



A Boating Safety Refresher

By: David Sidney, Lake Conroe Division

With summer on the horizon and boat traffic on Lake Conroe increasing by the day, we felt it important to provide a few safety reminders before you hit the water.

The following are some general things to keep in mind before making way:

- We always recommend a Boaters Safety Course before operating any vessel.
 - Courses are offered by both the US Coast Guard and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.
 - <http://www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/boating-safety-courses.php>
 - <https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/boater-education>
- Make sure to have all the proper safety equipment required onboard the vessel.
 - A full checklist is available through the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department at the following website: https://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/boat/safety/vessel_requirements/
 - The list includes the following general categories, but be sure to check the requirements for your particular type of vessel:
- Wearable and throwable personal flotation devices
- Sound producing devices
- Navigation lights
- Check the weather forecast and wind conditions for the day.
 - Remember to closely monitor wind and weather conditions as they may vary drastically throughout the day.
- Know the "rules of the road."
 - Just like for driving a car on public roads, there are specific rules for navigating public waterways. When everyone knows and follows these rules, it makes boating much safer. It's important to know which boat is supposed to "give way" and which is supposed to "stand on."
 - There are various courses available through the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.
- Operate your vessel at a safe speed and be aware of your surroundings
 - Operating your vessel or personal watercraft at a safe speed allows you time to make decisions when navigating on crowded waters.
 - When underway, always scan your surroundings for other boaters and navigational hazards.
 - Always practice defensive driving. Remember just because you are a responsible boater does not mean everyone else will be practicing the same safety habits, so be alert and don't assume the other person will react properly.
- Check your navigation lighting.
 - Even though you may only plan to be out during the day, circumstances may change causing you to navigate at night.
- File a float plan.
 - It is always a good idea to let someone know where you plan on going, how long you expect to be out, and when you expect to return.
- ALWAYS wear your LIFE Jacket
- ALWAYS avoid consuming alcohol while operating your vessel.

Keeping these recommendations in mind can help you and everyone around you have a great day on the water and get home safe!

For more information, please visit our website at www.sjra.net or contact our Lake Conroe Division at 936-588-1111. ♦

