



# County of Ottawa

## Sheriff's Office

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**PROPER PLANNING NOW CAN PREVENT TRAGEDY LATER**  
**THE OTTAWA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ASKS "IS YOUR BOAT**  
**SEAWORTHY?"**

The Ottawa County Sheriff's Office wants Ottawa County residents to stay safe on the water this summer by performing a vessel safety check now.

While most people are aware that they need to keep their automobiles in good running order, it sometimes doesn't occur to them to check their boats before the season gets underway. The Sheriff's Office recommends boat owners take the following steps for vessel safety.

- Check the condition of your life jackets. Make sure that there is one properly fitting life jacket for every person on board and that they are in good condition. Check for discoloration, dry rot, and mildew; popped seams and tears in the fabric; and that the straps, buckles, and zippers still work.
- Check your equipment to make sure it is in good working order. This includes items like your visual distress signals, sound-producing devices, navigation lights, bilge pumps, ventilation blowers, and fire extinguishers.
- Check to make sure your navigation charts are on board and updated to the most current conditions.

The Sheriff's Office encourages boat owners to have the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit or the Coast Guard perform a free vessel safety check. Vessel examiners will check the boat for mechanical safety as well verifying the proper safety equipment is on board and offering recommendations on how to best outfit vessels to comply with Federal and state laws and regulations.

By taking the proper precautions now, you can prevent tragedy later. Take personal responsibility for your safety in order to enjoy a summer on the water.

In short, boaters should be prepared! By following these simple tips, boaters should be able to enjoy a long relaxing weekend on the water!

Any questions please feel free to contact Sgt. Keith Koeman, Ottawa County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit at [kkoeman@miottawa.org](mailto:kkoeman@miottawa.org) or call direct at 616-786-4181.