



FloatPlanWizard Solo Boating Safety Series

Solo Boater Trip Planning Guide & Checklist

Build a clear trip plan that somebody ashore can understand and use.

Why this checklist matters

When nobody else is aboard, the shore contact may be the only person who knows where the boater intended to go and when the trip was supposed to end.

An accurate plan helps a shore contact distinguish an ordinary schedule change from a potentially overdue boater. It also gives the contact useful facts if authorities need information.

The plan should be specific enough to be useful without pretending that every delay is an emergency. Agree in advance on check-ins, what overdue means for this trip, and what the shore contact should do.

What to think about

Record the intended trip

Identify the exact launch or departure point, planned route, destination, important stops, and expected return or arrival time. Include reasonable alternate destinations or safe stopping points when the trip may change.

For a trailered boat or paddlecraft, the ramp, beach, access point, parking area, vehicle, and trailer can help identify where the trip began.

- Use location names that another person can find.
- Record timing as a plan, not as a guaranteed schedule.
- Keep the shore contact's copy accessible for the full trip.

Agree on check-ins and overdue expectations

A planned check-in is a specific point when the boater expects to report. An overdue threshold is the agreed point when the shore contact should follow the response plan. They are related, but they are not the same thing.

There is no universal grace period. Trip type, weather, remoteness, communications, the operator, and other circumstances all affect the appropriate response. Evidence of immediate danger may justify action before a planned overdue time.

Update and close the plan

When practical, notify the shore contact after a substantial route change, different destination, unexpected stop, delay, early return, or abandoned trip. The contact should know which information is still current.

Tell the shore contact when the trip is safely complete. A plan left open creates avoidable uncertainty about whether the boater forgot to close it or is actually overdue.

Key things to remember

- A useful plan identifies where the trip starts, where it is intended to go, and when it should end.
- The shore contact must understand the plan and the agreed overdue response.
- Report material changes and close the plan when the trip is complete.

Trip plan 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 have identified my exact launch or departure point.
- ☐ My planned route is recorded.
- ☐ My intended destination is recorded.
- ☐ Important planned stops are recorded.
- ☐ My expected return or arrival time is recorded.
- ☐ I have identified reasonable alternate destinations or safe stopping points.
- ☐ My shore contact knows how I will report a change of plans.
- ☐ We have agreed on check-in expectations.
- ☐ We have agreed on when I should be considered overdue.
- ☐ My shore contact knows what to do if I am overdue.
- ☐ My shore contact has access to the FPW Shore Contact Guide.
- ☐ I will tell my shore contact 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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