



## Safety First - In 10 Easy Steps

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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY



Let's start 2012 correctly - by putting safety first in 10 easy steps! This column is about that, from your Coast Guard Auxiliary!

The United States Coast Guard characterizes their Auxiliary corps as a "force multiplier", enabling the active-duty and reserves corps to do more with the budgeted dollars allocated by the US Congress. USCG Auxiliaries donate 100% of their time to the tasks authorized by the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. And no task is more important than promulgating and expanding the safety of life at sea. This column is about that.

### The Ten Commandments

Well, that might be a bit of an overstatement (these are hardly divinely inspired) and an understatement (there are a lot more than 10 things you can do to enhance safety for you and your crew.) However, the numbers associated with these 10 steps that any skipper can do, or insist is done, are compelling.

**#1 - Thou Shalt Wear a Life-jacket** - If 16 mariners go into the water without a life-jacket - only 1 comes out. Conversely, if they fall overboard with a life-jacket, 15 come out. Which cadre do you want to be in? Always have an adequate supply of personal flotation devices aboard. Make sure that children are wearing life-jackets that fit correctly. Federal and State law requires

that they have one on. Only you, the skipper, can ensure that it fits them properly. (see SSP, "Do I Really Need To Wear a Life-jacket?", 9/24/08, and "Life-jackets Save Lives - Maybe Yours!", 2/11/09.)

**#2 - Never Shalt Thou Drink and Drive** - Whether a car or a boat, it is just plain crazy - and illegal - to drink and drive (see SSP, "Scotch & (Sea)Water - A Deadly Cocktail", 6/30/10.) Individual years vary, but I have never seen alcohol account for less than 25% of boating accidents in a given year.

**#3 - Taketh a Boating Safety Course** - Yes, something as simple as an 8-hour boating safety class can make all the difference. 70% of boating accidents involve skippers who have never taken a boating safety course. If you haven't, start here <http://www.cgaux.org/boating/> or email me below and we'll get you squared away.

**#4 - Safety Begins With Thou** - Adults between the ages of 40 and 49 account for the highest rate of boating fatalities. You set the tone for safety for the entire crew and her passengers. Come on, Bunky, get that life-jacket on.

**#5 - Thou Shalt Know The Rules of Navigation** - Can you imagine giving the keys to the family car to one of your children - and they have never opened the book of driving regulations, much less taken a course (see #3

above, Bunky.) You can get them online at the US Coast Guard's Navigation Center (<http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/>) You can also get them from prior columns here. (see SSP, "What Side of the Buoys Do I Go On?", 10/22/08, for a starter.)

**#6 - Thou Shalt Keep A Good Look-Out, While Driving Safely** - You are required by law to always maintain a look-out. (see SSP, "Rule 5 - Proper Look-Out", 7/18/07.) You are also required to use all available means to do so. Have radar? Turn it on, Skipper. Speed is another matter because, like driving a car, speed should always be reduced if visibility and/or weather demands it. (see SSP, "Rule 6 - Safe Speed", 10/10/07.)

**#7 - Knoweth Thy Weather** - Clearly, if you've ever left the dock under beautiful skies and then came home under heavy weather, you know how important it is to know - before you go - what to expect during the course of your journey. Particularly for skippers of open boats, this can be all the difference, even between life and death. (see SSP, "Drill, Baby, Drill - Weather Analysis", 8/04/10.)

**#8 - Haveth Thy Boat Meet Federal Standards** - Can there be any an easier way to ensure that your boat meets USCG requirements than getting a FREE vessel safety check? This is not a

regulatory event - if the boat is missing some requirement, the examiner is very likely to give you his or her cell phone number and the advice to, "fix this and then give me a call - I'll come right down, complete the safety check and affix the safety sticker to your windshield." (see SSP, "No Fuss - No Muss - Free Vessel Exams!", 4/23/08 for details or just go to <http://safetyseal.net/GetVSC/>, put in your zip code and a vessel examiner will contact you directly.)

**#9 - Useth a Carbon Monoxide Detector** - If you have an enclosed cabin, equip it with a Carbon Monoxide detector. Nothing else will protect you from the odorless, tasteless gas that can kill you and yours. (see SSP, "Flu Symptoms But No Sniffles? Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Is a Killer - an update", 9/1/10.)

**#10 - Thy Shalt File a Float Plan** - The US Coast Guard recommends that you always tell a friend or family member where you plan to go and when you'll be back. Make it a habit before leaving on any boat trip. (see SSP, "Float Plans - Nothing but Upside", 10/04/06.)

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at [JoinUSCGAux@aol.com](mailto:JoinUSCGAux@aol.com) or go directly to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at DSO-HR and we will help you "get in this thing..."

## Legislator Muratore Helps Local Teen Center

Legislator Tom Muratore recently visited the Middle Country Public Library located at 101 Eastwood Blvd. in Centereach in order to present a check for \$5,000 for the teen center. The library has created a trendy, inviting place just for teens, The Underground. Located on the lower level in the Centereach building, it's a teen living room and recreation space to read, chat with friends, listen to music, or just do homework. The Underground is open Monday thru Friday from 1pm to 9pm, Saturday from 9:30am thru 5pm, Sunday from 1pm until 5pm and from 9:30am thru 9pm on school holidays. The grant will be used for upgrades to the teen center.



Sandra Feinberg, Library Director and Legislator Tom Muratore. Back Row: Sophia Serlis-McPhillips, Assistant Library Director; Kristine Sabia, Teen Librarian; and Tracy Delgado-LaStella, Coordinator of Youth Services.

"I am glad to be able to provide the Middle Country Public Library with funds for upgrades to their teen program," stated Legislator Muratore. "The library has done such a great job with The Underground. This is a great venue for our children to enjoy after school and on weekends where they can get together with friends in a safe, fun, teen-friendly environment."

For more information about the Middle Country Public Library and its programs, please contact the library at [www.mcpl.lib.ny.us/](http://www.mcpl.lib.ny.us/) or call 631-585-9393 or contact the Office of Legislator Tom Muratore at 631-854-9292, or email [tom.muratore@suffolkcountyny.gov](mailto:tom.muratore@suffolkcountyny.gov).



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