

Safety Tips for Boaters and Bikers

Whether you hit the highways or cruise the water, the summer has a lot to offer in the way of carefree fun. But with any outdoor adventure comes a certain amount of risk. To ensure that you and your family stay safe on the water, follow these simple precautions:

- **Learn safe boating techniques.** According to the U.S. Coast Guard, about 70 percent of all boating accidents occur because of operator error. Reduce that risk with “Boat Smart” courses from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.
- **Get your vessel inspected.** You can submit a request for a safety inspection at the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary’s Vessel Safety Check website.
- **File a “float plan” before launching.** This form can be found online and lists all the information the Coast Guard needs for emergency action. It’s not required, but it can be a lifesaver. Make sure you the leave the plan with a friend or family member.
- **Wear a life jacket.** It may seem obvious, but the Centers for Disease Control notes that more than 90% of drowning fatality victims didn’t wear a life jacket.

And here are a few safety precautions for motorcyclists:

- **Be visible.** Oftentimes people driving cars just don’t see motorcycles. Put reflective decals on your clothing and bike, keep your headlights on day and night, and avoid riding in drivers’ blind spots.
- **Warn vehicles of your presence.** Use your horn to alert someone of your presence and flash your brake light when slowing down.
- **Wear your helmet—always.** All motorcycle helmets are required to meet federal Department of Transportation (DOT) standards and display a DOT sticker. If a helmet doesn’t have this sticker, it doesn’t offer adequate protection.

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