

## ■ Good Hands® Advice

Tips to help you be prepared and informed



# Boat Safety

During the warm months of summer many Canadians take the opportunity to spend time on the water. As many as nine million Canadians participate in recreational boating each year. Sadly, about 200 of these people will die in accidents on the water, with another 6,000 suffering non-fatal injuries according to statistics provided by the Canadian government. While our summers may be short, it's important to take the time to ensure your boating and swimming experiences are both fun and safe. Taking precautions will let everyone enjoy our lakes for many summers to come. Be safe while on the water this summer, and follow these boating safety tips:

### Be prepared

- If you operate any powered watercraft in Canada – regardless of engine size or length of boat – it is Federal law to carry your Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC), often referred to as a Boater Exam.
- If your boat is fitted with an engine of 10 horsepower or more, you must also have a Pleasure Craft Licence – kind of like your licence plate – which you can apply for by calling the Boating Safety Infoline at 1-800-267-6687.
- Ensure your boat is in perfect working order. Check lights, look for damage or cracks and make sure the plugs are in before you put your boat in the water.
- Make sure you are in compliance with requirements for safety equipment and pleasure craft licensing. Ensure you are up-to-date and have proper supplies on board. For more information about proper requirements go to: [www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-menu-1362.htm](http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-menu-1362.htm)
- Check the forecast before you head out. You can't control the weather but you can be prepared. Bring additional clothing in case the weather changes suddenly.
- Be prepared in the event of an emergency. Know how to send a distress call and who to send it to. Asking for help in an emergency can be the difference between life and death.
- Ensure all required safety equipment is on board, in good working order and easily accessible. In addition to basic required equipment – keep an emergency preparedness kit on board that includes other items including drinking water, snacks, a first aid kit, extra fuel, basic tools and spare parts.

### Boating safely

- Wear a lifejacket or personal flotation device (PFD) of appropriate size. You will pay \$250 for each person that does not have a PFD on board if you're stopped by marine patrol. More importantly not wearing a PFD could cost you your life. Statistics show that nearly 90 per cent of those who die in boating accidents were not wearing a life jacket. If you are knocked unconscious in a boating accident, knowing how to swim won't help you.
- If you decide to jump overboard to go for a swim, know the water you are jumping into. Some underwater currents are undetectable from the surface.
- According to Allstate data, collision — whether with rocks, piers or other boats — is the most common boating related claim at 36.4 per cent. Respect water ways, know who has the right of way, follow all signs and buoys and be courteous to other boaters.
- Don't cruise and booze. Ever. Not only is it illegal, alcohol can have more of an effect on your reaction time if you have been on the water and in the sun. In most provinces, you can also lose your driver's licence if convicted of operating a boat while impaired.

For more information about boat safety, visit [allstate.ca/learningcentre](http://allstate.ca/learningcentre), contact your local Allstate Insurance Agency or call 1-800-allstate.

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