



## **General Boat & Watercraft Safety**

Regardless of the type or size of the boat or watercraft that you may have, the use of common sense and the following boating and watercraft guidelines will promote an overall positive and safe boating experience.

Each person on board a watercraft is required to be equipped with a government approved life jacket or personal flotation device, or "PFD." Children should be encouraged to wear their life jacket at all times, whenever they are in the vicinity of a body of water such as lakes, rivers, streams, etc. Ensuring that young children learn to wear their PFDs at an early age will help to make this a common practice as they get older. Parents must, however, always remember that a life jacket is not a substitute for adult supervision.

Illegal, dangerous or negligent activity while boating or operating an air cushion vehicle, jet skiing, Sea-Dooing, water-skiing, tubing, knee-boarding or participating in any other water activity involving an object and/or person being towed in the water, is a criminal offence. Some of the offenses that you could be charged with under the criminal Code of Canada include: Operating a vessel while intoxicated, towing a person after dark, towing a person without a proper lookout or spotter, failing to stop at the scene of an accident, to mention a few.

### **Common Sense Do's and Don'ts**

**DO** slow down when passing a non-motorized craft such as a rowboat or a canoe.

**DO** always let someone responsible know when you are departing on any watercraft outing and when you plan to return.

**DO** always be alert for debris in the water.

**DO** make sure before you depart that your boat or watercraft is properly equipped, i.e., PFDs for each person in the boat, paddles, first aid kit, adequate amount of gas, etc.

**DO** always keep a flashlight and extra clothing in a water-resistant bag in case of emergency.

**DON'T** stand up while the boat or watercraft is in motion.

**DON'T** put too much weight in the back of your boat or watercraft.

**DON'T** throw garbage in the water.

**DON'T** mix alcohol and boating.

The golden rule to ensure proper ventilation of boats with built-in gasoline tanks is to run the "blower" for five minutes prior to starting the motor. Also, never refuel portable outboard motor tanks while they are still on-board the boat. Gasoline tanks should be removed from the boat and

placed on the dock or beside the boat. Once refilled, the tanks should then be wiped off to remove any spillage that may have occurred during filling. Smoking should never be permitted anywhere in the vicinity of the gasoline tanks or the refueling area.

Boating can be a great activity for all ages. Using common sense and being aware of the potential hazards can help to ensure everyone's safety.

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