



# Boating Reminders This Holiday Weekend

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Not only are more cars expected on our roadways this Labor Day weekend, but more boats are expected out on our lakes and rivers. Holidays often bring infrequent boaters and their guests to the waterways. The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary offers these helpful hints so that all boaters will have a safe and enjoyable time while out on the water this holiday weekend.

1. Check the trailer before taking to the road. The boat needs to be properly tied down to the trailer, and the trailer needs to be properly secured to the car. Lug nuts on trailer wheels need to be tightened, and the outdrive or motor needs to be secured in the up position. Don't let a trailer mishap spoil the weekend.
2. Prepare boat away from the ramp. Transfer all supplies and equipment from the tow vehicle to the boat while in the parking lot, away from the launch ramp. Be considerate of others and do not block the ramp while transferring coolers, waterskis, tubes, and other equipment to the boat.
3. Put in the drain plug. Nothing will spoil a holiday outing quite like a boat that is taking on water and about to sink. Remember to put in the drain plug before launching.
4. Do not overload the boat. Boats have a capacity plate that will indicate the total weight of the people, equipment and supplies that the boat can safely accommodate. When a boat is overloaded, it will sit very low in the water and is more likely to swamp or capsize.
5. Have a properly sized life jacket for everyone on board. Life jackets are not only needed for everyone on board the boat, but the life jacket needs to be properly sized for each individual. An adult extra large is not an appropriate life jacket for a small child, for example. A throwable flotation device is also required for boats 16 feet and longer in length.

6. Always wear a life jacket while underway. Coast Guard statistics from 2012 indicate that 71% of all fatal boating accident victims drowned, with 84% of those victims reported as not wearing a life jacket. Moreover, on state waters in , children under the age of must wear a life jacket at all times while on board any vessel.

7. Limit alcohol intake. Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents. Alcohol impairs judgment and causes a decreased sense of balance and depth perception, factors which are necessary for the safe operation of a vessel.

8. Operate in a safe and responsible manner. Limit the speed of the vessel when operating at night, go slowly through "No Wake" zones, stay out of restricted areas, and do not operate the boat or jet ski in close proximity to swimmers, skiers, and others out on the water. In addition, personal watercraft operators must avoid wake jumping - passing closely behind an underway vessel in order to launch the jet ski in the air off of the boat's wake.

To learn more about boater education, Vessel Safety Checks and other services provided by the Coast Guard Auxiliary - or if you are interested in learning how to become one of us - please visit us online at [www.uscgauxflotilla3-13.org](http://www.uscgauxflotilla3-13.org) or contact us at [bcz@charter.net](mailto:bcz@charter.net).

*The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is composed of uniformed, non-military volunteer civilians who assist the Coast Guard in all of its varied missions, except for military and direct law enforcement. These men and women can be found on the nation's waterways, in classrooms and on the dock, performing safety patrols, vessel safety examinations and public education. The 31,000 members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary donate millions of hours annually in support of Coast Guard missions.*