

SAFETY FIRST

Wear PFDs when appropriate. This is especially important for non-swimmers. But even strong swimmers can unexpectedly fall into the water and be injured in so doing. Everyone should wear at least buoyancy aids and preferably life jackets when moving around on deck and special care needs to be taken when getting on and off boats. Children should wear properly fitting and secured life jackets and be properly supervised at all times.

Care at bridges. It will often be necessary to lower canopies and masts, depending upon specific arrangements, which is often best done whilst moored up. Special care needs to be taken to avoid injuries from the moving parts when they are lowered (or raised) and any advice in the boat operating manual should be taken. Always ensure sufficient height clearance and ensure that everyone on board is inboard with heads, arms etc. safely positioned to avoid striking the bridge. At narrow bridges special care is needed to avoid collision and a boat heading into the tide should keep clear of one navigating with the tide.

Care when mooring up. Mooring, and un-mooring, can be hazardous, especially in areas with strong tides and on windy days. Always approach moorings slowly, have mooring lines ready and check that they are free from knots and tangles, ensure that those assisting with mooring operations know the intentions of the skipper. Life jackets should be worn and care taken getting on and off the boat, avoiding jumping. Care is needed handling the mooring lines and securing them so as to avoid injury from the lines. Whenever possible approach moorings against the tidal flow and wind so as to assist with the slow speed manoeuvrability of the boat. Always ensure that mooring equipment is not overloaded, with mooring cleats, bollards, rings and ropes kept in good condition as if they break or detach under load serious injury or even death can occur.

Never swim or dive into the rivers or broads; there may be weeds, strong currents or waterborne diseases.

If anyone falls in. Avoid entering the water yourself but try to assist by throwing something buoyant to them ideally attached to a line so you can help pull them back to shore; boats and many moorings have rescue equipment to assist in retrieving persons from the water.

Coping with pets. Remember not to put yourself at risk by trying to help an animal apparently in distress. All too often people have died trying to assist animals that survive. Remember life jackets are available for some pets.

Anti-social behaviour. Every year many groups of people hold celebrations on the Broads with a party on a boat. Whilst great fun please be aware that drinking large quantities of alcohol whilst on a boat can be potentially dangerous. Please consider other people enjoying the Broads. If you should witness any behaviour that you think is anti-social or potentially dangerous please report it to the police by dialling 101 (or 999 in the case of an emergency).

Be careful with alcohol. Do not take control of a boat whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If you have

been drinking be especially careful getting on and off boats. Consider taking life jackets with you whilst ashore. At night remember to take a torch with you to assist in identifying trip hazards both on shore and on deck.

Carbon Monoxide (CO). New BSS Requirements for CO alarms apply to boats with accommodation spaces i.e. areas within a boat surrounded by permanent boat structure and where CO gas may accumulate. Boaters need to pay attention to exhaust gases, particularly petrol engine exhaust fumes, if they can smell them in the boat's cabins because they can contain dangerous levels of CO. Although the need for CO alarms has been introduced to help protect boat owners from sources of the toxic gas from neighbouring boats, the alarms are also expected to prevent death or injury to crew members from their own boat engines or appliances. CO is a silent killer. Its symptoms can be similar to colds, flu or hangovers; headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, confusion, stomach pain and shortness of breath are warning signs of its presence. If CO poisoning is suspected, stop the source, get to the open air and seek medical attention.

- Avoid problems by staying alert to engine fumes – keep them out of the cabin.
- Run portable generators ashore away from the boat, never aboard.
- Don't run a propulsion engine when moored if the exhaust fumes are blowing back inside, even if your batteries are desperate for a charge. Wait until the wind changes for the better or move to a different mooring.
- Be a good neighbour and don't run petrol engines where exhaust fumes could enter a nearby boat cabin.
- If you're smelling and breathing in exhaust fumes, stop the engine and get off the boat.

Ventilation. Good ventilation of interior spaces is important to ensure no build up of dangerous gases such as CO which is a by-product of combustion appliances fuelled by oils, solid fuel or gas. It has no smell, no taste, is colourless and is extremely difficult for human senses to detect. Therefore, it is essential that CO alarms are fitted in areas where CO could accumulate and pose a risk to health; of course all alarms should be tested routinely. The use of canopies can potentially increase the risk of poisoning, even when a boat is making way. Although external engine exhaust outlets discharge exhaust fumes into the open, the wind, aerodynamic effects and the proximity of nearby structures frequently result in the fumes entering the boat. Never ignore the smell of exhaust fumes in any enclosed space.

Dinghies/tenders. Life jackets should be worn when using dinghies and tenders with special care taken getting into or out of them.

Outboard engines. Where a 'kill cord' is fitted always use it.

Overloading. Never exceed the stated capacity of the boat as this will affect the stability and manoeuvrability. Also for similar reasons persons on board should be evenly distributed to avoid excessive heel or trim.