

Conservation Corner

by James Cummins
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COVID-19 is forcing everyone to navigate uncharted waters, including boaters. For the annual celebration of National Safe Boating Week, held May 16-22, 2020, the National Safe Boating Council recommends boaters follow local guidance for social distancing and outdoor recreation.

To enhance the boating experience and educate the public regarding boat safety, the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) was organized in September 1958, and currently has a membership of over 330 organizations, all with an interest in boating safety and education.

With the warm weather, everyone is ready to get out and enjoy the sunshine and have some fun on Mississippi's hundreds of thousands of acres and miles of water. Just remember to be safe. Always wear sunscreen, protective clothing, and stay hydrated.

When going out on the water in a boat, there are safety rules. First and foremost, be sure everyone on board has a properly fitting life jacket and they wear it! Do not put an adult size life jacket on a child because it can easily slip off. An accident can happen unexpectedly and very quickly. According to the most recent U.S. Coast Guard statistics, nearly

three-fourths of fatal boating accident victims drown. Out of those who drowned, 84 percent were not wearing a life jacket.

In case of an emergency, you need to communicate with someone details of your outing—who is on the boat, where you will be, and how long you plan to be gone.

Be aware of the current and forecasted weather for your outing. Water conducts electricity, so it is important not to be boating during an approaching storm.

Never operate a boat while or after drinking alcohol. You are not only putting yourself in danger, but also everyone else in your boat and on the water. Alcohol will limit your judgment of distance and decision making. Operating a boat under the influence of alcohol is illegal in all 50 states and is a violation of Federal law.

All boat engines produce carbon monoxide (CO)—an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas that can kill you in a matter of minutes. You do not have to be inside the boat to be at risk. Many have died from exposure on the swim platforms of boats and in other areas where CO exhaust may accumulate or be emitted. Be aware of the early symptoms (irritated eyes, headache, nausea, weakness, and dizziness).

*Safer at Home

(Continued from page 1.) disinfected, and sanitized top to bottom. After opening, salons and barbershops must be deep-cleaned daily.

• All salons and barbershops are expected to take every step necessary to implement the regulations, orders, and guidance from the Mississippi State Department of Health and CDC to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

• Hand sanitizer must be placed at all entrances.

• Minimizing person-to-person contact through technology, like mobile or online reservations and contact-less

Knowing the nautical rules of the water is important when crossing, meeting, or overtaking another boat.

Last, but not least, take a safe boating course. The primary contributing factors in accidents are attributed to operator factors—such as failure to pay attention, carelessness, excessive speed, inexperience, recklessness, and failure to watch for hazards. Boating safety courses are available, inexpensive and quick—a great way for you to learn safety and the rules on the water.

James L. Cummins is executive director of Wildlife Mississippi, a non-profit, conservation organization founded to conserve, restore and enhance fish, wildlife and plant resources throughout Mississippi. Their web site is www.wildlifemiss.org.

payment, is encouraged.

• Salons and barbershops must post signage at each entrance stating no customer with a fever or COVID-19 symptoms are allowed in.

• Chairs are to be rearranged to ensure at least 6 feet between each customer and be sanitized after each use by a customer.

• Only one customer per employee is allowed in the salon or barbershop at any given time.

For employees:

• All employees will be screened daily at the beginning of their shifts, including asking whether they have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and have they had a fever in the last 48 hours.

• Face coverings must be provided to all employees who come in direct contact with customers. Employees are required to wear that face covering throughout their shift and clean or replace daily.

• Employees must also wear disposable gloves and change them between customers, as well as wash their hands between every customer.

• All employees must be provided training on how to limit the spread of COVID-19.

For customers:

• All waiting areas are to remain closed. Customers must wait in their vehicles until their appointment time and they are called for screening before entering.

• Customers must sanitize their hands when entering

and exiting.

• Customers will be screened upon entry, including asking whether they have experienced any symptoms of COVID-19.

• Customers must wear a face covering, such as a cloth mask, while inside at all times, unless they're receiving a service that would be impeded by the covering.

• Each customer must be draped with a clean cape, which are to be laundered after each use. A protective neck strip should also be placed around the neck of each customer getting a haircut.

GYMS

For businesses:

• Before they can reopen, the entire gym must be deep-cleaned, disinfected, and sanitized top to bottom. After opening, gyms must be deep-cleaned daily.

• All gyms are expected to take every step necessary to implement the regulations, orders, and guidance from the Mississippi State Department of Health and CDC to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

• Gyms must close to the public by 10:00 PM each day.

• In addition to other gym staff, there must be at least one employee on site during hours of operation dedicated to wiping down equipment after each use.

• All high-touch areas must be sanitized at least once every two hours.

• Exercise machines and equipment must be rearranged and/or deactivated to ensure at least 6 feet between

customers.

• Gyms must post signage at each entrance stating no customer with a fever or COVID-19 symptoms are allowed in.

• Hand sanitizer must be placed at all entrances and throughout the gym floor.

• All common areas must remain closed.

For employees:

• All employees will be screened daily at the beginning of their shifts, including asking whether they have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and have they had a fever in the last 48 hours.

• Face coverings must be provided to all employees who come in direct contact with customers. Employees are required to wear that face covering throughout their shift and clean or replace daily.

• All employees must be provided training on how to limit the spread of COVID-19.

• Every employee on the gym floor must wear disposable gloves to be changed at least once an hour.

For customers:

• No more than 30% of the gym's maximum capacity. Gyms are encouraged to limit customers' time to a maximum of 1 hour per day.

• Classes or group exercises are allowed with customers maintaining a minimum of a 6-foot distance apart.

• Customers must sanitize their hands when entering and exiting the gym and when they move between equipment.

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