



OPEN WATER

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Know the regulations and permit requirements for your activities.
- Learn the meaning of channel and zone markers and understand the rules that apply across all zones.
- Leave your float plan with a contact and use only a well-maintained vessel with the proper U.S. Coast Guard-approved safety equipment.
- Wear a Coast Guard-approved and serviceable PFD when boating.
- Check the charts, weather, and tides.
- Bring a communication device and know emergency numbers.
- Have a sober operator with the necessary qualifications and local experience.

TRAVEL ACROSS DURABLE SURFACES

- Avoid anchoring on hard bottom or in seagrass and use mooring buoys when available.
- Stay in navigable waters or operate slowly and use a depth finder.
- Maintain proper buoyancy while diving, snorkeling, or swimming.
- Never rest, walk, or stand on corals.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Trash is one of the greatest threats to marine wildlife. Pick up litter and recycle when possible. If you're on a boat, be sure to secure your trash on board.
- Avoid single-use plastics. Choose reusable items and use fewer disposable ones.
- Keep fish and lobster carcasses out of nearshore waters or canals.
- Properly dispose of fishing lines and tackle into available trash cans or pack them out.
- Secure items when running or trailering.
- Utilize self-contained portable toilets or marine sanitation devices for human waste.

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Leave historical artifacts where and how you find them.
- Take only pictures and leave only bubbles while diving or snorkeling.
- When shell collecting is permitted, make sure shells are empty.
- Clean watercraft, fishing, scuba, snorkeling, and other gear after every trip.
- Never discard or release live bait.

LIMIT USE AND PREVENT DISCHARGE OF POLLUTANTS

- Utilize pump-outs.
- Use non-toxic cleaning chemicals, eco-friendly bottom paints, and reef-safe sunscreens.
- Use absorbent pads or other fuel capture devices when fueling; don't overfill to prevent vent spills.
- Report oil, chemical, and hazardous waste spills.

RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Even when watching wildlife from a vessel, maintain a proper distance.
- Practice sustainable fishing methods and know the local regulations.
- Research and use the appropriate style of traps per regulations.
- Retrieve your traps at the end of the season, even if the buoy is missing.
- Avoid touching, feeding, or harassing marine life as it endangers them and you.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS

- Keep a safe distance and speed when passing, meeting, or overtaking another vessel. Always be respectful and conscientious.
- Display a flag from the vessel's highest point only when divers/snorkelers are in the water.
- Respect diver-down flags. Maintain a distance of at least 300 feet from divers-down flags. If you must approach proceed slowly, maintaining a sharp lookout.
- Be aware of your speed and proximity to others, including your boat wakes.