

# Boating & Dive Safety

## Description

The UF Diving Science and Safety Program (DSSP), under the guidance of the University Diving Safety Board, exists to ensure that all officially sanctioned diving at the University of Florida is conducted in a safe manner, thereby facilitating the research and educational functions of the University. The program strives to minimize the hazards of accidental and/or occupational injury while supporting and enabling legitimate diving activity and research functions appropriate to the University.

Appointed by the University Provost, the Diving Safety Board, and the Diving Safety Officer seek to ensure that all diving activity officially related to the University of Florida is performed in accordance with the University of Florida diving safety regulations. This program is then designed to meet exemptions from [OSHA 29 CFR 1910 Subpart T -Commercial Diving, Appendix B, Guidelines for Scientific Diving](#). To do this, and to meet community standards, the DSSP is an organizational member of the [American Academy of Underwater Sciences](#) (AAUS).

Please review the [Dive Safety Manual](#) and [OSHA Guidelines](#).

## UF Boating Safety Manual and Information

[su\_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" SECTION 1.0 Overview and Administration "]  
[\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 1.10 PURPOSE "] The purpose of this manual is to establish good boating practices under the auspices of the University of Florida (UF); to ensure that all use of small boats (boats less than 30') under UF auspices is conducted in a safe and legal manner; and to familiarize participants with the basic procedures that affect their own safety and the safety of the fellow users. Ultimate responsibility for safe boat operations rests with the boat operators. It is their duty to refuse to operate a boat if, in their own judgement, conditions are unsafe or they would be violating federal, state, or local laws. It is a boat operator's responsibility to be familiar with and follow all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the safe operation of the boat. [/\_su\_spoiler] [\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 1.20 APPLICABILITY "] The provisions of this manual apply whenever personnel are operating a small boat under UF auspices, regardless of ownership of the boat.

Specific examples of boat operations under UF auspices include, but are not limited to:

1. Persons engaged in research.
2. Employees acting within the scope of their employment.
3. Students engaged in any research/educational operation, including those receiving or providing boat operation instruction or involved in boat checkouts;
4. Boat operation conducted in educational and recreational programs sponsored by UF.

Boats used under UF auspices include:

1. Boats owned, supported, or administered by UF.
2. Privately owned boats used for UF research or educational purposes.

3. Any other boats used by UF for research or educational purposes.

[/\_su\_spoiler] [\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 1.30 AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY "] The boat operator has immediate authority and responsibility to the safe conduct of each boating operation. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) will hold the boat operator directly responsible for any violation of the USCG regulations. [/\_su\_spoiler] [\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 1.40 BOATING SAFETY OFFICER "] The Boating Safety Officer (BSO) is an individual employed by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), who is responsible for the implementation of these policies, procedures, guidelines and recommendations, which ensure the safety considerations of UF's small boating operations [/\_su\_spoiler] [\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 1.50 BOAT OPERATOR "] All personnel who operate any small boat under UF auspices must be an authorized boat operator. The designated boat operator is responsible for all aspects of boating operations. The responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Safety of the boat and all persons on board.
2. Operation of the boat in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.
3. Safe transport of the boat to and from the launch site, if applicable. Before transportation, the Boat Trailing Check List should be used to ensure the boat is ready for transport (Appendix I).
4. The safe operation of all equipment. Before boat operation, the Boat Operating Check List should be used to ensure the boat is ready for operation (Appendix II)
5. Ensuring that all required operational and safety equipment is on board and that the crew member(s) know the location and how to operate safety/survival equipment.
6. Report all accidents, incidents, citations, safety concerns, and issue to the BSO.

To be an authorized boat operator, the individual must:

1. Be over 18 years of age.
2. Hold a current valid State of Florida driver's license.
3. Complete an online safe boating course ([www.boatus.org/florida](http://www.boatus.org/florida)) and provide a certificate of completion to the unit.
4. Participate in a unit-sponsored boat operator training for the specific boat that they will be using.
5. Participate in a unit-sponsored trailering training (to include launching and loading of boat) if they will be required to trailer the boat to the launch site.

A list of authorized small boat operators will be maintained by each unit. Only those people on the list are permitted to operate boats under UF auspices. [/\_su\_spoiler] [\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 1.60 MAINTAINING AUTHORIZATION "] A boat operator will retain their authorization if they conduct boat operations in a safe manner, have operated a boat within the past year, and are still employed by UF, a UF student, or are officially affiliated with UF. [/\_su\_spoiler] [\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 1.70 REVOCATION OF AUTHORIZATION "] A boat operator's authorization may be revoked or restricted for cause by Environmental Health and Safety. Violation of any UF boating regulations, USCG regulations, maritime law, or unsafe boating operation will be considered cause. The boat operator shall be informed in writing of the reasons for revocation, and they will be given an opportunity to state their case to the Director of EHS in writing for reconsideration and/or reauthorization. In addition, a boat operator's authorization will be revoked if their State of Florida driver's license is suspended or revoked for any reason. [/\_su\_spoiler] [/\_su\_spoiler] [su\_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" SECTION 2.0 Training "] [/\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 2.10 BOAT OPERATOR TRAINING REQUIREMENTS "]

1. Complete an online safe boating course ([www.boatus.org/florida](http://www.boatus.org/florida)) and provide a certificate of completion to the unit.
2. Participate in a unit-sponsored boat operator training for each specific boat that they will be operating.

Training will be specific to each boat, but should include at a minimum, the items found in the Boat Operator Training Recommendations (Appendix III).

Each department shall provide a list of authorized operators to the EHS Boating Safety Officer and shall forward the names of newly authorized operators as they become qualified. [/\_su\_spoiler] [/\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 2.20 TRAILERING TRAINING REQUIREMENTS "] Participate in a unit-sponsored trailering training (to include launching and loading of boat) if they will be required to trailer the boat to the launch site. This training shall be documented and signed by the unit trainer. Training should include at a minimum, the items found in the Trailer Training Recommendations (Appendix IV). [/\_su\_spoiler] [/\_su\_spoiler] [su\_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" SECTION 3.0 Boating Operations "] [/\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 3.10 AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED "] No persons shall engage in UF boating operations unless she/he is authorized, or currently in boat operator training under the guidance of an approved boating instructor.

Authorized trainers shall have a minimum of three years of successful operation of the class of vessel for which they are providing training. Trainers shall be knowledgeable in the local, state and federal boating regulations in the area they and their students will be operating. [/\_su\_spoiler] [/\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 3.20 BOATING PROCEDURES "] All boat operators shall obey local, state, federal and international laws while conducting boating and trailering operations under UF auspices. It is highly recommended that all boat operators review the [USCG's "A Boater's Guide to the Federal Requirements for Recreational Boats" \(PDF\)](#).

All SCUBA diving operations conducted from UF boats shall be in accordance with the [UF Diving Science and Safety Program](#). [/\_su\_spoiler] [/\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 3.30 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES "] The local emergency medical system should be activated if imminent danger threatening life or property exists and immediate help is required. For most freshwater and some nearshore coastal area calling 911 on a cell phone will connect you with local emergency help. For near and off shore coastal waters, contacting the US Coast Guard on a Marine VHF Radio channel 16 will connect you with the nearest emergency help. If there is a genuine concern for the safety or welfare of any person onboard a vessel that has not returned or check in within a reasonable amount of time, the USCG Boating Emergency Guide should be followed.

In an emergency requiring immediate action, the boat operator may deviate from any rule of this manual to the extent required to meet that emergency. [/\_su\_spoiler] [/\_su\_spoiler icon="chevron" title=" 3.40 FLOAT PLANS "] A pre-departure float plan shall be given to a responsible party on shore. The float plan should include a minimum:

1. Names of operator and crew;
2. Name and description of boat;
3. Planned date, time and place of departure;
4. Planned date, estimated time and place of return;
5. The site(s) of operation.

[3.50 REQUIRED ACCIDENT, SAFETY, AND CITATION REPORTING](#) All boating accidents, safety concerns, and criminal offences shall be reported to the BSO immediately.

[3.60 DRUG-FREE/ALCOHOL-FREE STATEMENT](#) The University of Florida is committed to providing a campus environment free of alcohol and other drugs. The unlawful possession or use of a controlled substance or the unlawful possession and use of alcohol are harmful and prohibited in and on property owned and controlled by the university. No employee, student, or authorized operator of a university boat or boat used for university purposes such as research are to operate the vessel while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol. Violation of this policy by an employee, student, or authorized operator is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination, expulsion, or revocation of boat operation privileges. Additionally, a violation may be reason for evaluation and treatment, or referral for prosecution consistent with local, state, and federal criminal law.

[3.70 PRE-BOATING ACTION](#) Each boat operator shall, before going boating, become familiar with all available information concerning that boating activity. This information should include:

1. Marine weather reports and forecasts for the location, fuel and boat oil requirements, and alternative points of landing if the original launch site is unavailable.
2. Seaworthiness and equipment operation of all components pertaining to the boating mission.

[3.80 WEATHER](#) Use of any boat is always contingent upon weather conditions. Responsibility for monitoring weather conditions prior to departure and during operations resides with the operator. When small craft advisories are issued by the National Weather Service for the waters of a planned operation or experiment, boats that are scheduled for operations within that geographic area should postpone their operations until more favorable conditions prevail.

[3.90 SCUBA DIVING](#) Any person scuba diving from a UF boat is required to observe the provisions provided in the UF Dive Safety Manual. Therefore, all divers must be on an UF dive plan that has been approved by the UF Diving Safety Officer (DSO). The designated lead diver will be in charge of all diving operations. The boat operator has ultimate authority to cancel any planned diving operations.

- [Appendix I – Boat Trailing Checklist](#)
- [Appendix II – Boat Operating Checklist](#)
- [Appendix III – Boat Operator Training Recommendations](#)
- [Appendix IV – Recommendations for Trailing Training](#)

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## COVID-19 BOATING RESOURCES

- [UF Boating Guidelines COVID-19 Cleaning: Disinfection for Boat-Equipment](#)
- [Minimum COVID-19 Exposure Control Guidelines for Essential UF Boating Activity during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)