

FWC BOATING SAFETY

With 2025 Florida Boating
Statistics

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Escambia County

FLORIDA: THE BOATING CAPITAL OF THE WORLD



FLORIDA HAS OVER ONE
MILLION REGISTERED
VESSELS.



KNOWN AS A PREMIER
BOATING DESTINATION FOR
RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

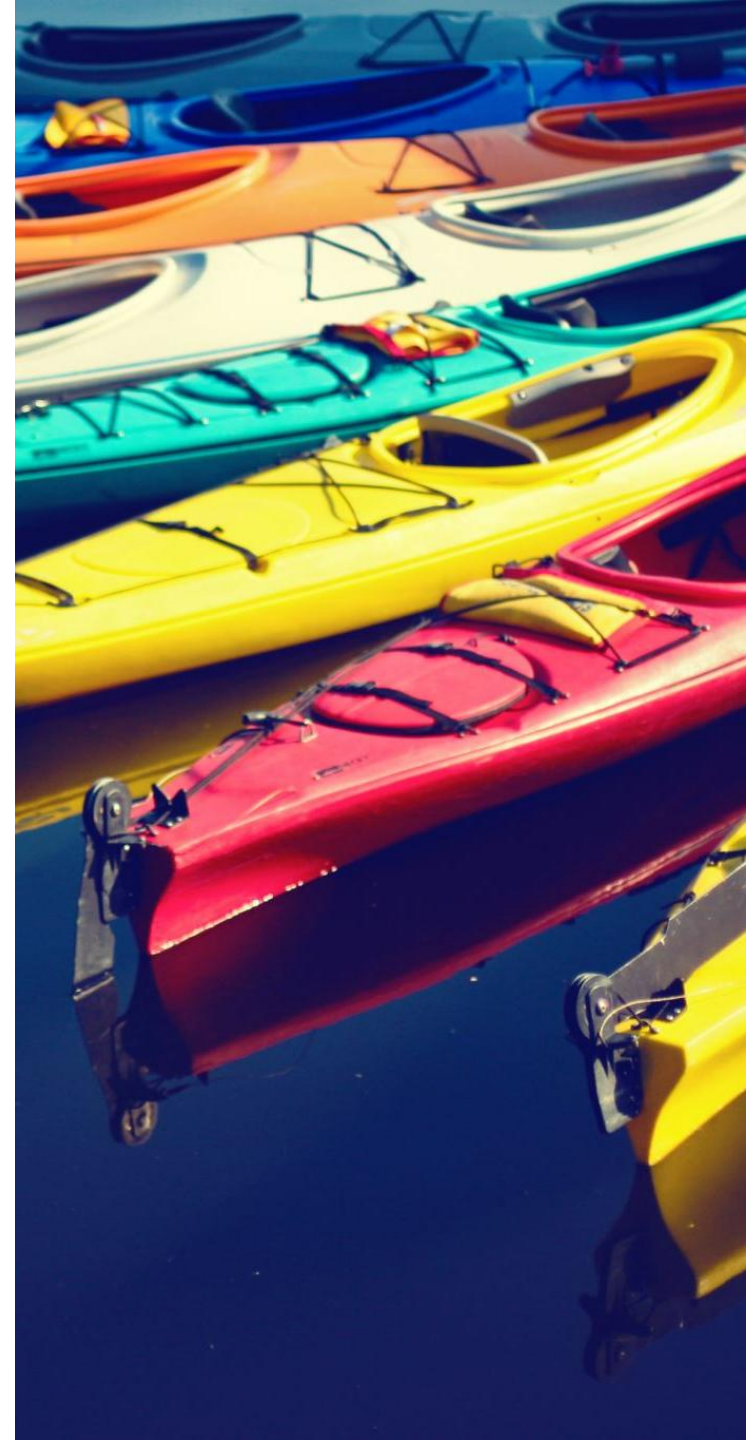


FWC RESPONDS TO MANY
PREVENTABLE BOATING
ACCIDENTS EACH YEAR.

FWC BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICAL REPORT

FWC releases the Boating Accident Statistical Report each year before National Safe Boating Week.

Reports available at
[MyFWC.com/Boating/Safety-
Education/Accidents/](https://myfwc.com/Boating/Safety-Education/Accidents/)





53% of boating deaths in 2025 were due to drowning.



72% of boating fatalities involved people not wearing life jackets.



Unexpected emergencies leave little time to grab a life jacket.



FWC encourages all boaters to wear a comfortable life jacket at all times.

**LIFE JACKETS
SAVE LIVES**

MAINTAIN 360-DEGREE AWARENESS


Always pay attention to what you see and hear around your vessel.

Over half of reportable boating accidents in 2025 involved collisions.

25% of collisions were linked to operator inattention or improper lookout.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR IMPAIRMENT

Boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal and dangerous.



Impaired operators will be arrested.



14% of boating fatalities in 2025 were alcohol or drug related.

TAKE A BOATING SAFETY COURSE

68% of operators involved in fatal boating accidents had no formal boating education.

43% of operators in reportable accidents over age 35 lacked boating education.

Operators aged 36+ have represented the largest accident age group for the past 10 years.

FWC encourages all boaters to complete a boating safety course.

A person born on or after January 1, 1988, may not operate a vessel powered by a motor of 10 horsepower or greater unless they have completed a boating safety course and possess a valid boater safety card along with photo ID

USE TECHNOLOGY TO SAVE LIVES



Carry an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or Personal Locator Beacon (PLB).



Emergency locator devices help search and rescue teams find boaters quickly.

Tell family or friends
where you are going and
when you expect to return.

Early notification improves
search and rescue
response time.

**FILE A FLOAT
PLAN**



Inspect required safety equipment before every trip.



Required items include life jackets, horn/whistle, lights, fire extinguisher, and flares.



Carry additional optional emergency gear when appropriate.

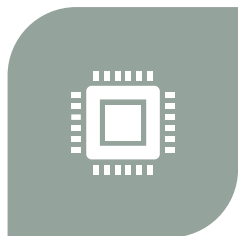
CHECK SAFETY EQUIPMENT



MOST PWC ACCIDENTS
RESULT IN REPORTABLE
INJURIES.



ALL RIDERS MUST WEAR
A USCG-APPROVED
NON-INFLATABLE LIFE
JACKET.



OPERATORS MUST USE
THE ENGINE CUT-OFF
SWITCH LANYARD.



NO PERSON UNDER 14
MAY OPERATE A PWC
IN FLORIDA.

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (PWC) SAFETY



Rental liveries must carry insurance and provide safety instruction.



Additional operation guidance and safety equipment are required.



Liveries cannot rent PWCs to anyone under 18.

RENT FROM A PERMITTED LIVERY



Review local boating speed zones before departing.



Use FWC maps for manatee zones and boating regulations.



Always operate at a safe speed for conditions.

KNOW LOCAL SPEED ZONES



Weather conditions can change rapidly on the water.



Check forecasts before boating and monitor storms while underway.



Returning early is safer than boating through severe weather.

WATCH THE WEATHER

Stay	Divers must stay within 300 feet of a divers-down flag in open water.
Stay	Divers must stay within 100 feet in rivers, inlets, or channels.
Idle	Boaters must idle when operating within these distances.
Meet	Flags must meet Florida size and visibility requirements.

DIVER-DOWN FLAG SAFETY

DIVER-DOWN FLAG REQUIREMENTS

Boat-mounted flags must be at least 20 x 24 inches and visible from all directions.

Flags require a stiffener to remain unfurled.

Divers-down symbols towed by divers must be at least 12 x 12 inches.

Display warning devices only while divers are in the water.

Remain with the vessel
after an accident or
capsize whenever possible.

A vessel is much easier for
rescuers to spot than a
person in open water.

**STAY WITH
THE BOAT**



Engine cut-off switches stop propulsion if the operator leaves the helm.



These devices help prevent runaway vessels and reduce injuries and fatalities.



More information is available from the U.S. Coast Guard.

ENGINE CUT-OFF SWITCHES

EMERGENCY VESSEL SLOW SPEED ZONES

Move over and give emergency vessels a wide berth.

Within 300 feet of emergency vessels displaying lights, operators must travel at slow speed with minimum wake.

CONSTRUCTION VESSEL SLOW SPEED ZONES

Operate at slow speed within 300 feet of construction vessels displaying an orange construction flag.

Construction flags must be orange, at least 2 x 3 feet, and fully unfurled.

Report dangerous boating activity to 888-404-FWCC (3922).

Tips may also be submitted online through Wildlife Alert.

REPORT DANGEROUS BOATING

Visit [MyFWC.com/Boating](https://myfwc.com/Boating) for boating regulations, safety resources, and boating courses.

Use the Florida Boat Ramp Finder to locate launch sites statewide.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES