



## BOATING

**Step 1: IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS:** Let's look at the hazards associated with safe boating:

- Weather (storms, wind, swells, tides)
- Location (lakes, rivers, oceans)
- Boat condition/drain plug open (cracks/holes in hull, leaks)
- Motor condition (old, broken, unreliable)
- Fueling (vapors, spills, explosion)
- Exceeding people/equipment limit
- Slippery/wet surfaces
- Lost (no Global Positioning System (GPS)/compass/map)
- Stranded (sandbar, reef, rocks, submerged trees)
- Speed
- Alcohol
- Safety equipment

**Step 2: ASSESS THE RISK:** Then assess the impact of each hazard in terms of potential loss and severity:

- Injuries, damage, and loss equipment due to severe weather and water conditions
- Mishaps on lakes, dangerous currents in rivers, and rapid tidal changes for inlets, etc.
- Boat sinking due to taking on water from damaged hull or open drain plug
- Drifting due to motor breaking down/flooding out
- Fires due to fuel vapors or spills
- Capsizing due to exceeding the load limit of people and or equipment
- Falling overboard, hypothermia, or drowning
- Traveling in the wrong direction
- Hypothermia, dehydration, sunburns, or drowning
- Loss of control, collisions, capsizing, or running aground due to excessive speeds
- Intoxication, impaired judgment, unnecessary boat maneuvering
- Ensure personal flotation devices are available for all individuals, flares, and first aid kit

**Step 3: MAKE RISK DECISIONS:** Once you have identified the hazards and assessed the associated risk, you should develop risk control options. Start with the most serious risk first and select controls that will reduce the risk to a minimum consistent with mission accomplishment. Decide on some controls that can be employed to reduce or mitigate the hazards:

- Start with a good safety briefing prior to heading out

- Listen to the National Weather Service for the day's forecast and plan accordingly. Cancel boating trip if inclement weather is expected. Ensure all safety equipment is ready and available
- Familiarize yourself with lakes, rivers, and inlets before attempting to navigate on your own
- Ensure to inspect equipment. Have boat motor and any other equipment serviced routinely
- Use extreme care when fueling. Clean up any spilled fuel. Don't let anyone smoke or have open flames near gas tanks. Try to keep gas tank area well ventilated
- Travel at speeds safe enough for water conditions
- Don't overload the boat with people or equipment
- Ensure all occupants wear properly fitting US Coast Guard approved floatation vest
- Keep an emergency kit onboard that contains food, blankets, sun block, fresh water, and flares

With selected controls in place, decide if the benefit outweighs the risk. If risk outweighs benefits or if assistance is required to implement controls, communicate with higher authority in the chain of command. You need to either accept the risk, avoid the risk, reduce the risk, or spread the risk. Do not make dumb decisions.

**Step 4: IMPLEMENT CONTROLS:** Once you select appropriate controls, implement them! A plan is only good if it is followed.

**Step 5: SUPERVISE:** As always, the situation is subject to change quickly. Monitor the situation and adjust as necessary to keep things under control. Summer is a great time to have fun and we all deserve a break every now and then. From now on, use risk management to make your summer fun, memorable, and safe. No one wants a summer outing to turn into a tragedy!




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Member  
Printed Rank/Rate/Name

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Member Signature

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Date