



FloatPlanWizard Solo Boating Safety Series

Solo Boater Vessel Identification Guide & Checklist

Make the boat, craft, launch point, vehicle, and trailer easier to identify accurately.

Why this checklist matters

If a solo boater is overdue, somebody ashore may need to describe the boat or craft and explain where it entered the water. Generic descriptions such as 'white boat' or 'blue kayak' provide far less useful information than a current photo and accurate details.

The most useful identification varies with the craft. A kayaker may need an exact launch site, vehicle information, and a clear craft photo. A cruiser may need vessel name, registration or documentation, size, color, marina, and distinguishing features.

Record the information before departure, when there is time to confirm it. Do not rely on the shore contact remembering details from an old photo or a casual conversation.

What to think about

Start with a current photo

Use a recent photo that clearly shows the vessel or craft as it appears for the trip. If practical, include its primary colors, hull profile, cabin or deck arrangement, and visible equipment.

For paddlecraft, record the kayak or canoe type and color. For powerboats and sailboats, include make, model, type, length, registration or documentation, and prominent features.

Describe what makes it identifiable

Identifying features can include vessel name, hull and trim colors, top or enclosure color, sail markings, antennas, towers, unusual equipment, or other visible details. Accuracy matters more than a long description.

- Use current registration or documentation information where applicable.
- Record the exact marina, ramp, dock, beach, or access point.
- Include the tow vehicle and trailer when they help establish the launch location.

Match the record to the craft

Kayaks and canoes may have little formal identifying information, so the current photo, color, launch location, route, vehicle, and planned return may carry more weight. Larger boats often have additional registration, documentation, vessel-name, size, marina, and equipment details to record.

Key things to remember

- Use a current photo, not a generic model image.
- Record exact access-point and vehicle details when relevant.
- Describe the craft with details another person can repeat accurately.

Vessel or craft information 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.

- ☐ A current photo of the boat or craft is available.
- ☐ Registration or documentation information is current where applicable.
- ☐ Make, model, type, length, and primary colors are recorded.
- ☐ Important identifying features are recorded.
- ☐ Launch ramp, marina, dock, beach, or access point is recorded.
- ☐ Vehicle information is included when relevant.
- ☐ Trailer information is included when relevant.

Related guidance

- [Solo Boating Safety Guide](#)
- [Shore Contact Guide](#)

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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