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Safe Boating Week – Boater Checklist: Don't Leave Shore Without It

By News Canada

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by: News Canada

(NC)–Fresh breezes, sunshine and sparkling water – an ideal combination for summer pleasure boating. Don't let disaster darken your outing.

Canada's leading provider of first aid training and safety products, St. John Ambulance, says take precautions to avoid tragedy. Keep this boater checklist handy and refer to it before you leave shore every time.

Does your boat meet all safety regulations?

Is your boat seaworthy and capable of handling the prevailing water conditions?

Do you have an approved lifejacket for every member of your party?

Do you have safety flares and a waterproof lighter?

Do you have two buoyant towlines?

Do you have an anchor?

Do you have a sound-emitting device, such as a horn or whistle?

Do you have paddles or oars?

Do you have tools to perform minor mechanical repairs?

Do you have a first aid kit?

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Do you have a fire extinguisher?

Do you have sufficient fuel?

Have you checked for fuel system leaks or fumes?

Do you have water and nourishment?

Do you have protection from the elements – sun, wind or rain?

Boating is nothing to fool with

Many people think operating a boat requires merely knowing how to run the motor and steer. That's far from the case. Should your boat capsize or if you fall overboard, don't panic. Never attempt to swim to

shore unless you are positive you can easily make it.

Hang on to the boat and wait for help. If you are in the water for an extended period, be wary of the signs of hypothermia, which can be present even in warm water conditions. As the body cools it becomes susceptible to shivering, slurred speech, and drowsiness – all warning signs of hypothermia. The condition is severe when shivering stops. Unconsciousness and stopped breathing could follow. This is a dangerous, life-threatening condition that requires immediate first aid.

Here's what to do when a hypothermic casualty is in the water:

Tell the casualty not to take off any clothing – clothing helps keep heat in.

Tell the casualty to move as little as possible – movement causes more heat loss.

When removing the casualty from the water, keep them horizontal and handle them gently as rough movement could upset heart rhythm.

St. John has training programs and first aid products to give you what you need. Contact the St. John Ambulance branch nearest you or visit our website at

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Safe Boating... All Summer Long

By News Canada

(NC)—In Canada, studies show boating is a safe family activity. Almost every problem we hear about is the result of a stupid decision - mixing alcohol with boating and/or ignoring safety regulations. There are some very simple ways to keep you and your family safe while boating.

The most common accident to passengers and crew is falling overboard. In fact, 40% of all fatal boating accidents arise from this. It can be avoided if boaters make sure they have good footing and a good hand-hold at all times. If you need to move around in the boat, hold on to both sides and keep your weight low.

Don't mix alcohol and water. In a Red Cross Society study, two-thirds of boating injury victims - where the blood alcohol level was recorded - had consumed alcohol. Almost 40% had an alcohol level above the legal limit. In addition to being illegal, it's clearly a dangerous idea to operate a boat and drink.

Always carry enough Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) for each person on board. For water-skiing, fishing or simply cruising, PFDs are absolutely essential. It's now even easier to find the ideal PFD because they're available in a wide array of colours and patterns. Choose one to match your swimsuit or boat and make sure it fits properly! The Red Cross Society study noted 92% of boating-related drowning victims were not wearing a PFD or lifejacket correctly!

Boating, practiced by smart boaters is safe. U.S. statistics show boating is twice as safe as biking, five times as safe as driving and 24 times as safe as scuba diving. By practicing safe boating, you're guaranteed to have a great time boating all summer long.

To get more information on boating, including a free CD-ROM entitled "Discover Boating", visit

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