



FloatPlanWizard Solo Boating Safety Series

Solo Boater Personal Safety Guide & Checklist

Prepare for personal needs and self-recovery when no second person is aboard to assist.

Why this checklist matters

A small problem can become serious more quickly when there is no second person to provide flotation, take the helm, retrieve equipment, call for help, or assist with reboarding.

Personal preparation includes wearing an appropriate PFD, dressing for air and water conditions, beginning rested and hydrated, carrying needed food and medications, and keeping first-aid and emergency equipment accessible.

Before departure, ask: If I enter the water, can I get back aboard without another person's help? The practical answer depends on the craft, freeboard, ladder or rescue method, clothing, water temperature, waves, fatigue, and physical condition.

If you enter the water, can you get back aboard without another person's help?

What to think about

Wear and carry equipment for the activity

Federal and state PFD requirements vary by vessel, activity, age, location, and jurisdiction. This reference does not state that every adult is legally required to wear a PFD at all times in every situation.

For solo boating, the FloatPlanWizard best-practice recommendation is to wear an appropriate PFD while underway. An unexpected emergency may not leave time to retrieve and put one on.

Plan the recovery before the trip

A kayak requires a practiced capsize or self-rescue method appropriate to the craft and conditions. A small open boat or center console requires a realistic way to reach and use a ladder. A sailboat or high-freeboard cruiser may be very difficult to board from the water without a properly designed system.

Practice the relevant method where practical and safe. A ladder is useful only if it can be reached or deployed from the water, and essential communications are useful only if they remain accessible after separation from the boat.

Manage the operator

Rest, hydration, food, medications, exposure protection, and first-aid preparation are operational safety considerations. Set conservative limits before departure, and do not let a schedule create pressure to continue when the operator is not ready.

Key things to remember

- Wear a PFD appropriate to the activity and conditions.
- Dress for both air and water exposure.
- Know and, where practical, practice how you would reboard or self-rescue.
- Keep essential equipment reachable if separated from the craft.

Personal safety checklist

Use this checklist before departure. Marking an item does not replace the operator's responsibility to confirm what is appropriate and required for the actual vessel, activity, location, and conditions.

- ☐ I am wearing an appropriate PFD for the activity and conditions.
- ☐ My clothing is appropriate for both air and water conditions.
- ☐ I am rested enough for the planned trip.
- ☐ I have adequate drinking water.
- ☐ I have appropriate food or snacks for the trip length.
- ☐ Necessary medications are accessible.
- ☐ First-aid supplies are appropriate for the trip.
- ☐ I know how I would get back aboard after entering the water.
- ☐ I have practiced the relevant self-rescue or reboarding method where practical.
- ☐ Essential emergency equipment will remain accessible if I become separated from the boat.

Related guidance

- [Solo Boating Safety Guide](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard Life Jacket Guidance](#)
- [National Park Service Kayak Safety](#)

Turn the checklist into a real trip plan

A checklist helps you remember the details. FloatPlanWizard helps you organize them into a float plan that can be created, sent to a shore contact, shared, and automatically monitored during an active trip.

For solo boaters, FloatPlanWizard puts the information a shore contact may need into one organized workflow: vessel and operator details, passengers when applicable, route, departure, destination, timing, shore contact, trip sharing, and supported scheduled check-in information.

FloatPlanWizard is built specifically to make float-plan preparation, sharing, and automated trip monitoring practical for recreational boaters - including people who boat alone.

Automated monitoring is not professional human monitoring. FloatPlanWizard does not guarantee live tracking, a current location, alert delivery, distress verification, emergency-services contact, or rescue dispatch.

[FloatPlanWizard.com](https://floatplanwizard.com)[Read the complete Solo Boating Safety Guide](#)

Safety note: This guide provides general recreational-boating safety information and does not replace applicable laws, official safety guidance, training, seamanship, or the judgment of the vessel operator. Requirements vary by vessel, activity, location, and jurisdiction.

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