

Safety . . . not just the operators responsibility.

Many of the factors of vessel operation and safety are the direct responsibility of the operator of the vessel. Operating at a *Safe speed*, following the “*Rules of the Road*” (ColRegs), maintaining proper *control of the vessel*, etc. are all in the hands of the operator, and the operator needs to know and follow all of the rules, regulations and laws. All of the required information is taught in a Pleasure Craft Operator training program. Every operator that takes a certified training program will understand the safe operation of a vessel, from gear and equipment requirements to navigation, to handling emergency situations and much more.

BUT . . . Safety on board is also the responsibility of all crew/guests on board the vessel. As a crew member you will be a safety asset, if you too, know how to handle an emergency. For example, in a man overboard situation, the operator will bring the boat back to the person in the water, but one crew member should maintain a watch on the person in the water, other crew should get the buoyant heaving line ready, and someone should prepare a method to re-board the crew from the water. Man over board on a nice calm day is usually solved easily, but man over board happens much more often in rough water/storm conditions and there needs to be a coordinated effort from all crew members.

Another example might be sudden hull flooding, all crew members need to act quickly and prior training will increase safety dramatically. Yes, the operator can shout instructions to the crew, but prior training makes it easier to understand what needs to be done.

Other members of your family may never expect to drive the boat, but that does not mean they do not need to understand how to handle the many situations that can suddenly arise out on the water. And yes, people have drowned because there was nobody else on board that knew how to start or drive the vessel.

Anyone, *that may ever venture out on to the water*, should attend a training program on pleasure craft operation and safety.

Make yourself a **Safety Asset** on board any vessel, attend a training program.

Rick Scott, S.C.O.T.T.S Boat Safe