

# NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK

May 21–27



**Boating safety advocates across the United States have teamed up to promote safe and responsible boating during National Safe Boating Week.**

This is a great week to check your vessel for seaworthiness and safety gear. Don't forget our friendly manatees, the gentle giants who glide peacefully around and under our vessels. Make sure you comply with all manatee and boating safety zones so you can protect yourself, your passengers, other boaters and our precious manatees.

## **Follow these tips to keep everyone safe:**



**Wear a lifejacket.** The leading cause of death from boating accidents in Florida in 2015 was drowning (64 percent), which lifejackets are designed to prevent. Inflatable models like belt packs and suspenders are comfortable and easy to wear.

**Use an engine cut-off switch lanyard.** This safety device attaches from the vessel operator to the ignition. If the operator falls overboard, the engine will shut down. In 2015, 22 boating fatalities in Florida were from falls overboard.

**Don't operate a boat while impaired.** Alcohol and drug use played a role in 11 percent of boating fatalities in Florida in 2015.



**Post a lookout.** This will help the operator pay attention to everything going on around the vessel. The lookout may spot the tell-tale swirls or "footprints" manatees

make when swimming through the water. In 2015, the primary cause of boating accidents was not having a proper lookout, or operator inattention.

**Wear polarized sunglasses.** They help you see underwater obstructions and manatees in the vessel's path. A manatee's snout may be the only visible portion when a manatee surfaces to breathe.



**Slow down and observe all speed zones.** This will help protect your passengers and manatees. Slowing down gives the boat operator time to avoid striking objects and manatees in the water. It also gives the manatee time to

move out of the way. In Florida in 2015, 58 boating accidents were attributed to excessive speed, and 86 manatees died from watercraft strikes.



## ***Most boating accidents are preventable!***

To report boating emergencies or manatees in distress, call **888-404-FWCC (3922)**.

To report people who are operating boats dangerously, call or text **Tip@MyFWC.com**.