

CAPT'N KEVO'S

Boating Tips

Wear It California

There were five adults on the boat. It was hot and they had just departed from the last stop on a “poker run.” Since the rally was over, they decided to stop at a seasonal bistro on the Delta. Afterward, they proceeded back to Discovery Bay for the big party. Before they joined the festivities, they decided to put the boat to bed back at the owner’s house so as to avoid navigating at night and be safe in these (seasonally/historically) very congested waterways.

The skipper agreed to let one of the passengers drive the boat the last mile or so in fast water on Indian Slough (it was his birthday). This didn’t work out so well... Although the new driver was an experienced and capable skipper when it came to high-performance catamarans, he was not used to driv-

ing this particular vessel (stepped hull). While negotiating narrow “S” turns at approximately 25 knots, he turned tighter to starboard than the hull could handle in the middle of an “S” turn without the proper outdrive trim deployed.

The boat veered sharp to starboard and then 90 degrees (relative to the beam) to port. The results were catastrophic. Four of the five persons on the boat were thrown completely out, including the driver (and owner). The vessel did not flip, which is (most likely) the main reason all four of these folks are with us today.

The driver was not wearing his lanyard and the boat continued at speed into the tules heading south and ran (hard) aground. The only terrified passenger left onboard was standing between the port and starboard front seats with legs



BY KEVIN O'LEARY

braced and arms holding tight. But I digress. I'll get to the rest of this story later...

Why Wear A Life Jacket...?

It's too hot! It doesn't look cool. I know how to swim. Nothing is going to happen to me.

These are just some of the many reasons people claim that they do not wear their life jackets. With approximately 700 people drowning each year from recreational boating accidents, it is imperative for you to wear your life jacket at all times while you are on the water.

Life jackets are no longer the orange, hot and bulky life jackets that are commonly associated with on-the-water safety gear. New innovations and developments in life jackets have produced a smaller, sleeker, and much more comfortable version of a life jacket, leaving you with no reason not to WEAR IT!!

Much like a helmet to a biker or skate boarder, life jackets are an essential part of your boating safety equipment and should be worn at all times while on the water. Of the 709 recreational boating fatalities in 2008, more than 89 percent of those victims were not wearing their life jackets.

Life jackets are now lighter, less



The Discovery Bay community supports the wearing of life jackets at all times on the water. From left, Janine Seaton, Angela Adams, Winona Gibson, Michele Baca, Karina Dugand, Lisa Black, Alisa Ortiz and Toni Adams. Photo courtesy of Craig Chutka.

obtrusive and more attractive than ever before. The new inflatable life jackets allow you the mobility and flexibility that you need when boating, fishing, paddling or hunting and are much cooler in the warmer weather. There are many different varieties of inflatable jackets ranging from those that inflate instantly when you hit the water to those that are manually inflated. All are designed to be more comfortable and wearable than the traditional life jacket.

Accidents can happen at an alarming speed anyplace or anytime you are on the water. Although many boaters stow life jackets on their boat, very few choose to wear them. There just isn't time to grab a life jacket and put it on properly before you are in the water.

If you are faced with a strong current or unfavorable weather conditions, you will not only have trouble making sure you are safe and secure in your life jacket, but you will be unable to help your friends, relatives, children or passengers who have accompanied you in your boat. Wearing your life jacket will allow you to be safe in case of an accident and will also allow you the ability to assist others who may be in danger.

OK... Back to the story... All four of the persons thrown out of this vessel were wearing automatic inflatable life vests. Every one deployed and inflated as designed. One gentleman was seriously injured, suffering a broken arm, wrist, finger, plus a partially torn aorta (yikes!). The other three escaped serious injury, but were sore as hell for the next few days (at least). The one who was seriously injured swears the inflatable PFD saved his life (the boat owner).

It should be noted that inflatable life jackets are only legal if they are being worn. Also, children under age 13 are not permitted to wear inflatable life vests. (California just changed from 12 to 13 in order to conform to federal statutes.)

Capt'n Kevo's Tip:

The following numbers are the quickest way to get help on the Delta in relation to where you are.

CG Rio Vista: 707/374-2655
 CG Carquinez: 707/643-7749
 CCC Sheriff: 925/646-2441
 Solano County Sheriff: 707/421-7090
 San Joaquin County Sheriff: 209/468-4421
 Yolo County Sheriff: 530/666-6612
 Sac. County Sheriff: 916/874-5111

Throughout the boating season remember to practice safe and responsible boating, always wear your life jacket, and be alert and aware while on the water. By practicing these simple steps you can save your life as well as the lives of the people boating with you.

Life jackets are now more comfortable and lightweight than ever, with many new models to fit the style and fit you want...

By the way Daaalings... You loooked maaaaveous in your new inflatable life jackets! That's my interpretation of Fernando Lamas. (You had to be there.) HA!

Be safe & happy boating!

As always, feedback is appreciated. I can be reached at kevo@yachtsmanmagazine.com or 925/890-8428. =



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