



NorCross Marine Products, Inc.
6881 Kingspointe Pkwy, #8
Orlando, FL 32819
P: (888) 667-2767
F: (407) 370-6880
www.norcrossmarine.com

Unofficial Boating Season Kicks-Off

Tubing Popularity Increases – Boaters Urged to Take Safety Precautions

Orlando, Florida, May 24, 2007 -- Each Memorial Day marks the unofficial kick-off to the boating season, and as boaters take to the water, some common safety precautions and new technology can help to reduce the chance of on-the-water accidents.

The Coast Guard estimates that 70 million people will hit the water this summer, more than ever, leading to 5,000 boating accidents, thousands of injuries and almost 700 deaths.

Drowning is the number one cause of death in boating accidents, and with the increased popularity of tubing, boaters should educate themselves about safety measures.

The Waters Sports Industry Association has developed a set of guidelines to keep you safe while on the water. These principles will help promote safety for everyone on, or behind, your vessel.

- Do not use towables at speeds that exceed the skill of the rider. Boat speeds should never exceed 20 mph for adults and 15 mph for children. "Whipping" a rider can increase the towables speed by 1.5 times.
- An adult should always supervise children using towables.
- Towables should not be used as a personal flotation device, and anyone on the water should always wear a Coast Guard approved Type III (PFD) vest.
- Riders should never place wrists or feet through the towrope handle, and body parts should be clear of the towrope at all times.
- The watercraft driver is responsible for the rider, and a person other than the driver should be present as an observer.
- Do not tow in shallow water or near the shore, docks, pilings, swimmers or other boats.
- Do not exceed the manufacturer's recommended number of riders for your particular tube.
- Always check your towrope's length, strength rating and warning label before use.
- Do not operate watercraft, or ride under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Technology often offers great solutions to increase safety while on the water. The SkierAlert SP, from NorCross Marine Products, is a device that uses patented technology to closely monitor a skier, wakeboarder or tuber, and even doubles as a man overboard detector.

When the wireless safety lanyard is attached to a life jacket, the dash-mounted base station will immediately sound when the signal from the lanyard is out of range or submerged in water.

Visit www.skieralert.com for more information.

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