

BOATING

WATER SAFETY CHECKLIST

Boating is a fun way to spend time on the water, but safety should always come first! This checklist will help you prepare thoroughly, stay secure while on the boat, and ensure you're ready to handle emergencies.

BEFORE YOU BOARD

- ☐ **Weather Check:** Review the latest weather conditions and forecasts. Postpone the trip if extreme weather is expected.
- ☐ **Float Plan:** Inform someone onshore of your planned route, destinations, and return time.
- ☐ **Safety Gear:** Confirm all passengers have properly fitting life jackets and that children wear theirs at all times.
- ☐ **Communication Devices:** Check that all communication devices (VHF radio, cell phones, emergency beacons) are working.
- ☐ **Navigation Tools:** Ensure GPS devices and physical maps are onboard and up-to-date.
- ☐ **First Aid Kit:** Verify the kit is complete and all supplies are up to date.
- ☐ **Fire Extinguisher:** Confirm that fire extinguishers are charged, easily accessible, and not expired.
- ☐ **Training:** Ensure at least one person is trained in boat operation, basic first aid, and CPR.
- ☐ **Communication Protocol:** Establish a clear plan for communication among passengers and those onshore.

ON THE BOAT

- ☐ **Life Jackets On:** All passengers should wear life jackets at all times, especially children.
- ☐ **Sit While in Motion:** Remain seated while the boat is moving, and never jump off of a moving vessel.
- ☐ **Supervise Children:** Actively monitor children, ensuring they are in safe areas of the boat.
- ☐ **Speed and Distance Regulations:** Adhere to local speed limits and no-wake zones, and keep proper distance from other boaters, docks, and the shoreline.
- ☐ **Lookout:** Keep a vigilant lookout for other boats, swimmers, obstacles, and weather changes.
- ☐ **Avoid Alcohol:** Everyone should skip drinking to maintain alertness and quick response capabilities. Alcohol affects balance, judgment, and coordination.



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IF YOU PLAN TO SWIM

- ☐ **Active Supervision:** Ensure close, constant, and capable supervision when anyone is swimming.
- ☐ **Practice Safe Entry and Exit:** Confirm that everyone knows how to enter and exit the boat safely. Ensure that the entire engine is off every time someone enters or exits.
- ☐ **Never Go Out Alone:** Always swim with a buddy for increased safety.
- ☐ **Seasick Protocol:** If you feel seasick, alert someone immediately, sit down, and focus your eyes on your feet or the floor.

EMERGENCY PREPARATION

- ☐ **Take a Boating Safety Course:** This information is helpful even if you're not the operator.
- ☐ **Man Overboard Procedures:** Make sure everyone knows what to do if someone falls overboard.
- ☐ **Emergency Contacts:** Have a list of emergency contacts, including local maritime authorities.
- ☐ **Use of Flares and Signals:** Train passengers on how to use distress signals and flares.
- ☐ **Abandon Ship Plan:** Have a clear plan for evacuating the boat if necessary.
- ☐ **Stay with the Boat:** If evacuation isn't possible, stay with the boat and signal for help.

