

Going Boating? A Crew Safety Briefing Could Save Lives

National Safe Boating Week May 16-22

ALEXANDRIA, Va., April 29, 2009 - Having friends and family aboard is what boating is all about. But in an emergency could they quickly locate a fire extinguisher or provide accurate location information to rescuers -- without your help?

For National Safe Boating Week May 16 - 22, BoatU.S. [Seaworthy magazine](#) Editor Bob Adriance has developed a short Crew Safety Checklist. "Boating is supposed to be fun, so we do not want to unduly alarm our guests. However, every skipper should take a few minutes before they leave the dock to share these tips with crew." They are:

1. **Life Jackets:** Offer a correctly sized life jacket to those who wish to wear one, show guests where they are stored and how they are properly worn.
2. **Fire Extinguishers:** They should be easily visible near engine and galley areas. Take a moment to explain what types they are and how they are meant to be used. Point out any fire port locations for snuffing out engine compartment fires.
3. **Flares:** Show where they are located and how to safely activate without causing injury.
4. **Engine and Fuel Shutoffs:** Especially on sailboats, it's not always clear how to shut off the engine (usually by pulling out the "kill" knob).
5. **VHF Radio:** It's very important to familiarize the crew with its operation, how to make a radio distress call, and DSC one-button rescue mode (if equipped).
6. **Battery Switch:** Show the crew how to turn off power in case of an electrical fire.
7. **Chartplotter, GPS, and Loran:** At a minimum, crew should know to find a latitude/longitude position with these electronics. Pinpoint its location on the unit's screen. Have a paper chart aboard, show your crew where you're departing from and headed for the day.
8. **Man Overboard Gear:** Show where it is and give a brief explanation on how to use it.

To help boaters learn more about these and other safety related items, the [BoatU.S. Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water](#) has an Online Boating Safety Study Guide at <<<http://www.BoatUS.com/foundation/toolbox>>>