



# News Release

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## **'TIS THE SEASON TO PUT BOATING SAFETY ON YOUR HOLIDAY LIST**

**U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary offers great gift ideas for the boater in your life**

**LOS ANGELES, Calif.** - With over 12.7 million boats in the U.S., it has been estimated that over 80 million Americans participate in boating activities at least once during the year. As the holidays draw near, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary would like to offer some holiday gift ideas for the boaters on your shopping list to help them stay safe all year long.

"The holidays are a great time to consider the safety items that you need for next year's boating season," says Ed Sweeney, Chief -Public Affairs for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. "With so many boaters in the United States, and with the numbers getting larger every year, safety issues are more critical than ever."

One of the best gift ideas for boaters is to sign them up for a boating safety course. Knowledge is power, and it has been statistically shown that boaters who have taken a safety class are far less likely to be involved in a boating mishap or fatality. Course topics include basic boat handling, required and recommended safety equipment, navigational rules and dealing with boating emergencies. To learn more, call 1-877-875-6296, visit the USCGAUX Boating Safety Class page at: [http://nws.cgaux.org/visitors/pe\\_visitor/class\\_finder/index.html](http://nws.cgaux.org/visitors/pe_visitor/class_finder/index.html)

One of the most valuable gifts for boaters doesn't cost anything but time, such as scheduling a free vessel safety check(VSC) with the local Coast Guard Auxiliary. An Auxiliarist will ensure examine your vessel to compliance with federal, state and local safety requirements before getting underway. For more information or to schedule a VSC, call 1-800-368-5647, or visit: <http://safetyseal.net/> and click on "I WANT A VSC."

Ten other great gift ideas to "deck the hulls" and help keep boaters safe include:

- Sleek, light-weight, and comfortable inflatable life jackets (personal flotation devices - PFDs)
- A carbon monoxide detector
- Emergency signaling kits -- flares, signal mirror, whistle, etc.
- Kill switch leash -- kills the engine if the boater falls overboard
- Up-to-date navigational charts and/or a handheld GPS unit
- Navigation tools and calculators
- Hand-held VHF marine radio with extra batteries
- Personal emergency position indicating radio beacons (PEPIRBs)
- Tool kit and spare parts for boats
- First Aid kit, sun screen, sunglasses, food and water.

The price range for these items runs from under \$10, up to several hundred dollars, but giving the gift of safety to a friend or loved one is priceless.

Another recommended gift that is invaluable, yet is absolutely free: sign up the boater in your life to receive **Waypoints**, the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety's monthly electronic newsletter, to help them stay up-to-date on the latest safety tips from the boating community. **Waypoints**, is filled with news and pointers direct from the experts. Visit <http://www.uscgboating.org/waypoints/> to sign up.

The Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary recommend these gifts in the effort to save lives and reduce mishaps on America's waterways.

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## **Remember - to be a survivor - WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET!!!**

*The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is composed of uniformed volunteers who assist the Coast Guard in all of its varied missions, except for military and direct law enforcement. These men and women can be found performing a variety of missions - on the nation's waterways, in the air, in classrooms and on the dock, performing Maritime Domain Awareness patrols, safety patrols, vessel safety checks and public education.*

*The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary was founded in 1939 by an Act of Congress as the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve and re-designated as the Auxiliary in 1941. Over 30,000 members donate millions of hours annually in support of Coast Guard missions.*

**For more information on the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, visit us at [www.cgaux.org](http://www.cgaux.org) or [www.auxpa.org](http://www.auxpa.org) .**

