



## Fact Sheet (11)

# Boat Safety

### General

- Before setting out, inform someone of your location and intended time of return.
- Do not overload a boat with tackle or people.
- Always wear a life jacket when afloat - a buoyancy aid may not be enough to save your life in an extreme emergency. Avoid wearing waders when in a boat.
- Always check the weather forecast before setting out. If the weather is forecast to deteriorate it will.
- Never venture out in a boat if the weather conditions are not favourable. Do not take chances.
- Always have some form of back-up power available - even if this is only a set of oars.
- Never speed in your boat, especially in unfamiliar areas. On some waters levels are so variable that areas that are safe one day are dangerous the next.
- Ensure that the anchor you use is capable of keeping you in position in even the roughest of weather. Sometimes it is safer to sit out a passing storm at anchor than try to run for shelter. Remember that it is too rough when it is impossible for you to fish effectively not when the waves are breaking over the gunwales.
- Make sure the anchor rope is long enough to enable you to fish your chosen swim safely. For example, twice the depth of your chosen swim on your bow anchor.
- Always ensure that knots tied to the anchor are strong and capable of withstanding the forces require to remove a stuck anchor. If the anchor rope snaps when you are pulling hard on the rope you will end up over the side.
- Keep the anchor rope tidy so you don't trip over it.
- Make sure the anchor rope cannot foul on you or anything else when lowering the anchor.
- Always be careful when retrieving the anchor rope while the engine is running, if the rope catches on the propeller you could end up with more than you bargain for so carry out this procedure with great care and never when you are fishing alone.
- Never reach over the side of a boat unless tied on to a fixture or held by a companion.
- Always be aware of where your boat partner is and what he is doing. Take especial care if moving position in the boat. Sudden, unexpected movements of one angler can move the boat and easily unbalance the other angler causing him to fall.

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- Check fuel level before setting out on a long run. If you run out of petrol in open water then all other safety precautions are rendered useless.

### **In case of emergency**

- If caught out in rough weather try and steer into the wind and veer towards the nearest safe bank taking notice of your depth finder as rocks can appear from nowhere.
- In case of engine failure use the oars to keep the bow into the wind and drift down wind until you reach shore.
- If all power is lost lie in the bottom of the boat to lower the centre of gravity and drift to shore. If you have a drogue, attach it to the bow of the boat on the full length of cord.
- Always carry a first aid kit to cover personal injury containing bandages, plasters, antibiotic cream etc.
- Carry a change of clothing in the car. Should you fall in or get soaked by the weather changing into dry clothing, especially in winter, will make you feel a whole lot better.

### **Combating the elements**

- Even in fine weather you can get wet from the spray thrown up as the boat ploughs through rough water. You will need effective waterproof clothing - jacket and over trousers/bib and brace, or one piece suit.
- It is always 'an overcoat colder' fishing from a boat than from the bank. Wearing clothing that allows you to add or remove layers as the weather changes is the best plan.
- Keep your spare clothing in a dry bag or box in the boat. Adding a layer of damp clothing is not a good way to get warm.
- In summer carry and use a good sunscreen. Not only will you be subjected to the direct rays of the sun, but they will be reflected off the surface of the water too. Wear ultra violet protecting polarised sunglasses too.

### **Fishing from hire boats**

- Fully acquaint yourself with the operating instructions for the outboard BEFORE leaving the jetty.
- Watch out for hooks and flies stuck in the anchor ropes. Wearing thick leather gloves is a good idea to protect your hands when raising and lowering ropes.
- Take a large unhooking mat or some other pike-friendly floor covering when fishing from hire boats.
- Consider taking your own anchors and ropes, especially if you want to bait fish and require two anchors.

