

 **BoatUS® Press Room**

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**NEWS from BoatUS**

**Boat Owners Association of The United States**

**880 S. Pickett St., Alexandria, VA 22304**

**BoatUS Press Room at [www.BoatUS.com/PressRoom](http://www.BoatUS.com/PressRoom)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# Boaters: Don't Let July 4th Be Your Undoing

## BoatUS: Nation's Birthday Requires Special Caution



Watching July 4th firework shows from a boat is wonderful, but boaters need to be cautious on this most highly-trafficked boating holiday.

ALEXANDRIA, Va., June 25, 2014 – A long day on the water exposed to the elements combined with crowded waterways and alcohol consumption could be a recreational boater's ultimate undoing this July 4th holiday weekend. "It's mayhem," said BoatUS Foundation President Chris Edmonston, "So pull out all the stops and make safety priority #1 to ensure you have a wonderful time on the water." [BoatUS](http://www.BoatUS.com) suggests these tips to enjoy America's birthday on a boat:

**Everyone wants to see the show:** Every boat owner becomes popular on July 4th because they've "got boat". Whoa, that doesn't mean everyone can safely come aboard. Overloading combined with intense wake action always spells trouble on recreational boating's most highly-trafficked holiday. Keep to your boat's capacity limit, ensure everyone has a seat inside the boat, and have a life jacket for everyone aboard. Wearing life jackets, especially after the fireworks end when the risk of a nighttime collision is the greatest, is a wise move.

**Get all of the lights working:** In the dark, the only way to determine a boat's direction is by seeing its [navigation lights](#). Fix any broken lights before you go – and ensure they are visible from 360 degrees. You may be surprised to learn that just because the light switch is turned on, it doesn't mean your nav lights can be seen from every quarter.

**Paddlers, resist the urge:** Stand up paddleboards, kayaks and canoes are great – but not in the middle of a nighttime fireworks display. Wearing a headlamp or hanging glowsticks around your neck isn't enough to be seen and may confuse other boaters. If you do insist on going out, stay very close to shore and away from any boating traffic, have USCG-approved nav lights, and keep clear of any channels, marinas or launch ramp areas. Assume that no one can see you.

**Patience is a virtue:** Wait a little bit after the fireworks show ends for boating traffic to thin out before you haul anchor. It's also better to pass other boats astern to avoid anchor line entanglements – one of the top reasons why boaters will call for on water assistance from the TowBoatUS or Vessel Assist fleets. BoatUS reports their 24-hour dispatch call center

switchboards (800-391-4869) light up like a Christmas tree after the fireworks shows end.

**Check your dock:** Before you invite everyone down to the lake house, ensure that any dock with electric service or a boat tied up to it isn't leaking any stray current into the water. Minute amounts of alternating current in fresh water can be hazardous to swimmers and lead to [Electric Shock Drowning](#). An easy way to check your dock is with a circuit tester and a clamp meter. If in doubt, just shut off all electricity to the dock, relax, and enjoy the fireworks.

**Boat Sober:** While it's embarrassing to be arrested for boating while intoxicated, it also means the boat driver has forgotten his or her responsibility to keep everyone aboard safe. Wait until after you've tied up for the night before drinking, or one of the hundreds of law enforcement officers assigned to increased patrols may have to remind you in a very unpleasant, humiliating and costly way. Drunk driving on the water can cost you your car driver's license, too.

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About BoatUS:

Boat Owners Association of The United States ([BoatUS](#)) is the nation's leading advocate for recreational boaters providing its over half-million members with government representation, services such as 24-hour dispatch, on water boat towing as well as roadside assistance for boat trailers and tow vehicles, feature-packed boat insurance programs, money-saving benefits including marina and service discounts, and vital information that improves recreational boating. Its member-funded BoatUS Foundation is a national leader promoting safe, clean and responsible boating and offers range of boating safety courses – including 33 free state courses – that can be found at [BoatUS.org/courses](http://BoatUS.org/courses).

[BACK TO TOP](#)