



The following is a public service announcement for Safe Boating Week: **Friday**

...Lightning Safety on the Open Water...

The following is a safe boating message from the National Weather Service...

No one thinks they will ever be struck by lightning, but the most common threat boater's face in thunderstorms is lightning. Boats operating near thunderstorms are at great risk of being struck by lightning as lightning is attracted to tall objects and boats are normally the tallest object on the water.

Each year 100,000 thunderstorms develop across the United States and adjacent coastal waters. Lightning can generate a phenomenal amount of heat that can vaporize water, melt metal, or cause objects to explode. In fact, bolts of lightning can produce extreme temperatures up to 53,000 degrees Fahrenheit—or almost 5 times hotter than the surface of the sun!

A lightning strike to a boat can be catastrophic, especially if it results in a fire or loss of radio and navigation equipment. Although you cannot prevent lightning from striking your boat you can take protective measures to limit the damage.

The best things to do the minute you see lightning or hear thunder: head to shore and take shelter until the storm passes. If you must weather the storm out on the water, drop anchor. If your boat has a cabin, stay inside and avoid touching metal or electrical devices. If your boat doesn't have a cabin, stay as low as you can in the boat.

At all times, but especially during thunderstorms, make sure you and your crew are wearing life jackets. To protect your boat, make sure it is grounded. Use a good conductive material to allow the current to travel through and off the boat through a discharge plate or the keel. Another way to minimize the chance of a lightning strike is to install a static dissipater.

Listen to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards for the latest forecast and observation information before setting sail. On the open waters, set your radio frequency to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards for alerts on sudden severe storms that might cross your path. Be prepared, not sorry.

Visit the National Weather Service on the web at www.weather.gov/grb for further information on staying safe if lightning or severe weather threatens.

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