

Enhance Your Boating Experiences

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There are many ways to enhance your experiences on the water. One way is to make boating friends. The other is to be aware of basic boating etiquette. **Are you a considerate boater?**

I've gathered a few tips that'll enhance your boating experience, help you make friends with your marine neighbors while becoming a consider boater.

- Pass vessels slowly and keep your wake to a minimum. You are responsible for your own wake and any damage done by it. Always enter anchorage and mooring areas at very slow speeds.
- The first person in an anchorage has the right to determine the swing radius. Keep a good distance from other anchored boats, winds change promptly and anchor lines tangle quickly if too close.
- Remember when swinging at anchor — power boats, fin-keel sail boats and full-keel sail boats all react differently to wind and current and swing in different directions.
- When tying up, keep your noise to a minimum; turn down your lights and VHF radio. Be careful what you say, noise carries over the water clearly. Most boaters retire early so they can set out for early departures. If planning to BBQ, anchor downwind from your neighbors.
- If for any reason you need to use a spotlight, be careful not to shine it on your neighbors.
- When using your dinghy at night or before sunrise, use your oars and not your outboard.
- When fueling up be prompt at the dock, pay and leave. Don't stay at the fuel dock while getting groceries, supplies, and bait. Others are waiting to fuel. Move your boat to guest slippage.
- Wear non-skid deck shoes.

- When you see a boat arriving, ask if you can lend a hand and take their lines.
- If the skipper doesn't provide a run through of the emergency equipment, procedures and supplies, ask for one and become familiar.
- Know the "right-of-way" rules, if for some reason you feel you are being challenged for the right-of-way, always give way to the other vessel.
- If you see a boat that appears to be in trouble, ALWAYS stop and render assistance; law requires it. You will want someone to stop and help you if needed.
- Vessel heads are different than toilets on land, use only a minimum amount of toilet tissue and never flush anything other than toilet tissue.
- Do not debate a skipper's instructions, he/she has the final word and they expect prompt action from their orders. Do what is requested and when requested. Your safety and those on board is the paramount concern.
- Do not bring or consume alcohol without inquiring about the particular policy of the skipper's boat. Ask first.
- Never bring illegal drugs or substances aboard anyone's boat. There is zero tolerance, if found, the Coast Guard can and will impound the boat.
- Offer to assist with cleaning up at the end of the cruise. There is usually one-to-two hours worth of work including organizing equipment, washing the entire boat with soap and water, removing trash, cleaning decks, dishes etc.
- Bring a smile, have fun. Any questions, just ask us. Email Cynthia Funnell at pro@sppss.org.