

Ahoy, Safety Mate! Your 30-Minute Boating Safety Crash Course

Time: 30 Minutes

Goal: Learn the basics to stay safe and have fun on the water!

Part 1: Gear Up! The Mighty PFD (10 minutes)

What's a PFD? It stands for Personal Flotation Device, but most people call it a life jacket! It's THE most important piece of safety gear on a boat.

Why Wear It? Stuff happens! Even strong swimmers can get into trouble if they fall overboard unexpectedly, get cold, or hit their head. A PFD keeps you floating.

Activity: 'PFD Check'

1. If you have a life jacket at home, grab it! If not, imagine one.
 2. **Check for Fit:** Put it on and fasten it. It should be snug but not uncomfortable. Ask an adult to lift it by the shoulders – it shouldn't slip up past your chin or ears.
 3. **Check for Type:** Look for a label. Does it say US Coast Guard Approved? What type is it (I, II, III, V)? Type III is common for recreational boating.
 4. **Quick Question:** When should you wear your PFD? (Answer: Ideally, always when on deck or in an open boat! Definitely required for kids under a certain age in most places, and always in bad weather or risky situations).
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Part 2: Rules of the Water Waves (10 minutes)

Just like roads have rules, waterways do too!

Rule #1: Be a Lookout!

- Always keep an eye out for other boats, swimmers, floating debris, markers (like buoys), and changing weather.
- **Scenario:** Imagine you're steering a boat. What could happen if you were only looking at your phone? (Discuss potential dangers: collision, running aground, missing a hazard).

Rule #2: Watch Your Speed!

- Go slow in crowded areas (like near docks or other boats) and areas marked as 'No Wake' zones.
- Speeding can cause dangerous wakes (waves) that can swamp smaller boats or damage shorelines. It also gives you less time to react.

Rule #3: Check the Weather!

- Weather can change FAST on the water. Check the forecast before you go and keep an eye on the sky.
 - **Question:** What kind of weather would be dangerous for boating? (Answer: Thunderstorms/lightning, high winds, fog).
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Part 3: Safety Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Quick Quiz!

1. What does PFD stand for? (Personal Flotation Device)
2. Name one important boating rule we discussed. (Keep a lookout OR Watch your speed OR Check the weather)
3. Why is it important to check the weather before boating? (It can change quickly and become dangerous)

Challenge: Draw a simple boating safety poster highlighting one rule or the importance of PFDs!

Remember: Being safe on the water means being prepared. Knowing the basics helps everyone have a better time!