Alcohol & Drugs

Florida law prohibits anyone from boating under the influence (BUI). That is, it is illegal to operate any boat or to manipulate any water ski, sailboard or similar device while intoxicated due to alcohol or any combination of alcohol, a controlled substance, or drugs. Alcohol and drugs cause impaired balance, blurred vision, poor coordination, impaired judgement and slower reaction time. Because you can drink faster than your system can burn the alcohol off, there is an increasing level of alcohol in your blood. This level is referred to as Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). The best thing you can do for your safety and the safety of your passengers and other boaters is simple... Don’t Drink and Boat!

Obstructing Navigation

Boat operators should always be considerate of other boat operators even when stopping to anchor or moor. It is illegal to:
- Operate any boat in such a way that will interfere unnecessarily with the safe navigation of other vessels on the waterway.
- Anchor a boat in the traveled portion of the river or channel that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.
- Moor or attach a boat to a buoy (other than a mooring buoy), beacon, light or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities.

Unlawful Operation of a Boat

It is unlawful to operate a boat in the following reckless or dangerous manner:
- Reckless or careless operation
- Improper speed
- Exceeding maximum loading or horsepower
- Riding on the bow, deck or gunwale

Boating Regulatory Zones

It is important that boat operators look for signs, understand what they mean, and abide by the speed regulations.

Who May Operate Your Boat

To operate a boat powered by a motor of 10 horsepower or greater (including PWCs), a person who was born on or after January 1, 1988, must have completed a boater education course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) or passed an approved equivalency exam.

No one under 14 years of age may operate any PWC on Florida waters at any time, even if such person possesses a Boating Safety Education ID Card.

No one under the age of 18 years may rent/lease a PWC.

It is also illegal for the owner of a PWC to knowingly allow a person under 14 years of age to operate a PWC.

You must have a Florida Certificate of Registration and validation decal to operate a vessel legally on public waters of Florida.

The Certificate of Registration must be on board and available for inspection by an enforcement officer whenever the vessel is operated.

For state boating law information, call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC): 850-488-5600
Or visit the FWC website at: www.MyFWC.com

For federal boating laws, visit the U.S Coast Guard’s boating safety website: www.uscgboating.org

REMEMBER...

As an owner of a boat, you may be responsible if you allow others to operate your boat in violation of Florida law.
Boater's Tips:

- Be aware at all times when large vessels are approaching. They are very difficult to maneuver due to the narrow space between shops, boats, restaurants and may require a mile or more to stop. It is up to the small boat operator to keep safely out of the way of these ships.
- Keep your boat in good repair with all necessary safety equipment on board.
- Monitor channel 16 for distress calling and safety, ship to ship and ship to coast.
- Be sure your boat is visible at night to avoid accidents.
- Know your boat's limitations and respect them.
- Jet skis are boats, too, and must follow all boating regulations.
- Be careful to prevent spills during fueling and when adding oil.
- Always check weather conditions.
- Finally, the U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary and Power Squadrons offer free boating safety classes. These are interesting and informative.

www.uscg.mil

Manatees may be found in fresh or salt waters, preferring calmer rivers, estuaries, bays, and canals. In the winter, manatees seek warmer waters and often congregate in discharge areas near power plants or natural warm water springs. Boaters should avoid manatee habitats and use caution when traveling in known manatee travel corridors. It is illegal to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal, including manatees. Any act that disrupts a manatee’s normal behavior is punishable by a fine of up to $500 and/or imprisonment for up to 60 days. Conviction on the federal level is punishable by fine of up to $50,000 and/or one-year imprisonment.

Common Sound Signals

When changing directions:
- One short blast tells boaters “I intend to pass you on my port (left side).”
- Two short blasts tell boaters “I intend to pass you on my starboard (right) side.”
- Three short blasts tell boaters “I am backing up.”

Restricted Visibility:
- One extended blast at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by power-driven vessels when underway.
- One prolonged blast plus two short blasts at intervals of not more than two minutes is the signal used by sailing vessels.

Warning:
- One prolonged blast is a warning signal.
- Five or more short, rapid blasts signals danger or signals that you do not understand or that you disagree with other boater’s intentions.

Created by Antillean Marine Shipping Corp

Miami River
Boater's Tips
Promoting Safety and Security

Law Enforcement - Miami Police Marine Patrol
(305) 603-6640

Recreational boaters have a role in keeping our waterways safe and secure.
Persons who violate boating laws and regulations may be subject to fines or, for more serious violations, subject to arrest.