

# A Beginner's Guide To Boating



**WELCOME**  
*To The*  
**WATER™**



DiscoverBOATING®

**WELCOME**  
*To The*  
**WATER.**



**DiscoverBOATING**



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There are roughly 1.4 billion trillion litres of water on the earth, so there's plenty to explore...

# WHAT BETTER WAY TO ENJOY THE WATER THAN ON YOUR OWN BOAT?



**INTRODUCTION**

## **If you've been thinking about getting out on the water, this is the place for you.**

No matter if you love the open sea, enjoy the whirl of a reel or just like the whip of the wind through your hair, the water is there, waiting for you. Each chapter of this guide provides insight and information that will help you easily realize your boating dream. We'll help you find and buy the right boat, show you the best way to haul and store your new boat, and how to have fun all along the way.





## While your car takes you to work, a boat takes you away and lets you enjoy all the water activities you want.

It provides a way for you to spend more time with your family and friends, develop bonds and create new relationships and memories—yes, a boat can do all that. So you shouldn't look for just any boat—look for the right boat. A boat that matches your love of the water, meets your fun criteria and fits into your budget.

Our guide can help you find the right boat for what you plan to do on the water. But before we move on, there are a few important questions you want to keep in mind when searching for your perfect boat.

- What activity or activities do you want to enjoy?
- Fishing: fresh water or salt water?
- Watersports: Do you want to wakeboard or race?
- Do you want to relax? Entertain? Explore?
- Do you want the vessel to do the work or do you want to master the vessel?
- Who do you want to bring with you? What do you want to leave behind?

If you don't have all the answers right now, that's OK. You'll figure it out as you go through your selection process. The good news is, regardless of what you plan to do, you'll be doing it on a boat. And that's always fun.

## TYPES OF BOATS

# There are lots of boats, but only

There's nothing quite like discovering the perfect boat. In some ways, it's as much an emotional decision as it is practical. It's that moment when everything comes together and you suddenly realize your dream is about to come true because you have found the "one." Ready to start your discovery? Check out our list of watercraft, from PWCs to multilevel motor yachts and every vessel in between. There's a boat to satisfy every taste and desire.



### BOWRIDERS

The perfect boat if you want to live it up with friends.

- Allows people to ride up front and catch a breeze while enjoying sun
- Typically ranges between 4.8 and 8.5 metres (16 and 28 feet) long
- Can accommodate several people
- Great for lakes and inland water
- Has ample power for most watersport activities



### CABIN CRUISERS

Recreational in nature, the cabin cruiser has many comforts below deck.

- Includes sleeping, cooking and bathroom facilities
- Driven from the stern (rear) of the cruiser by inboard engines
- Typically ranges between 8 and 12 metres (26 and 40 feet)

A photograph of two men on a boat. The man in the foreground is wearing an orange long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans, and a black life vest. He is steering the boat with a chrome wheel. The man in the background is wearing a white shirt, a blue life vest, and sunglasses. He is smiling and looking towards the right. The background shows a bright, sunny day on the water.

**one you.**  
**Find the right match.**

## FISHING BOATS

### Saltwater Boats

In the simplest terms, saltwater boats tend to be larger and deeper than their freshwater counterparts. This allows the boat to go out on the water for longer periods of time and at much farther distances. Both the outside of the vessel and the internal motor mechanics are constructed of materials to help prevent corrosion caused by saltwater.



### Centre Consoles

A great choice to take you saltwater fishing in open, offshore waters.

- T-top centre provides shade and rod storage, and allows up to seven anglers around the perimeter of the vessel
- Typically equipped with bait wells, fish lockers, rod holders, outriggers and other fittings



### Walkarounds

When you're ready to tackle the big one on a great lake or out on the big blue.

- Equipped with livewells to keep fish, rod holders and full-length decks
- Stowaway seating, plumbing and even a small cabin await
- The Walkaround is ready whether you want to cruise, drift, swim, tube or ski.



### Sportfishing Yachts

These are built to help you find and stay where the fish are.

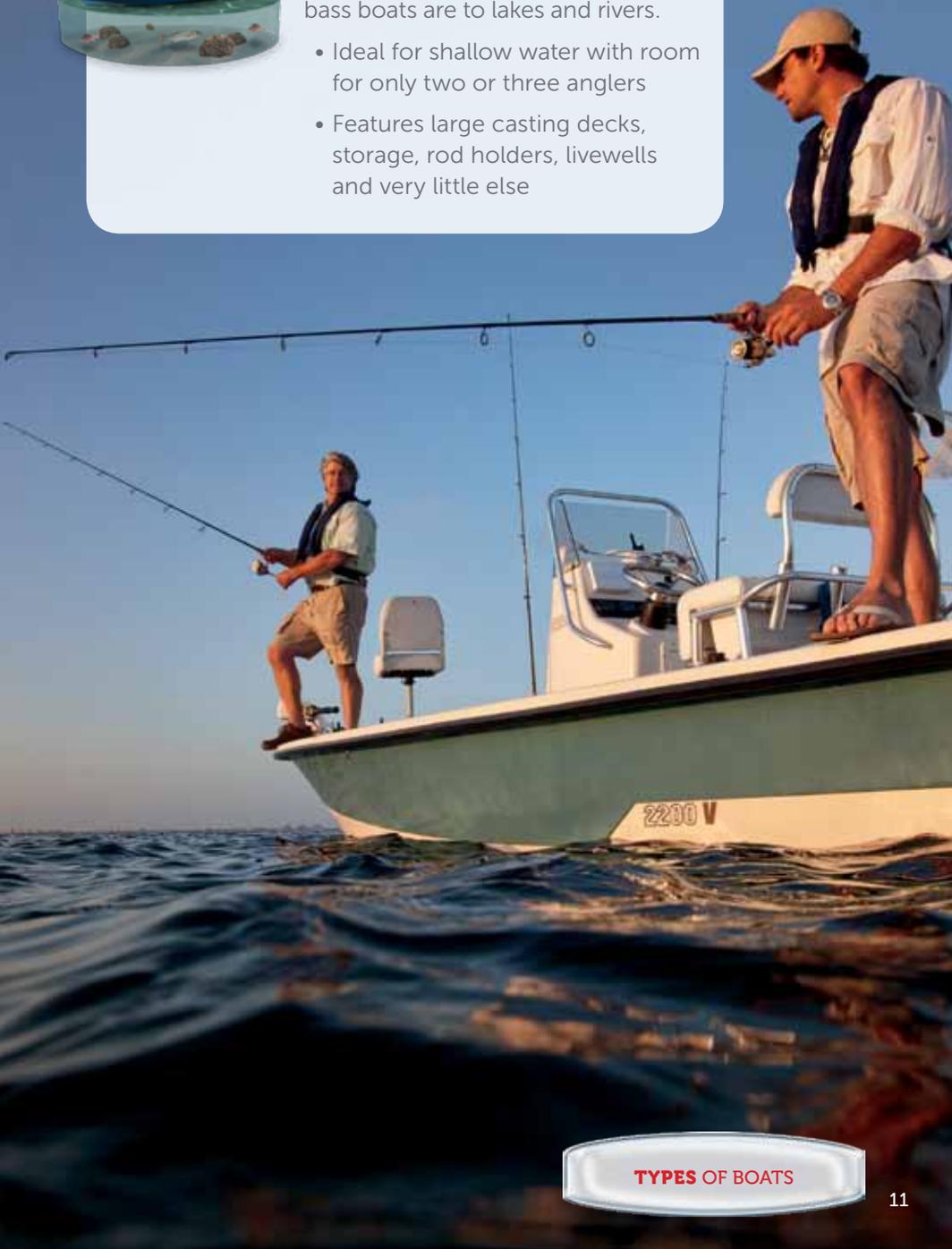
- Typically ranges between 8 and 30 metres (26 and 100 feet) long
- Comes equipped with eating, sleeping and plumbing facilities
- Can stay on the water for days at a time



## Flats Boats

Flats boats are to coastal fishing what bass boats are to lakes and rivers.

- Ideal for shallow water with room for only two or three anglers
- Features large casting decks, storage, rod holders, livewells and very little else





## Aluminum Boats

A no-nonsense, hardworking choice for a great day of fishing.

- Lightweight and easy-to-manoeuvre
- Has bench seating and outboard engine
- Perfect for shallow water and other areas larger boats can't reach
- Very durable and affordable

# FISHING BOATS

## Freshwater Boats

Smaller freshwater boats, such as aluminum, jon boats and bass boats, range anywhere from 2.4 to 6 metres (8 to 20 feet). Which makes them great for more manoeuvrability in tight and shallow waters. These types of boats can carry up to 5 passengers and can be equipped with an outboard and trolling motor.

Larger freshwater boats, such as pontoons, serve many purposes in addition to fishing.

- Great for recreational watersports
- Can include livewells, bait bays and ample storage room for fishing accessories



### Bass Boats

If you're serious about fishing, this could be your choice.

- Outboard motor, with trolling motor on stern or bow (front)
- Accommodates two or three anglers on swivel chairs
- Usually 4.8 to 5.4 metres (16 to 18 feet) long
- Contains recirculating water livewells to store live catch



### PERFORMANCE BOATS

Performance boats are the cheetahs of the water, offering breakneck speeds. Big-time muscle coupled with gorgeous lines allow these boats to be comfortable almost anywhere. Cranking offshore or simply relaxing in a cove, performance boats deliver lots of smiles per hour.



### JET BOATS

Jet boats are fast, manoeuvrable and offer an exciting ride. Most have spacious seating in front and back with a swim platform in the rear. Jet boats get their name from their mode of propulsion. Instead of using a propeller system, jet boats use water-jet drives to propel the vessel. The drives are almost completely enclosed inside the hull, reducing the risk of damage from impact with obstacles.



## HOUSEBOATS

Houseboats are ideal for spending time with family and friends while you cruise lakes, rivers and even coastal waters for a day, a night or a long weekend or longer.

- Available in different styles and sizes or can be built to your specifications
- Comes equipped with amenities like bathrooms, sleeping, dining and entertaining areas



## INBOARD WAKE AND SKI BOATS

Inboard wake and ski boats are specifically designed for towing skiers and boarders. However, there's an important difference between the two.

- An inboard ski boat throws a very slight wake, making it easy for the skier to cross
- Inboard wake boats carve a steep, large wake that riders love to launch off of

Both provide spacious room, ample power and hours upon hours of enjoyment.



## INFLATABLES

Versatile by nature, inflatables are a wonderful option if you're looking for a lightweight, manoeuvrable vessel. There are two types of inflatables—roll-up or rigid hull inflatable boats (RIBs)—and both are suitable for saltwater and freshwater fishing, watersports and more.



## DINGHIES

Dinghies are small boats (inflatables, rowboats, sailboats or boats equipped with a small outboard motor) that can be carried or towed by larger freshwater or saltwater vessels such as houseboats or motor yachts. They are very useful when venturing into smaller bodies of water and ports where larger vessels are cumbersome and difficult to manoeuvre.



## MOTOR YACHTS

Yachts are ideal for cruising the ocean, the Great Lakes or large rivers.

- Usually 12 metres (40 feet) or longer
- Has two engines, typically diesel
- Has a generator for electricity
- Self-sufficient in terms of living accommodations

Motor yachts feature more open area, a fly bridge (on some), large windows, a stateroom and other luxurious living accommodations spread out over two or three decks. They're ideal for entertaining clients and adventuring.



## CUDDY CABINS

Cuddies are nimble and manoeuvrable like a bowrider, but a closed deck over the bow area creates a cozy sleeping area with limited plumbing for a bathroom and, sometimes, a kitchen area.

- Usually powered with sterndrive engines; outboard power is becoming popular
- Has features such as a sunpad, swim platform and towline hook, making it ideal for skiing, tubing and wakeboarding



## DECK BOATS

A great option if you're going to have several people on board

- Contains huge seating areas that can often carry as many passengers as pontoon boats
- Has a semi V-bottom hull that makes it fast and manoeuvrable
- Excellent for all water sports or a long, leisurely cruise



## MULTI-HULL POWER BOATS

There's a whole lot of ocean out there, so why not make the most of it? Multi-hull boats (aka, "catamarans") let you do it in style.

- V-bottom hulls offer a smooth and fuel-friendly ride
- Comfortably carries up to eight passengers and accommodates those who want to enjoy some serious fishing or relaxation time



## PERSONAL WATER CRAFT (PWC)

Lightweight and manoeuvrable, PWCs are the perfect option for boaters looking for an exciting escape and enjoyable time on the water. Whether you're riding solo or taking your family on an adventure, PWC owners can enjoy a variety of activities, ranging from touring rides to watersports activities such as tubing, waterskiing and fishing. PWCs are easy to store, maintain and transport, and are quite affordable.



## SAILBOATS

Sailboats are in a class all their own because they are propelled partly or entirely by wind. Captained by adventurers who want to harness the wind, sailboats transform wind into power to move the vessel through the water. The term "sailboat" covers a variety of sailing craft. In general, they are distinguished by size, hull configuration, keel type, number of sails, use and purpose.



## TRAWLERS

For those who want to spend long, lazy days on the water, you may want to consider a trawler. Trawling is like sailing without all the work. Efficient trawler hulls mean less fuel consumption, and their sleeping, cooking and plumbing facilities mean more comfort for your guests.

## PONTOONS

Pontoons are the "Kings of Comfort."

- Spacious with living room-like couches, lounges, swivel seats, with spacious and flat platforms
- Has a deck atop two or three floats, making it very stable
- Usually outfitted with smaller engines but can be equipped with higher horsepower engines for skiing and tubing

**For help in finding the right boat for you,  
visit Discover Boating's Boat Selector at  
[DiscoverBoating.ca/BoatSelector](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/BoatSelector)**





*With our help,* you'll  
only have buyer's remorse  
if you don't get a boat.

### **Useful tips when it's time to purchase your boat.**

Should you buy new or pre-owned? What do you need to research? Where are the best places to shop and browse? If you have questions, we have the answers. If you already know what you want, we still have great information to enhance your boating experience.

# BUYING A BOAT

## NEW VS. PRE-OWNED: PROS AND CONS

Pre-owned or new, which boat is right for you? Whatever your inclination, start your shopping process by looking at the newest makes and models of boats in the market so you have a grasp on the latest advancements in design and technology.

### ADVANTAGES OF BUYING NEW

Shopping for a new boat means you can go out on the water knowing that the hull, onboard systems and engine are in top-notch condition. If by off chance, something does go wrong, your boat will be under warranty and you'll have a ready resource for help.

Following the same course of thought, when you buy new, the boat's history starts with you. You control its destiny. You get to live the fantasy of taking her out on her "maiden voyage" rather than settling for a redo. Buying new also gives you the special honour of naming the boat, rather than inheriting a name.

Finally, you have the freedom to be selective. So be picky. Comparison shop. With all the information you gather, you can be confident that the boat you choose is the right one for you.

### ADVANTAGES OF BUYING PRE-OWNED

Maybe you aren't ready to dive right in as a newbie. That's okay. Pre-owned boats are a great option for those just starting out or those with a slightly smaller budget.

Aside from a lower purchase price, pre-owns may already be "region ready." When you buy a new boat, you'll need to equip it for where you'll be boating and what you'll be doing. However, if you pick a vessel that's already been outfitted with gear to salmon fish on the big lakes, tow a couple skiers in the calm waters of the bay or cruise the nearby waterways, you'll be free to focus on getting out rather than getting ready. For many, "used" means "good to go."



## WHERE TO BUY

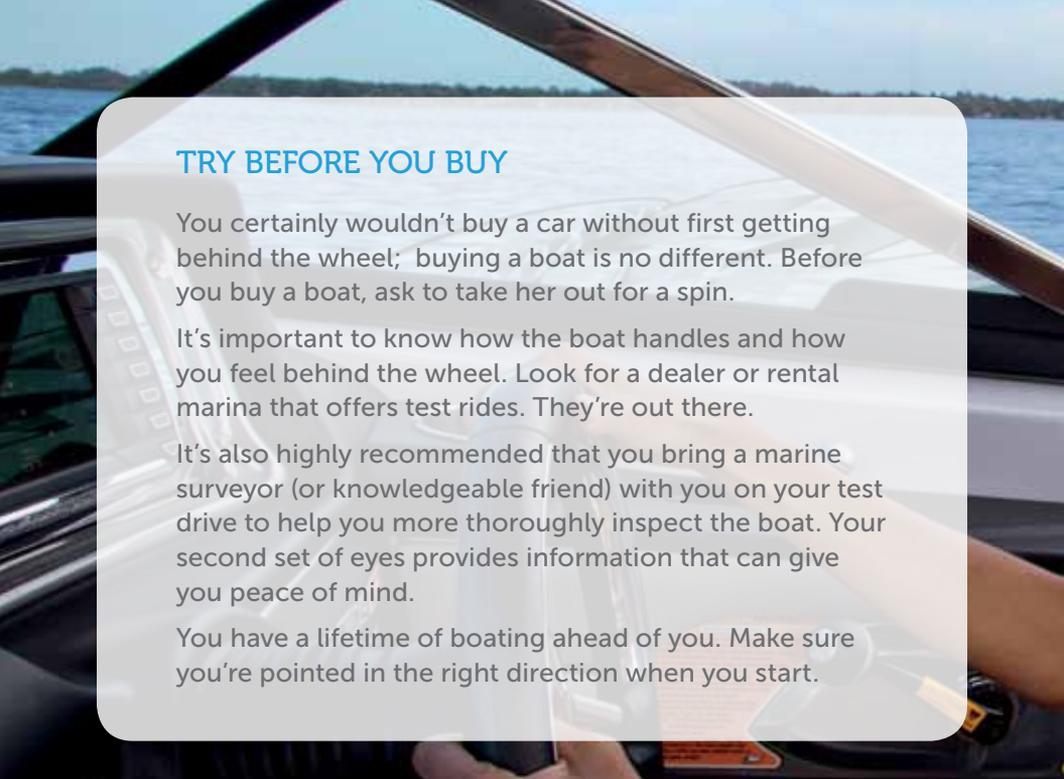
Even if you've decided to buy a pre-owned boat, your best bet is to first visit a few dealerships. You'll find knowledgeable sales staff to answer all your important questions. Plus, shopping around gives you an opportunity to compare and contrast prices, models and more. Finding the right dealer always works wonders in the long run, for your pocket and your fun.



You can also visit a Marine Five Star Certified Dealer (a list is available on [DiscoverBoating.ca/CertifiedDealer](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/CertifiedDealer)). Their commitment to excellence, knowledgeable employees and reliable service guarantee your satisfaction. Chances are there's a certified dealer nearby that can take care of you before and after your purchase. Hitting a boat show is a great way to compare manufacturers. Plus, you can see what new gadgets are on the market, discover new ways to use your boat, attend safety and maintenance seminars, and even get that "fix" you so desperately crave when you can't get out on the water.



**BUYING A BOAT**

A person's hands are visible on the steering wheel of a boat. The background shows a body of water and a distant shoreline. A white rounded rectangular text box is overlaid on the center of the image.

## TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

You certainly wouldn't buy a car without first getting behind the wheel; buying a boat is no different. Before you buy a boat, ask to take her out for a spin.

It's important to know how the boat handles and how you feel behind the wheel. Look for a dealer or rental marina that offers test rides. They're out there.

It's also highly recommended that you bring a marine surveyor (or knowledgeable friend) with you on your test drive to help you more thoroughly inspect the boat. Your second set of eyes provides information that can give you peace of mind.

You have a lifetime of boating ahead of you. Make sure you're pointed in the right direction when you start.

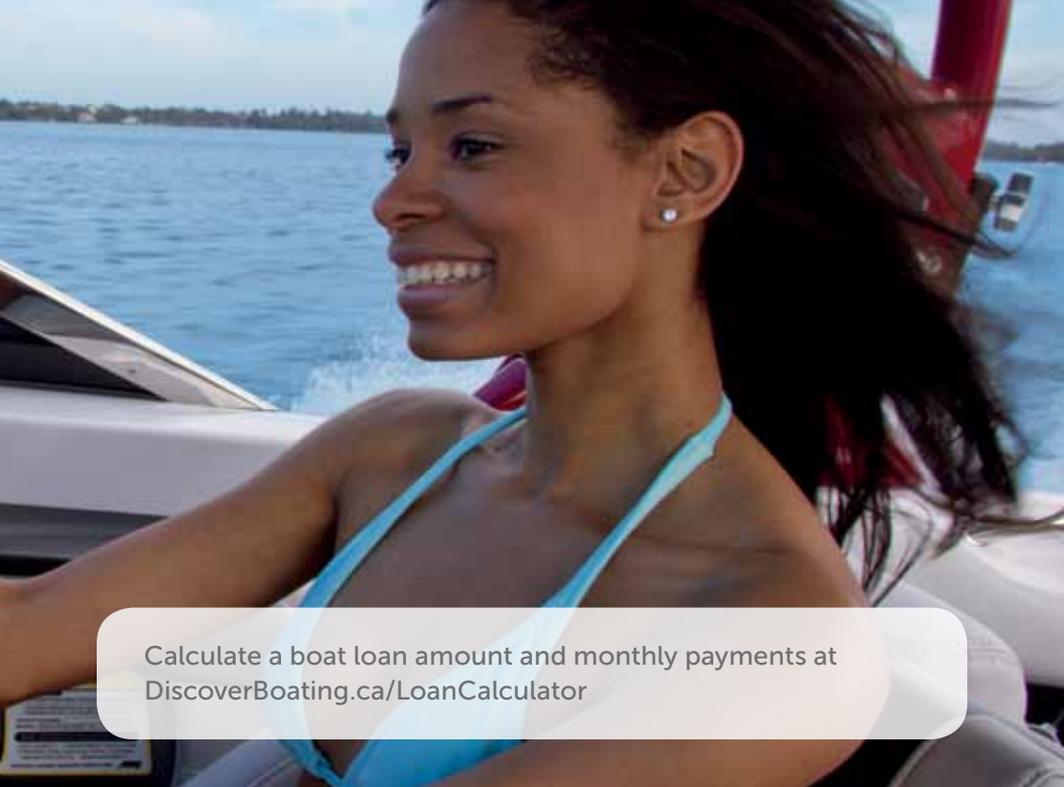
## Boating Is a Worthy Investment

Perhaps you've been thinking (or been told) that a boat "isn't in the budget." Truth is, most new boats cost less than your average car and a day on the water costs less than playing a round of golf, bringing the whole family to a baseball game or taking your significant other out for dinner and a movie.

## Financing

Deciding what kind of boat to buy is only one part of your buying process. Determining your budget, finding the type of loan you need, comparing rates and negotiating terms are equally important steps. We'd go through it all right now—but we want you to take your time with this. It's important.

The good news is, lenders such as banks, credit unions and even dealers, have learned that boat buyers like you are almost always excellent loan clients.



Calculate a boat loan amount and monthly payments at [DiscoverBoating.ca/LoanCalculator](https://DiscoverBoating.ca/LoanCalculator)

## Insuring

Boat insurance is an important way to protect your investment. Consult your insurance broker for advice about policies and coverage, but also talk to your local dealer or even fellow boaters about their experience. Look for an insurance company licensed in Canada with an "A" rating or better, and find a licensed insurance broker that can tailor a policy to fit your boating needs.

## Useful Tips

Consider a separate policy to insure your boat rather than adding it on to your home insurance policy. A home policy is not written to protect marine risks and is not always adequate for boaters.

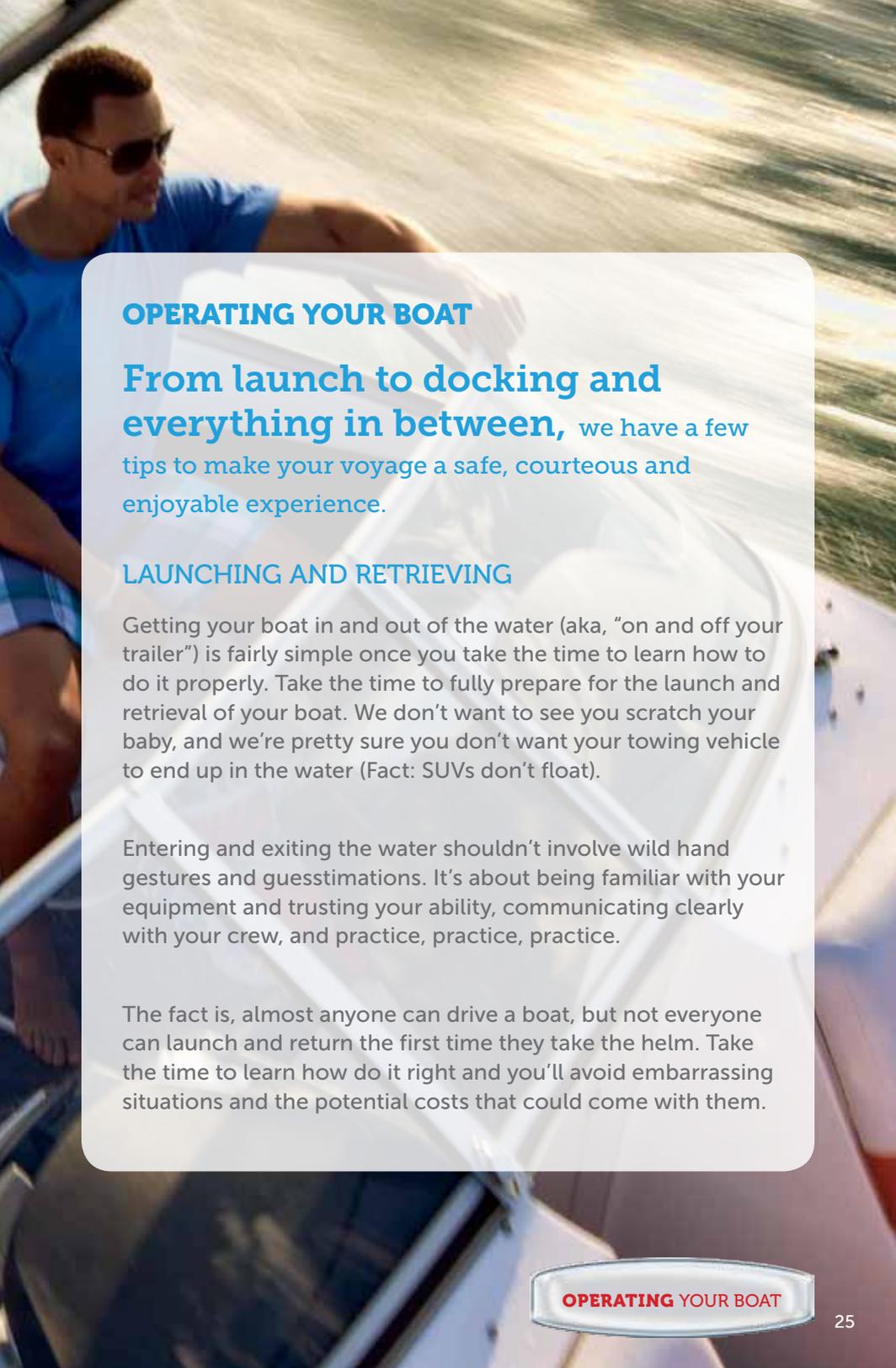
Boat insurance coverage varies from one company to the next, so don't compare them based on price alone.

When choosing a policy, find one that provides separate coverage limits for salvage work and wreck removal. This will compensate you not only for your boat, but also for its removal from the water in case of an accident.



A man in a yellow t-shirt and sunglasses is steering a boat. A woman in a white bikini and sunglasses is sitting in the background. The boat has white and orange upholstery. The text is overlaid on the image.

*A few tips* to make  
sure the Captain's seat  
is nice and comfortable.



## OPERATING YOUR BOAT

**From launch to docking and everything in between,** we have a few tips to make your voyage a safe, courteous and enjoyable experience.

### LAUNCHING AND RETRIEVING

Getting your boat in and out of the water (aka, “on and off your trailer”) is fairly simple once you take the time to learn how to do it properly. Take the time to fully prepare for the launch and retrieval of your boat. We don’t want to see you scratch your baby, and we’re pretty sure you don’t want your towing vehicle to end up in the water (Fact: SUVs don’t float).

Entering and exiting the water shouldn’t involve wild hand gestures and guesstimations. It’s about being familiar with your equipment and trusting your ability, communicating clearly with your crew, and practice, practice, practice.

The fact is, almost anyone can drive a boat, but not everyone can launch and return the first time they take the helm. Take the time to learn how do it right and you’ll avoid embarrassing situations and the potential costs that could come with them.



## LEARN THE ABCs TO AVOID AN SOS

Learn about boating safety before you go out on the water. Take a boating course and make sure every boat operator has their Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC). These courses are designed to protect you, your passengers and others out on the water.

Even if you're a seasoned pro, it's always good to take a refresher course.

To find a boating safety course near you, visit [DiscoverBoating.ca/Courses](https://DiscoverBoating.ca/Courses)

## DRIVING THE BOAT

Overall, the boating community is a friendly group composed of folks who want to relax and have fun. And with 10 million Canadians participating in boating, most captains understand that the best way to have fun on the water is to use common sense.

So just like you did back in Driver's Ed, take the time to learn the basics of boating and on-the-water rules of the road, and get your PCOC. Before you head out, double-check your equipment and safety gear. When you're on the water, operate at a safe speed, obey postings, watch for others, avoid alcohol and, above all, be respectful to others—all 9,999,999 of them. It's simple, really. The more you know about boating, the more fun you'll have.

## TOWING AND TRAILERING

Eighty percent of Canadians live within an hour of an accessible waterway, and many recreational boaters count on their trailers to get their vessels to and from the water. Trailers are also an affordable way to store your vessel after you've returned to dry land.

- Know the towing capacity of your car, truck or SUV. Don't force your vehicle to bite off more than it can chew. There's nothing sadder than seeing a boat on the side of the road (unless it's your ideal boat with a For Sale sign on it).
- Make sure the trailer bears the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) certification label. It guarantees your trailer meets industry standards and government regulations.
- When turning a corner, remember you'll need additional turning radius.
- When backing down a ramp, you need to turn your vehicle's wheel in the opposite direction you want the trailer to go.

Ways to make sure your boat  
is always as ready to go  
*as You are.*



## MAINTAINING AND STORING YOUR BOAT

**Boat maintenance**, on- and off-season, is a necessary part of ownership, but it doesn't have to be a laborious chore.

In fact, boats don't require a ton of work—that is, if you treat them right. Where and how you care for and store your vessel is a matter of budget, convenience and availability (and just a little bit of TLC). Learn how, where and when to store, park, care for and show off your boat by reading this Storage and Maintenance section.

### SLIPS, MARINAS AND BOAT LIFTS

Renting a slip at your local marina is one of the quickest and most convenient ways to dock your boat. Getting out on the water can be as easy as driving to the marina, climbing aboard and pushing off. Plus, you never have to worry about where you're going to park her when you're done.

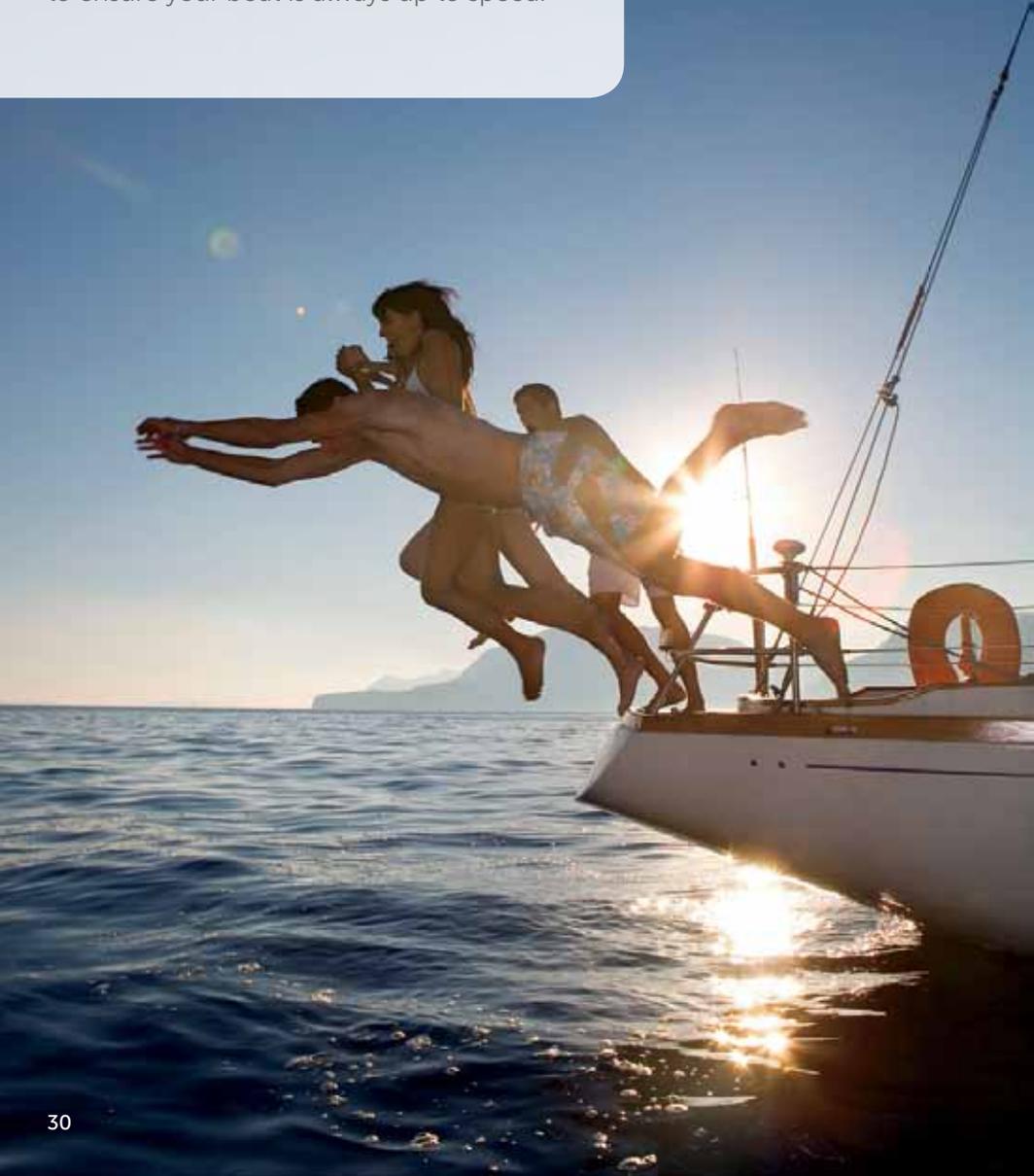
And a marina is a full-service facility for you and your boat. It usually provides amenities such as electricity, fuel, wash-down water, telephone, Internet and other services, plus many offer winter storage. What's more, the marina can be a great gathering place.

To find a marina near you, visit [DiscoverBoating.ca/MarinaFinder](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/MarinaFinder)

## MAINTENANCE BASICS

**MYTH:** Boats require a lot of maintenance.

**FACT:** Using a simple checklist is an easy way to ensure your boat is always up to speed.



**Proper boat maintenance** not only helps to extend the life of your boat but can also help save you from dealing with big problems down the road. Remember, she's a machine, so she'll need a tune-up. She tends to get dirty, so she'll need some upkeep. She's your baby, so you need to show her some love. (By the way, if "she" happens to be a rare "he," the same applies—but he won't admit it)

## WINTERIZING

For some of us, there comes the time of year we all dread. The time of year that marks the end of the boating season. And it's important to remember that how you take care of your boat during the off-season is just as important as how you treat her while she's in use.

When it's time to dry dock, the best thing you can do is to get your boat off the water and put her under a cover. A climate-controlled, indoor space is ideal but if this option is unavailable, shrink-wrapping to protect her from the elements is a good option.

Taking the time to protect and prepare your boat will save you time and money when you take her out in the spring.

## A FEW THINGS TO INCLUDE ON YOUR LIST.

- Check the oil just like you would in your car
- Check the charge and fluid levels of the battery
- Examine the exterior of the boat for damage
- Be sure the fire extinguisher is charged
- Check the outdrive (if you have one) for proper lubrication

For a checklist of Boat Winterizing tips,  
[DiscoverBoating.ca/Winterize](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/Winterize)



# Learn to speak boat.

## Boating Terms to Know:

Whether you're a stink potter (power boater) or rag bagger (sailor), it pays to know some basic boating terminology before you head out on the water. Here are just a few.

**See a complete listing of boating terminology at [DiscoverBoating.ca/Glossary](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/Glossary).**

**Aft** — The back area of the boat.

**Alee** — The side of a boat away from the wind. In other words, the calm side.

**Beam** — Measurement of a boat at its widest point. The wider she is, the more stable she is in the water.

**Bilge** — Lowest section in the hull where water collects. Not to worry, this is expected and the water can be drained or pumped out.

**BOAT** — Best Of All Times.

**Bow** — The front of the boat.

**Buoy** — An anchored floating object that serves as a navigation aid. Kind of like lane markers on the highway.

**Cast Off** — Unfasten all lines and push away from the dock.

**Cleat** — Handy little gizmo on a boat or dock to which lines are attached.

**Course** — Direction the boat is heading. You may want to consider having a compass on board.

**Dead Ahead** — Directly in front of the bow. On land you would say straight ahead.

**Draft** — Vertical distance a boat penetrates the water. Or, how much of the hull is below water level.



**Fender** — A cylindrical or round cushion used to protect the sides of a boat, typically used when tied up at dock or tying off on another boat.

**Gunwale** — The upper edge of the side of a boat. Cleats are often located here.

**Hatch** — A deck opening. If you have a cuddy, you'll likely have a hatch.

**Keel** — The bottom-most portion or longitudinal centreline of a hull. You never think about it until you enter shallow water.

**Knot** — Speed measured in nautical miles per hour. And knots are slightly slower than miles per hour, e.g., 15 knots is equal to 17.3 MPH (28.7 km/h).

**Lines** — Nautical term for ropes.

**Mayday** — A radio distress call. No joking matter.

**PFD** — Personal flotation device. Don't leave shore without one for every passenger.

**Port** — The left side of the boat when facing the bow.

**Running Lights** — Required navigation lights that a vessel uses at night or other times of restricted visibility to indicate position and status.

**Starboard** — The right side of the boat when facing the bow.

**Stern** — The back of the boat.

# *No matter* how far out you go, you're never alone on the water.

## BOATING RESOURCES

Let Discover Boating help you get started in boating.

- Boat Selector Tool: Allows you to explore and compare boat types by size, price, propulsion and more: [DiscoverBoating.ca/BoatSelector](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/BoatSelector)
- Cost Comparison Tool: Shows how the annual costs of boating compare to other leisure activities: [DiscoverBoating.ca/CompareCosts](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/CompareCosts)
- Loan Calculator: Helps you determine your monthly payment and loan amount: [DiscoverBoating.ca/LoanCalculator](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/LoanCalculator)
- Boat Brands: A comprehensive list of boat brands and manufacturers by boat type: [DiscoverBoating.ca/Brands](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/Brands)



- Find a boating safety course:  
[DiscoverBoating.ca/Courses](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/Courses)
- Find a marina in your area:  
[DiscoverBoating.ca/MarinaFinder](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/MarinaFinder)
- Learn boat winterizing tips:  
[DiscoverBoating.ca/Winterize](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/Winterize)
- Receive a free *Get Started in Boating* DVD:  
[DiscoverBoating.ca/FreeDVD](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/FreeDVD)
- Sign up for monthly news, tips and resources from  
Discover Boating at [DiscoverBoating.ca/SignUp](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/SignUp)



Buy Smart. Buy a Certified Boat.  
See a list of certified boats at  
[DiscoverBoating.ca/CertifiedBoats](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/CertifiedBoats)

If you follow "Safety First"  
*carefree fun*

won't be far behind.



## BOATING SAFETY BASICS

Transport Canada works hard to protect our marine environments and the boaters who enjoy them. To help keep you safe and happy on the water, here are a few regulations and tips they want you to know.

### PLEASURE CRAFT OPERATOR CARD

The Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC) is mandatory for anyone operating a motorized boat in Canada. It may be a simple, little card, but it proves that you understand the rules and regulations needed to safely operate a pleasure craft.

As you might expect, you need to complete a course to earn your PCOC. Courses cover boating basics like how to share waterways, required safety equipment and how to respond in an emergency. To find out where and how to get your PCOC, go to [DiscoverBoating.ca/PCOC](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/PCOC)

### PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

A pre-departure checklist is exactly what it sounds like: a list of the things you should take care of before starting a day on the water.

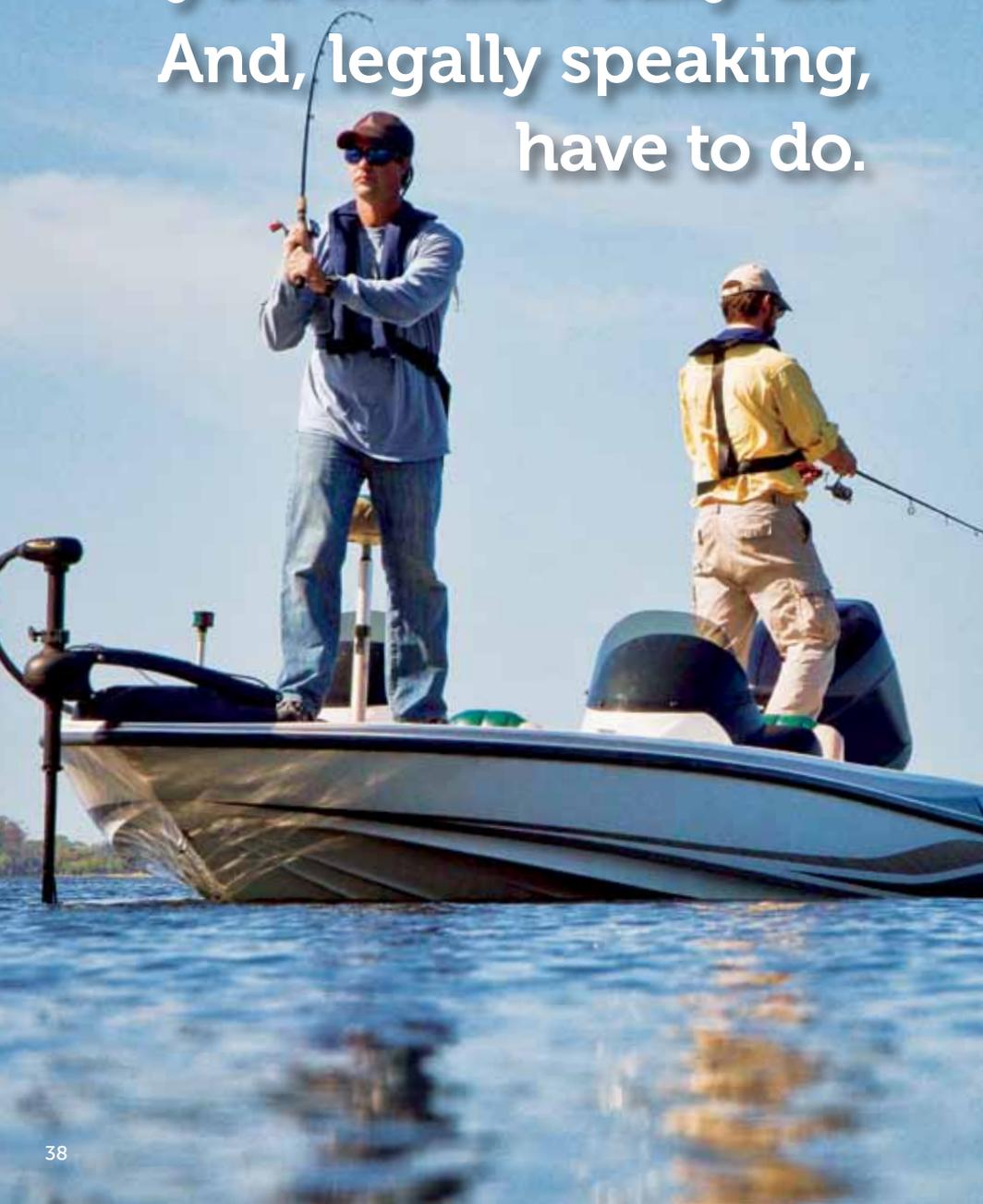
A pre-departure checklist should include little things like making sure the drainage plug is in place and checking the weather. Other checklist items include verifying that every passenger has a Canadian-approved lifejacket, that the driver has their PCOC and that all proper safety equipment is onboard. Use the comprehensive pre-departure checklist at [DiscoverBoating.ca/Checklist](http://DiscoverBoating.ca/Checklist) and make sure everything is shipshape on your boat before every trip.

This guide has been prepared,  
printed and distributed with funding  
supplied by Transport Canada.



*A couple of things*

you should really do.  
And, legally speaking,  
have to do.



## BASIC SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

The safety equipment required onboard depends on the length and type of boat. These regulations vary a little from boat to boat so be sure to check online for the most up-to-date list of equipment for your boat. And remember, safety equipment must be in good working order and within easy reach in case of an emergency. You can find a list of required safety equipment for your boat at [DiscoverBoating.ca/Safety](https://www.discoverboating.ca/Safety)

Safety equipment requirements only apply to pleasure craft, including powerboats, sailboats and personal watercraft, as well as less common types like airboats, hovercrafts and kiteboards. And whether you own, rent or are just borrowing a boat, if you're the captain it's your job to make sure the proper safety equipment is onboard.

## FLOAT PLAN

A Float Plan (some boaters call it a Sail Plan) is simply a form you fill out and give to a landlubber before you set out on your boat. It includes basic information about you, your boat and your boating trip. It's that simple. Then, if something happens or someone needs to get ahold of you, you're covered. You can get a basic Float Plan at [DiscoverBoating.ca/Safety](https://www.discoverboating.ca/Safety)

## REGISTERING OR LICENSING YOUR BOAT

Your licence is the number placed on both sides of the boat as required under the Small Vessel Regulations in Canada. If your boat is under 15 gross tons (12 metres or less) and powered by an engine 10 horsepower (7.5 kilowatts) or more, it must be licensed or registered, regardless of where you operate in Canada.

It's very easy to get your pleasure craft licence for your boat. You simply need to get and mail in the required forms and information. Find out where to get everything you need at [DiscoverBoating.ca/Register](https://www.discoverboating.ca/Register)

Your boat dealer may also be able to help you with this process, so if you need a little help, ask the dealer who sold you your boat. They'll be more than happy to help get you on your way.