bring along flares and whis-

tles in case you find yourself in danger and require help. A cell phone is a great tool for emergencies, but you may find yourself in an area without signal.