

May 17-23: Safe Boating Week

Safe Boating Week runs from May 17 until May 23. The Victoria Day long weekend marks the return of summer, which means pleasure crafts of all shapes and sizes will be out on the waters of Georgian Bay and the smaller inland bodies of water. The Grey County OPP Marine Unit, together with officers from neighbouring OPP Detachments, as well as the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), will be patrolling the waterways this summer to ensure boating safety and compliance. By following some of these simple steps before you leave the dock could make all the difference between having an enjoyable experience, or not, when out on the water.

Life Jackets ? A proper sized life jacket is required for each person on board. **Competent Operator ?** Consider a boating safety course and always carry your operator card with you. **Check and Monitor the Marine Weather Forecast ?** Conditions can change quickly, particularly on larger bodies of water. **Sail Plan ?** Let someone know your planned route and estimated time of return. Time is of the essence in an emergency; it can make the difference between a rescue and a recovery. **Safety Equipment ?** Required by law. Safety equipment required may vary depending on the type of vessel and size. Ensure you have the proper equipment on board each time you sail; it won't help you if it's left on land. **Charts and Compass ?** Be aware of local hazards, water levels, tides, and know where you are at all times. **Fuel Tank ?** 1/3 to go, 1/3 to return, 1/3 in reserve. **Boat Condition ?** Check the hull, hoses, lines, clamps and the battery. Regular maintenance reduces the risk of a break down on the water. **Leave the Beer on the Pier ?** Boaters caught drinking and boating in Ontario face similar consequences to drinking and driving. This includes power boats, canoes, kayaks, sail boats and personal watercraft.

Remember, Operation Lookout is in effect on the water just as it is on land. If you observe an impaired vessel operator call 9-1-1 and report it. Anyone interested in more information on boating safety can check online at: www.boatingsafety.gc.ca