



BOAT HANDLING

Editor's Note: This article is the first of a series offering tips on boating skill and seamanship prepared for the OB Beacon by Flotilla 16-3 of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

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Like driving a car or flying a plane, handling a boat is a skill gained by study and practice. It is an interesting and exciting experience.

Often a first-time boat owner may be frightened. His boat may not respond in ways he expects. He may feel he does not have control. But fear can be an incentive to boating safety.

Basic boat handling skills require, as a first step, a knowledge of how and why boats behave as they do. This can be gained by trial and error, but errors on the water can be dangerous to the boater and those in the vicinity.

An adequate amount of basic boat handling know-how can be learned in the Coast Guard Auxiliary classroom, at low risk. But eventually the more hours you use your boat, the more expert you become at handling her. Many novices can step aboard for the first time and perform reasonably well with little instruction or practice. But this does not mean the boat is being operated safely. It is not quite as simple as driving the family car.

One of the grave mistakes made by novice boaters is overloading. In smaller outboard boats, the owner should examine the capacity plate affixed to the stern, which specifies the number of passengers or weight the boat is built to accommodate.

Exceeding this capacity affects performance and invites danger. Automatically, the freeboard of any boat is reduced when overloaded. This could lead to swamping or capsizing. These two dangers are also reduced by properly loading your boat, so that weight is evenly distributed from bow to stern and from side to side. Stability of a boat would be sorely affected, for example, if your five passengers are distributed four on the port side and one on the starboard.

Over-powering a boat is equally as dangerous as overloading. A similar plate on your boat's transom indicates maximum outboard horsepower intended for a particular craft. Over-powering invites dangerous handling characteristics. Consequently, speed can be determined only by surrounding conditions and should be tempered with good judgement and caution, traffic and surface conditions.

Proper handling of passengers also is a boat handling skill. A wise skipper forbids bow and rail riding aboard his boat. Each year these dangerous practices account for serious injury and fatalities.

The skipper also has the responsibility of insuring all safety factors on his vessel. One of the best ways to add to safety afloat is a free Courtesy Marine Examination performed by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary at marinas and launch ramps everywhere. The Mission Bay Flotilla operates its Courtesy Marine Examination Station at Dana Landing the second Saturday of each month, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This consists of a thorough check of safety equipment and operating gear. Vessels which pass are awarded the coveted Seal of Safety windshield decal. Boats which fail are not reported or penalized.



Now that your boat is properly loaded and safety checked, the boating novice must consider two boat handling essentials: docking and anchoring.

For the newcomer, docking a boat can be a frustrating, embarrassing experience. It is all a matter of practice. The best advice is to approach docking with caution, slowness and patience. Experience will help you deal with those factors that influence docking such as other boats, wind, seas and current. But always be prepared in advance with docking lines, fenders and boat hook. By taking one's time, docking can become as simple as leaving the dock.

Anchoring is a skill every boater must acquire. You select an anchor and line according to the size of the boat and the type of anchoring you expect to do. It is wise to carry two anchors, for stabilization purposes or in case of emergency.

A couple of basic rules go hand in hand with anchoring skill. They help make it relatively simple. Always point the bow of your boat into the wind or current when preparing to anchor. Reduce speed then put the engine in reverse as your mate lowers (never throws) the anchor.

Sea conditions determine how much line, or scope, is let out, but generally it is a ratio of seven to one, that is, scope equal to seven times the depth of the water. This usually is sufficient for most weather and anchoring conditions.

There are a host of subjects related to boat handling, and you can improve your skill by attending a U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary course in safe boating skills. For further information, contact the Mission Bay Flotilla at 272-8130.

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children, he left his family with a grim determination and true grit seen only in men twice his age. One of the many young men on his way to the fields, Billy held two distinct advantages over the others. One was his size, he stood six feet two and weighed two hundred pounds, and the other was his intelligence. His mother had taught Billy how to read and write. He stayed panning for a year and two months when he had saved up \$6000.00. He guarded it carefully, never flashing it around and being prudent in his purchases.

Billy managed to team up with a wagon train headed for San Francisco. It was there that he met, courted and married sixteen year old Mary Bonny two weeks later. A comely girl, Mary Bonny was for all outward appearances a shy thing. Few people knew that underneath those shy grey eyes lay the heart and nature of a rattlesnake. She had seduced Billy and planned to have her way with him and his money. Mary recognized an instinctive intelligence in her young husband and worked out a plan to separate the man from his carefully guarded fortune. Billy had other plans.

One night as they packed their goods for the next days journey, Mary used her guile and cunning to convince Billy into leaving the wagon train and pairing up with another couple who were headed toward the California missions down the coast. Billy hesitated at first but Mary persisted, pointing out that they would be able to set up a dry goods store and deal with the trade ships from the Orient. Billy gave in. The next morning they started on their journey.

CONTINUED NEXT MONTH



Youth Hostels Schedule Walk

The San Diego Council of American Youth Hostels will celebrate the organization's 48th anniversary May 8th with a 15-mile walk from the Imperial Beach hostel to the Point Loma hostel.

Participants will walk for pledges to benefit the AYH's Hostel Development Fund to build, with State Park and Recreation Department help, a chain of 38 hostels along the California coast. Officials estimate 30 percent of the proceeds will go to meet walk expenses, making 70 percent of all pledges tax-deductible.

The walk route will run from 170 Palm Ave., Imperial Beach, along the Silver Strand to the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge, which walkers will cross on special buses. They will continue on foot from Marina Embarcadero Park to 3790 Udall St., Point Loma.

Pledge sheets and further information can be obtained at the San Diego AYH office at 1031 India Street. For more information, call 234-3339 or 239-2644.

EAGER YOUTHS READY TO WORK

Do you need a dependable, responsible young person who is eager to work? Did you know that there is a very active Career Center at Point Loma High School where the Career Counselor, Freyda Cohen, personally interviews and screens students seeking employment?

Students range in age 15 to 18, are available from 2:00 p.m. on

(some on earlier schedules), and once summer begins, students are available all day. Typing, accounting, cashiering, stocking sales, food services, mechanics, drafting and woodworking are some of the skills our talented students possess.

Join the many businesses who have successfully used the services of Point Loma High. The Career Center is open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Our phone is 223-3121.

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