

Boaters Basic First Aid

Boating Tips

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Stuff happens particularly on a boat. It moves, tosses and turns not always in a regular pattern. All too frequently people are injured, sometimes seriously.

Put yourself in the position of an injured person on another person's boat. What would you expect? What level of care? So, do you know what to do when someone is injured on your boat? Do you have the training? Do you have the basic supplies to treat the most basic, common injuries?

You're a boat owner, a boat user; what injuries have you incurred? Cuts, deep cuts, scrapes, fish hook in the hand, head or worse an eye; falls leading to broken ribs, arms or legs, concussion, almost drowning, etc.

For starters, take a basic first aid course from the local Red Cross, Power Squadron, Coast Guard Auxiliary or EMS/Fire Department; anyone offering a first aid course. You will not be expected to be a doctor but be able to stabilize a person by rendering the most basic of aid. You must know how to assess an injury then render aid.

Next, add a basic first aid kit to your boat's equipment. Many marinas, boating stores plus big box discount stores have a range of first aid kits. These range from the bare, basic kit to kits that enable you to treat serious injuries depending on your training and skill.

First aid kits include instructions for treating injuries using the contents of that specific kit. The more comprehensive the kit, the more robust the instructions.

For injuries the instructions don't cover or are more serious injuries, the Internet is helpful via your smart phone as is the coast guard via the VHF radio. Error towards caution. You are certainly not stupid to call for assistance or even an evacuation.

Being trained along with having a first aid kit is not enough. Certain items in the kit become outdated or unusable. At the start of each season, review your kit's contents for dates and usability. Also check you've not run out of a commonly used items, for example aspirin or



bandages. You have insurance on your boat so having a first aid kit on it is like insurance. You hope you never have to use it, but it's there if and when you do.

Finally, in an emergency, think, improvise, and make do. For instance, a fishing rod makes a good splint. Someone's shirt substitutes for a bandage. Boat caulk can seal a bad puncture wound.

Get first aid training. Add a first aid kit to your boat then check it regularly. Be prepared to render aid as if it was you injured on someone else's boat?

This article is given courtesy of the Pamlico Sail & Power Squadron, America's Boating Club™. To learn more about our boating courses, email Linda, our Education Officer at psps@gmail.com or contact her at 252-964-3009. Planning is underway for 2020 and includes 4 hour seminars and advanced courses. Reference our website at <https://pamlicosailandpowersquadron.org/> to learn more and to keep up on the education opportunities offered.