

Coast Guard promotes official boating safety app for PNW mariners

March 5, 2021



The Coast Guard is promoting a mobile application to assist with maritime voyage planning, boating safety and maritime distress in the Pacific Northwest.

On waterways throughout Washington and Oregon, the U.S. Coast Guard works diligently to provide safety information, conduct preventative inspections and assist mariners in distress. With the increased reliance of mobile phones, an official U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Mobile application, available for free on iPhone and Android devices, is a modern way for the Coast Guard to assist the every-day mariner. The app was developed as a tool that merges an easy-to-use interface with common cellphone operating systems, offering users a central application for commonly searched boating information.

Location settings in the app can be customized to provide real-time weather information from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather buoys. Mariners can also report navigational hazards or possible pollution incidents to local Coast Guard responders.

Additionally, the app can act as a form of communication between the mariner and the U.S. Coast Guard. Designed to store vessel registration and contact information, user profiles can be vital sources of information to search and rescue teams during maritime distress situations. A critical feature of the application is the bright red “Emergency Assistance” icon on the home screen. This icon will connect mariners in distress with the nearest Coast Guard unit or 911 emergency service while also providing responders with a real-time GPS location.

While the Coast Guard has many reasons for promoting the application, friends and family members of mariners can also benefit from its use. This application provides a unique avenue to file a float plan with designated contacts. These plans can provide information on future voyages to friends and family. Float plans can be critical in emergency situations where facts need to be accurately remembered and provided to search and rescue crews. While the Coast Guard does not actively monitor float plans, many mariners can find comfort in providing voyage information to family members who can then provide detailed inform to search and rescue crews if the vessel doesn’t return when planned.

The Coast Guard encourages mariners to do appropriate research before getting underway and hopes this application will provide a central platform for commonly requested information.

More information on float plans and the boating safety mobile app can be found at the following links:

Float plans: <https://uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/floating-plan.php>

U.S. Coast Guard Mobile App: <https://uscgboating.org/mobile/>