

# Captain's Pre-Launch Safety Briefing

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## Captain's Welcome

"Alright, folks, welcome aboard! We're going to have an awesome day out on Lake Martin. Before we head out, I need everyone's attention for a couple of minutes. As captain of this boat, my #1 job is to make sure every single one of us comes back to this dock safe and sound. So, let's quickly go over the rules of the road."

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## 1. The Most Important Thing: Life Jackets (PFDs)

"First, life jackets. We have more than enough for everyone on board."

- **Kids:** "Alabama law is crystal clear. Any child **under 8 years old** has to wear a USCG-approved life jacket, zipped up and buckled, *at all times* while this boat is moving. This is non-negotiable."
- **Adults:** "You'll find all the adult-sized vests stowed right here [point to the storage locker]. You aren't required to wear one, but I want every single one of you to know where they are. If you're not a strong swimmer, or if you'd just feel more comfortable, please put one on."
- **Throwable:** "You see this square cushion? [Hold it up]. This is our throwable flotation device. It is *not* a seat cushion. If someone falls in, this is what we throw to them."

## 2. Rules of the Boat (While We're Moving)

"This is a fast boat, and the water can be unpredictable. I have a few firm rules when the engine is on:"

1. **The "One Hand for the Boat" Rule.** "This is an old sailor's rule and a great one. Any time you are standing or moving around, even when we're idling, please try to keep *one hand on a fixed part of the boat*—a grab rail, the windshield frame, or the tower. It keeps you stable."
2. **Everyone Needs a Seat When Planing.** "As soon as we speed up, everyone needs to be in a proper, cushioned seat. No sitting on the edge of the boat, on the engine cover [point to the sun pad], or on the swim platform while we're underway."
3. **My "WAKE!" Command.** "Lake Martin is a big lake, and we will cross wakes from other boats. I'll do my best to slow down, but sometimes a wave can surprise us. If you hear me call

out **”WAKE!”** or **”CHOP!”** that is your signal to **immediately sit down** in the nearest seat. This is the #1 way we prevent falls.”

4. **Arms and Legs Inside.** “Especially when we’re coming up to a dock. Never, *ever* use your hands or feet to stop the boat. That’s what these fenders are for.”
5. **The Propeller is the Danger.** “When this engine is on, even at idle, the propeller is extremely dangerous. We have a simple rule: **Engine off, people in. Engine on, people out.** Nobody gets in the water until I have shut the engine completely off and given the ‘all clear’.”

### 3. What to Do in an Emergency

“This is the part that will never happen, but we’re going to be ready for it anyway.”

- **Man Overboard!** “If someone falls out of the boat, I need every single person who saw it to point at them. Yell **”MAN OVERBOARD!”** as loud as you can, and *do not take your eyes off that person.* Just keep pointing. I will handle getting the boat turned around.”
- **Fire!** “We have a new fire extinguisher right here [point to its location]. If you see smoke or fire, yell **”FIRE!”** and point to it.”
- **First Aid:** “We have a full first-aid kit right here [point to it]. Let me know immediately if you get a cut or feel sick.”

### 4. The “Maiden Voyage” Part

“Last, this is a new-to-me boat. I’m still learning its personality. Be my extra set of eyes and ears. If you see something in the water or hear a funny noise, sing out.”

“Alright, that’s it! Stow your gear, let’s have some fun.”