

By, Wilbur B. Scott

ANCHORING YOUR BOAT

Many recreational boaters become proficient in navigation and boat handling but they neglect the importance of proper anchoring procedures. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary stresses that the art of anchoring, which some skippers regard as simple should be mastered by all boat operators and their crew. Anchoring can be vital for the protection of both your vessel, and you life! Yes, I did say “and your life”! The careless or improper use of an anchor can indeed result in tragedy.

To hold a vessel securely, the right-size anchor and proper length of line are essential. Some boats carry at least two anchors, a lightweight one for use in good weather and in protected anchorages and a heavy anchor for use in bad weather or for overnight anchoring when there is a danger of dragging.

There are many types of anchors on the market. A novice boater should obtain expert advice or the manufactures recommendations regarding the selection of the correct anchor. A good rule of thumb to follow when determining the length of line to use is five to seven feet of line for every foot of depth at the point of anchoring.

Only a novice skipper tosses an anchor overboard. The proper method is to lower the anchor slowly into the water until it reaches bottom. Then drift, row or back you vessel until the anchor bites bottom, paying out line to the proper water depth.

To raise the anchor, which most likely is deep into the bottom, start the engine and put your boat directly over the anchor, then trip it, ordinarily it will break free of the bottom when the line stands vertically. It can then be raised. If the anchor does not break free with a good vertical yank, secure the line to a bit and go slowly ahead a few yards. It probably is fouled if it does not break free. Running the boat in wide circles on a taut line may also help free the anchor. You can learn more about boating safety and seamanship by attending one or more of the safe boating classes offered by Homosassa Flotilla 15-04.

For further information about safe boating and/or membership in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary please feel free to contact me at, seacapt34447@yahoo.com.