

2008 is the time to make the Difference.  
The more you know, the less likely you'll get in trouble...

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Each year thousands of recreational boaters get into trouble. Most often it's little things like engine malfunctions or hitting a sand bar. Other times it's more serious like collisions with another vessel and vessels striking a stationary object like a dock. The more serious the problem was, the greater the chance for injury and loss of life.

The overwhelming number of problems encountered by boaters throughout the country could have been either improved significantly or prevented by increasing your knowledgebase. Sounds like a Coast Guard manual, doesn't it. So, to simplify, **the more you know, the less likely you'll get in trouble.**

Now is the time to go out and increase your knowledge about boating. The Coast Guard Auxiliary and other organizations provide a wide range of courses that can complement your boating lifestyle.

I'm sure if you look on the Internet, or at your local educational services you can find courses that can help you stay safe while participating in this great sport.

Here are some of the courses the Coast Guard Auxiliary can provide and some of the benefits contained therein. Some insurance companies provide discounts for successful completion of some of these courses). Courses with an asterisk (\*) are NASBLA approved and are acceptable by states that require mandatory education. Contact your state Boating Law Administrators office for exact details:

About Boating Safely\* – either self-paced or in a classroom. This course provides both the first-time boater as well as the seasoned veteran with the basic knowledge needed to boat safely.

Boating Skills and Seamanship\* – this is a much longer version of About Boating Safely, in its 13<sup>th</sup> edition, providing in-depth information on such areas as; which boat is for you, boat equipment, radios, marlinspike, rules of the road.

Navigation – provides a full understanding of traditional as well as electronic navigation. This is a great course providing for the needs of both the intra-coastal and coastal sailor. One should always run a dead reckoning plot when they are boating, and this course will teach you how.

Let's Go Sailing – a beginners classroom taught course for those who want to boat the traditional way, by sail and a star.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary also gives some seminars that may be of interest. These short eight hour seminars provide a wealth of information on such topics as:

GPS for Mariners is all about how to use your GPS. While it won't teach you how to use your particular GPS, it will instruct you on how one uses a GPS in navigation, common terminology and the safety procedures that should be instituted while navigating by GPS.

How to Read a Nautical Chart - ever want just to understand all the crazy symbols and colors on a nautical chart? This seminar will enlighten you to those answers.

Personal Water Craft Safety (not an approved NASBLA course) – provides overview of PWC safety, rules of the road. This seminar should be taken in conjunction with a NASBLA approved course.

Suddenly in Command is a great seminar for those who boat a lot, but don't handle the helm. It's a "what do I do if there is an emergency" hands' on approach.

Radar for Mariners is a follow-up short course/seminar now being developed.

Other courses that are taught by other organizations may include classes (and some are hands on) such as engine maintenance, basic engine repair, weather, cruise planning, and celestial navigation, seamanship.

The more you know about general boating and the specifically the type of boating you normally do, the safer you will be.

To find a boating course near you, check our course finder at:  
[http://nws.cgaux.org/visitors/pe\\_visitor/class\\_finder/index.html#text](http://nws.cgaux.org/visitors/pe_visitor/class_finder/index.html#text)

Or contact your local Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla by using our Flotilla Finder at:

<http://ff.cgaux.org/>

Invite a friend or a family member along. Sharing an educational experience can be a great way to develop and reinforce relationships, all while learning about a subject that you're interested in.

One last request – get a Vessel Safety Check (VSC) every year, it's free, and may just save your life. To find a VSC examiner go to <http://vesselsafetycheck.org/>

Remember – **wear your life jacket!** – (also known as Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)).