# PREPARE FOR THE DANGERS BELOW THE WATER

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard

## BEWARE THE DANGERS OF PROPELLER STRIKES

BOAT LIVE 365

## CREATING A SAFE BOATING CULTURE 365 DAYS A YEAR

The focus of **Boat Live 365**® is on key areas of interest, determined by the U.S. Coast Guard, to help lower the rate of boating accidents, incidents and fatalities nationwide. This pamphlet focuses on two of those areas.

## PROPELLERS ARE SERIOUSLY NOT FUN

Have you seen the results of a propeller strike? It's horrific. With the growing number of recreational boating activities involving towing (skiing, tubing, wake boarding, etc.), more and more people are out in the water in the middle of boat traffic. We want to make sure everyone is properly trained in maneuvering and recovering people from the water.

**A propeller is out of sight, but too often it is out of mind as well**

If your day on the water includes towing activities, we greatly encourage you to have an orange or red flag on your vessel that you can fly while maneuvering near people. This will warn other boaters to stay clear during the recovery.

Always approach a person in the water from downwind (leeward) for better boat control, and on the helm side so the skipper can maintain visual contact with the person in the water. Stop the boat when the person is near the bow. Secure the engine and place the throttle in gear to prevent auto-propeller rotation and accidental starting of the engine. Have the person use a boat ladder on the downwind side (leeward) or swim platform to get in the boat. You can NEVER be too cautious when recovering someone from the water.

**A typical three-blade propeller running at 3,200 rpms can inflict 160 impacts in 1 second.**

ECOS Photo Courtesy of The National Safe Boating Council

**Advocate propeller safety with these life-saving tips**

- ◊ Always use an engine cut-off device (ECOS) to shut off the engine if the operator falls off.
- ◊ Check the water around your boat before starting the engine to ensure no one is nearby.
- ◊ Be alert in congested areas and near boats towing skiers or inflatables.
- ◊ Fly an orange or red flag while maneuvering near someone in the water.
- ◊ Never allow passengers to board or exit from the water when the engine is on or idling.
- ◊ Approach someone in the water from downwind (leeward) and on the helm side for better control and visibility.
- ◊ Tow at a distance greater than 20 feet when wakeboarding, tubing, or skiing.
- ◊ Stop the boat, turn off the engine, and use a boat ladder or swim platform to help someone back into the boat.
- ◊ Never reverse the boat to pick someone up; circle around instead.

**Visit www.boatlive365.org for more safety tips**

The focus of **Boat Live 365** and its key areas of interest are determined by the U.S. Coast Guard. It's important for us all to be aware of and discuss each of them, all year long.

- The dangers of drinking alcohol, taking drugs and other irresponsible behavior on the water.
- The importance of reporting boating accidents.
- The importance of wearing a life jacket and life jacket standards.
- The dangers of propeller strikes and emphasizing the use of an emergency engine cut-off device.
- The dangers of cold-water immersion and how to lessen the danger.
- The benefits of keeping a lookout and navigation rules and aids.
- The importance of boater safety training.
- The responsibility of boat operators keeping themselves and others safe.
- The dangers of being poisoned by carbon monoxide.

**BOATING IS SERIOUS FUN.**

**www.boatlive365.org**

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