

Public Service Announcement

## Safe Boating Weather Tips

Provided by your

**Metcalf County Emergency Management Office**



## Safe Boating Weather Tips



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### ***You know the weather. . .***

It can be both friend and foe. Calm winds and seas make for enjoyable power boating, waterskiing, and fishing. A fresh breeze and a light chop provide an invigorating sailing or wind surfing experience. But the sudden emergence of dark clouds, shifting and gusty winds, torrential downpours and lightning can turn a day's pleasure into a nightmare of distress. Here are some tips on how to keep your pleasure and safety to a maximum.

### ***Plan for boating fun. . .***

Several days ahead of time start listening for the National Weather Service extended 5-day outlooks on NOAA Weather Radio, AM/FM radio, and TV. The outlooks give general information to help you decide whether or not to continue making plans.

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### ***Before Setting Out. . .***

Pay close attention to the TV weathercast and listen to detailed marine weather forecasts on NOAA Weather Radio. Take note of small boat cautionary statements, Small Craft Advisories, or Gale or Storm Warnings in the forecasts. The Advisories and Warnings alert mariners to higher winds and waves either occurring now or forecast to

occur up to 24 hours from now. Advisories and Warnings for conditions expected later give mariners time to take action to protect life and property.

### ***After setting out . . .***

Don't touch that dial! Stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio. You know the weather--it changes! The change often occurs out of your sight and may be headed your way. Updated warnings and forecasts are aired immediately on NOAA Weather Radio, alerting you to changes that may require action on your part. But you can help yourself . . . It's up to YOU!

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### ***While on the water, stay alert. . .***

- Check NOAA Weather Radio for latest warnings and forecasts.
- Watch for signs of approaching storms:
  - dark, threatening clouds that may foretell a squall or thunderstorm
  - a steady increase in wind or sea
  - lightning flashes.
- An increase in wind opposite in direction to a strong tidal current may lead to steep waves capable of broaching a boat.
- Heavy static on your AM radio may be an indication of nearby thunderstorm activity.
- If a thunderstorm is approaching, head for shore if possible. Get out of your boat and away from the water. Find shelter immediately.
- If a thunderstorm catches you while afloat, remember that gusty winds and lightning pose a threat to safety.
  - Put on your personal flotation device and prepare for rough seas.
  - Stay below deck if possible.
  - Keep away from metal objects that are not grounded to the boat's protection system.
  - Don't touch more than one grounded object at the same time (or you may become a shortcut for electrical surges passing through the protection system).



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### ***Radio Tips***

If you have a VHF transceiver with built-in NOAA Weather Radio channels, use them. If your VHF radio is not equipped with weather channels, you may want to buy a VHF weather radio--they're readily available. Keep in mind, however, broadcast reception varies with the location of you and the transmitter, the quality of the radio, and any obstructions. A broad, average range is 20 to 40 miles. If you venture beyond that

range, you should consider buying a good quality HF single sideband transceiver to add to your VHF. It may be more expensive, but it is worth it to be able to get the information that may save your life and property.

