



FloatPlanWizard Solo Boating Safety Series

Solo Boating Precautions Guide & Checklist

Deliberately replace some of the redundancy lost when no capable second person is aboard.

Why this checklist matters

Solo boating removes the safety margin normally provided by another competent person aboard. The purpose of preparation is not to discourage boating alone; it is to replace some of that missing redundancy with planning, equipment, communication, conservative judgment, and practiced recovery methods.

A solo operator must consider what happens if the boat keeps moving after a fall overboard, whether reboarding equipment can be reached from the water, whether critical communications remain accessible, and who ashore understands the trip.

Before departure, ask two direct questions: If something goes wrong and you cannot operate the boat normally, what is your backup plan? If you fall overboard, will the boat stop - and can you get back aboard?

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If you fall overboard, will the boat stop - and can you get back aboard?

What to think about

Stay with the boat and plan reboarding

Use the engine cut-off system where required and whenever appropriately equipped for the operating situation. Arrange frequently used equipment to reduce unnecessary movement away from a secure operating position.

Know whether you can climb back aboard without help. Test the ladder, platform, or craft-specific self-rescue method where practical and safe, including whether it can be reached or deployed from the water.

Keep critical equipment accessible

Do not place every communication device or piece of emergency equipment somewhere you could lose access to after falling overboard or capsizing. Personal carriage and waterproof protection may be appropriate depending on the craft and trip.

Prepare before maneuvering

Set lines, fenders, and needed equipment before approaching a dock, marina, lock, or anchorage. Reduce avoidable last-second deck movement and identify the intended maneuver in advance.

Use an abort plan and keep shore informed

Decide what conditions, fatigue, equipment issue, or timing change will cause you to turn back, stop, or cancel. Do not allow a schedule to pressure you into unsafe conditions.

Report significant route or timing changes when practical, and close the float plan when the trip is safely complete.

Key things to remember

- Plan for separation from the boat before it happens.
- Keep a useful communication method personally accessible where appropriate.
- Prepare lines, fenders, and equipment before close maneuvering.
- Use conservative abort limits and keep the shore contact updated.

Solo-specific precautions 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 will use the engine cut-off system where required/applicable.
- ☐ Reboarding equipment can be reached or deployed from the water.
- ☐ I have considered what happens if I fall overboard while the boat is moving.
- ☐ Essential communications are not all stored somewhere I could lose access to after going overboard.
- ☐ The cockpit, deck, or paddling area is arranged to minimize unnecessary movement.
- ☐ Lines and fenders are prepared before close maneuvering where applicable.
- ☐ I have a clear turn-back or abort plan.
- ☐ I will not let my planned schedule pressure me into unsafe conditions.
- ☐ I will tell my shore contact about significant route or timing changes.
- ☐ I will close the float plan when the trip is safely complete.

Related guidance

- [Solo Boating Safety Guide](#)
- [Shore Contact Guide](#)
- [Why Use a Float Plan](#)

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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