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Boating Safety Tips: Boater Education & Resources for Safe Family Fun

No matter how much experience you have, it's always a good idea for everyone to review boating safety rules before departures. Read below to familiarize yourself with these 10 basic boating safety tips:

Be Weather-wise

Always check local weather conditions before departure- TV and radio forecasts can be a good source of information. If you notice darkening clouds, volatile and rough changing winds, or sudden drops in temperature, play it safe by getting off the water.

Follow a Pre-Departure Checklist

Proper boating safety means being prepared for any possibility on the water. From compliance with fire safety regulations to tips for fueling

up, following a pre-departure checklist is the best way to make sure no boating safety rules or precautions have been forgotten.

Get your Pleasure Craft Operator Card

Your Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC) is a bit like a driver's licence and once you have your PCOC it's yours for life. The PCOC is mandatory for anyone operating a pleasure craft with any type of motor, and the operator should be sure to have their original PCOC card "on board".

Develop a Float Plan

Whether you choose to inform a family member or staff at your local marina, always be sure to let someone else know your float plan. This should include where you're going and how long you're going to be gone. A float plan can include the following information: name, address, and phone number of trip leader; name and phone number of all passengers; boat type and registration information; trip itinerary; and types of communication and signal equipment onboard.

Make Proper Use of Lifejackets

Did you know that the majority of drowning victims resulting from boating accidents were found not to be wearing a lifejacket (also called a personal flotation device or PFD)? assigning and fitting each member of

Make sure that your family and friends aren't part of this statistic by your onboard team with a lifejacket-prior to departure.

Don't Mix Alcohol and Boating

Practise boating safety at all times by saving the alcohol for on land. The probability of being involved in a boating accident doubles when alcohol is involved, and studies have also shown that the affect of alcohol is exacerbated by external effects such as sun and wind. Just like driving under the influence, boating under the influence of alcohol is an offense under the Criminal Code of Canada. If you are planning to consume alcohol on your boat, then in most provinces you must be anchored and have permanent sleeping, kitchen and toilet facilities on board. Check with the appropriate provincial authorities (OPP for Ontario, SQ for Quebec, RCMP for all other provinces and territories) for carriage restrictions.

Learn to Swim

If you're going to be in and around the water, proper boating safety means knowing how to swim. Local organizations such as the Canadian Red Cross and others offer training for all ages and abilities - check to see what classes are offered in your area.