

Boating tips for all of us to have a good Memorial Day weekend

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FOR THE JOURNAL

Day weekend

Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial start to summer, and for many Upstate residents, that means boating season.

You're probably accustomed to hearing the typical safety directives around this time of year — wearing your lifejacket, having safety gear ready for an emergency and refraining from drinking when boating and driving.

Not to be leaguer those important rules, but there's also another set of tips, rules and guidelines that should be observed so that both you and I — and other lake users — can have an enjoyable holiday weekend.

TIP NO. 1: CRANK YOUR BOAT BEFORE YOU HEAD TO THE LAKE

If it won't crank at home, it's not magically going to start when you get to the water. Most boats can be started in your driveway or anywhere else that has a hose for direct connection to the water pump or with a set of earmuffs that cover the water

intake and allow the water to pass through the motor.

TIP NO. 2: CHANGE YOUR BATTERIES

Probably the No. 1 reason your boat won't start is because it sat all winter and the batteries either lost their charge or won't hold a charge. You can charge your 12-volt batteries on a portable battery charger. It should take around 12 hours on a typical charger. If they won't charge, you probably need to head out and

non-ethanol gas in the tank.

TIP NO. 4: DON'T BLOCK THE RAMP

There's going to be a line of people wanting to launch their boats. Have your boat loaded and ready to launch when it's your turn so you minimize ramp time. If your boat won't start, immediately move your rig off the ramp.

TIP NO. 5: WHEN ON THE WATER, FOLLOW THE RULES

Most boaters have very

get yourself some new batteries.

TIP NO. 3: DON'T USE ETHANOL GAS

Another primary reason your boat probably isn't starting is because you decided to use ethanol gas in the past, and that gas has now separated, leaving you with just water running through your fuel system. If you used and left ethanol — or even non-ethanol gas — in the boat all winter, drain the gas out and fill back up with fresh,

little idea of who has right of way on a crowded stretch of water. The best advice short of learning the rules is using a little bit of common sense. Particular attention should be paid to sailboats, kayaks and swimmers. None of them have the control or horsepower a power boat has, so give them right of way. Regard water skiers and tubers as swimmers who are in the process of entering the water. Give a wide berth to people in tow, as you

never know when they'll become swimmers.

TIP NO. 6: WATCH FOR FLOATING DEBRIS

The Upstate has had a lot of rain in recent days. Lake levels are up, and rivers are full. Not only is debris washing in from tributaries, but wave action from boats will loosen debris, docks, rafts and lots of other things, and these may wind up in your path.

TIP NO. 7: CHILL OUT

It's been a tough year for everyone. Tensions are high, and usage of our waterways is going to be at full capacity. Not everyone views the occurrences, mandates and recommendations of the past three months the same way you do. Don't let that ruin your day, and don't be the cause of ruining someone else's day. What's most important is that Monday is the day we as a nation remember those servicemen and servicewomen who gave their lives for this county. That sacrifice should be honored.

PHILLIP GENTRY is the host of the upcoming podcast radio program "The Outdoors Show with Phillip Gentry & Boat Girl." More information on the show is available at pgandboatgirl.com.



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An enjoyable Memorial Day weekend is upon us. Use some helpful tips to help you celebrate it properly on the water.