



Respect the River

The Ohio River and its tributaries are a tremendous asset and natural resource for communities along the Ohio Valley. Sadly, entirely preventable accidents and drownings occur each year. The U.S. Coast Guard is dedicated to promoting safety and saving the lives of those in peril. One way that boaters, swimmers, fishermen, and professional mariners alike can help in this effort is to Respect the River.

With narrow and shifting channels, sharp river bends, and strong currents, river navigation is always a challenge. The commercial mariners who pilot the tug and barge traffic undergo years of training before they are licensed by the Coast Guard. Respect for the River is central to their profession. Recreational boaters, including fishermen and hunters, should always Respect the River and follow these safety practices:

- Always wear a life jacket when out on the water. Wearing a life jacket on a boat is like using a seat belt when driving – most fatalities occur to people who aren't following this simple precaution.
- Be a sober boater and don't use alcohol while boating. Boating while intoxicated is a leading contributor to boating accidents. The effects of sun, wind, and motion on the water can magnify the effects of alcohol, reducing a person's ability to react quickly.
- Stay well out of the way of tug and barge traffic. These vessels can not stop or turn quickly. Ensure you are easily seen and use your navigation lights when operating at night or any time when visibility is reduced.
- Be particularly cautious around locks, dams, bridges, and near moored barges. All of these can create surprising currents and eddies that can be hazardous to boaters.
- While safe in most conditions, small recreational boats, such as skiffs and bass boats can be particularly vulnerable to capsizing. Know the limitations of your boat and Respect the River!
- Take a boating safety course from the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Finally, another way in which boaters can Respect the River is to keep it clean. Never discharge oil or throw trash overboard from your boat.

The Coast Guard has been rescuing people on the Ohio since the U.S. Lifesaving Service established our first station at the Falls of the Ohio in 1881. We are proud members of the community, and dedicated to safety, security, and environmental protection across the nation. For more information on a "Boating Skills and Seamanship Course" or a free Vessel Safety Exam contact the Coast Guard Auxiliary at www.cgaux.org, or contact Sector Ohio Valley at 502 779-5400.



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