



Be Prepared for Diverse Weather

Bring raingear and a dry change of clothing. Sudden wind shifts, lightning flashes and choppy water all can mean a storm is brewing. Bring a portable radio to check weather reports.

Wear a Life Jacket

Get and wear a Coast Guard approved Personal Floatation device (PFD). Don't leave it in the wrapper! Put it on and adjust it so it fits well. Children and non-swimmers should always wear a lifejacket in any small boat. Stay near the boat if you capsize. Draw knees up to your chest to conserve heat and hold off hypothermia.

Bring Extra Gear

Pack a flashlight, extra batteries, matches, a map of where you are, flares, sun tan lotion, first aid kit, and extra sunglasses. Protect vulnerable things in a watertight pouch or a container that floats. Double check equipment before leaving the dock.

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Tips for Boating Safety

Be Aware of Other Boats

Learn the rules of right-of-way and passing for watercraft. Powerboats must yield to sailboats and boats being rowed or paddled, except in a narrow channel. Stay well clear of all big vessels. Watch wakes; your own as well as other boats'.

Avoid Alcohol

At least 450 people die every year from alcohol-related drowning. Even more boating accidents are caused by alcohol. Slowed reaction times, fuzzy vision, dehydration, dizziness, and reduced ability to resist cold water are all effects of alcohol.

Load Your Boat Properly

Know your boat's maximum capacity. Don't overload it or put an oversize motor on it. Stay low and near the center of small boats. Be sure the dock lines are tied securely before you put gear aboard or go aboard yourself.

Be In Touch

Tell someone where you're going, who is with you, and how long you'll be away.

Ventilate After Fueling

Open hatches, run blower, and most importantly, carefully sniff for gasoline fumes in the fuel and engine areas before starting your engine.