



Pennsylvania

2023 National Safe Boating Week – Talking Points

What is National Safe Boating Week?

- Saturday, May 20 through Friday, May 26, 2023
- A nationwide campaign to encourage safe, responsible boating practices just in time for the busy summer boating season
- A reminder for both experienced and new boaters about basic safety requirements and boating regulations
- Information for all boaters – from paddlers on kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards – to motorboat operators who love to fish, waterski, or just relax on the water
- Boating is supposed to be a fun activity, but it can come with risks that can be minimized when you follow some basic safety steps before and during your trip

Related Boating Information:

- Pennsylvanians are fortunate to have hundreds of public boat access areas along our beautiful rivers, lakes, and streams across the state
- Find great places to boat, important boating safety information and instructions for how to purchase a launch permit, register your boat or purchase a fishing license at [Fishandboat.com](https://fishandboat.com)

2022 Pennsylvania Boating Statistics:

- Registered Motorboats: 298,715
- Registered Unpowered Boats: 32,929
- Unpowered Launch Permits Issued: 153,348
- 16,177 people earned Boating Safety Certificates by taking a basic boating safety course
- 41 recreational boating accidents (lowest since 1988)
- 9 boating related fatalities
- 6 of the 9 victims were not wearing a life jacket (67%)
- In the past 10 years, the average number of boating-related fatalities is 11 per year

Basic Boating Safety -- “Top 5” Things to Do

1) Always Wear a Life Jacket

- Wearing a life jacket is the simplest and most effective way to stay safe on the water
- Law requires that you have a lifejacket on board for every person on your boat
- Children ages 12 and under must always wear a life jacket when aboard a boat less than 20 feet in length, including *all* canoes and kayaks
- 6 of the 9 people who died in boating accidents in 2022 were not wearing life jacket (67%)

2) Never Boat Under the Influence (BUI)

- Alcohol use increases the chances of having an accident by affecting balance, coordination, and judgment
- Just like operating a motor vehicle on the road, in Pennsylvania, a person operating a boat is over the legal limit if he or she has a blood alcohol concentration of point-zero-eight (0.08%) or higher
- BUI Penalties include loss of boating privileges, significant fines, and imprisonment
- Waterways Conservation Officers will be on patrol throughout the summer looking for impaired boaters
- Always choose a designated boater

3) Have a Float Plan

- Let someone know where you are planning to boat and when you expect to return
- Stick to established water trails and map out where you will start and end your trip
- Carry a ‘dry bag’ in which to keep your cell phone and other valuables while boating
- Plans can change unexpectedly if you experience a mechanical or medical emergency while on the water

4) Take a Basic Boating Safety Course

- In Pennsylvania, all boaters born on or after January 1, 1982, who operate boats powered by motors greater than 25 horsepower must have a Boating Safety Certificate
- A certificate is also required for anyone who operates a personal watercraft (such as a jet ski), regardless of age
- Online and classroom-based courses can be found at www.fishandboat.com
- A free paddlesports safety course is also available through www.fishandboat.com

5) Have proper registrations and launch permits.

- In Pennsylvania, all powered boats, both gas and electric, must be registered
- Unpowered boats, such as kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards require registration or a launch permit only when using public boat access areas owned by PFBC or DCNR.
- Launch permits and boat registration instructions can be found at Fishandboat.com.