

THINKFIRST CANADA'S BOATING INJURY PREVENTION TIPS

DID YOU KNOW?

As of September 15, 2009 all recreational boaters in Canada must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Card, commonly known as a Canadian Boating License. It's the law; those without the card risk a \$250.00 fine. More importantly being licensed may help reduce your risk of injury. Read on to find out about what else you can do to reduce your chance of sustaining an injury while boating. This information is taken from Chapter 9 "Other Boating Activities" in the ThinkFirst book entitled *Catastrophic Injuries in Sports and Recreation: Causes and Prevention – A Canadian Study* edited by Charles H. Tator and published by the University of Toronto Press in 2008.

TOP TIPS: THINKFIRST BEFORE HITTING THE WATER

- Take Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) accredited course on boating competence and safety.
- Wear a properly fitted Personal Floatation Device (PFD) at all times. Parents are important role models for their children and should wear a PFD as well.
- Wear sunglasses, a hat, and sun block for protection from the sun and to maintain optimum visibility.
- When boating in cold and wet conditions, wear layers of warm clothing and a wind proof jacket to help prevent heat loss and hypothermia.
- Before boating:
 - Ensure the boat is in good working order.
 - Check the weather forecast and wind strength.
 - Check the people you are boating with about their ability to swim. Ask if they have any special medical conditions or allergies.
 - Assign someone to be the look out for possible obstructions and environmental problems.
 - Have your boating license and qualifications up to date.
- Prevent propeller injuries:
 - Keep the boat away from swimming and diving areas.
 - Ensure that passengers are seated before taking off in the boat.
 - Do not start a boat with the engine already in gear.
 - Do not allow passengers to ride on the seat back or bow.
- General Safety:
 - Do not consume alcohol while boating to maintain proper judgment, reaction time, and proper body temperature. The legal limit for blood alcohol in boating is 80mg%.
 - Ensure that the boat operator has taken a current boating safety course.



- Do not stand up in the boat, especially while it is moving at high speeds.
- Do not overload the boat with more people than what it was designed for.
- Check regularly for changing weather conditions.
- Stay hydrated by drinking enough water before and after boating. Dehydration can cause disorientation and put a boater at a higher risk of injury.
- If possible, try to keep your boat within sight of the water police or other local boating authorities.
- Keep a working radio and first aid kit on board the boat.

Remember: thinkfirst.ca before you play!