

the more common of these are overloading, improper loading, improper movement of passengers, horseplay, and bad trip planning.

Overloading is dangerous because it reduces freeboard (the distance from water line to gunwale or edge of boat). This means that smaller waves can wash in and that the boat will take water with a smaller tip. Loading must be especially light when there are or may be waves, and when a motor or sail is used. Motors or sails tilt a boat more than do oars or paddles.

Ordinarily a small boat with a motor or sail is loaded when the seats are full and there is little or no baggage. However, without sails or motors, and in smooth water, most boats can carry twice as many people as there are seats or an equivalent weight in baggage provided the load is well placed. With rough water anything more than the seated load may be too much.

Improper loading will make a boat unstable or lopy. The best place for the load is on the bottom and in the middle. Passengers should never sit or stand on the stem, stern or gunwales, and luggage should not be piled on seats or on boards across the gunwales.

Especially in rough water, the load, including passengers, should be placed low to keep the boat stable sidewise, and away from the ends to give bow and stern bouyancy so that the boat will ride over and not bury in the waves. If there is only one person in a boat he should keep away from the ends, especially in a canoe. Do not sit in the rear seat of an empty canoe. This is especially hazardous in a wind.

Only one person at a time should get into, out of, move about or stand in, a boat. When one person does move, all others should watch him. On entering a boat, or when it is necessary to move from one position in the boat to another, hold both gunwales and step along the keel. Never lean on one gunwale without holding the opposite gunwale at the same time.

Boats should be held alongside the dock until all passengers have boarded or stepped ashore. In entering or leaving a boat do not jump, leap or lunge. Transfer the body weight smoothly from boat to dock, or from dock to boat. A boat should not be entered unless it is fully afloat, nor should an attempt be made to leave a boat that is only partially beached. The boat should be either beached entirely or it should be left while it is still afloat.

At all times avoid horseplay or careless movement in or around a boat. Scuffling, dabbling in water alongside the boat, and rocking and splashing are dangerous particularly in deep water.

Perhaps the most common fatal mistake of small boat users is getting into something they are un-

able to get out of. Wind and current are often unexpected traps. An offshore wind may make the center of a lake dangerously rough even though the water is smooth near shore. Boat users should be alert for such a condition and avoid going too far out into the lake. River currents are equally dangerous. When just going for a pleasure ride, the experienced boatman will head upwind or upstream first, and return with the wind or current.

Keep away from big boats, particularly at night. Speed boats can prove especially dangerous.

Before large swells reach the boat, head it toward them and slow down so that they will slide under it from end to end. Keep the boat away from steep or rocky shorelines against which it might be thrown by a heavy swell.

If the boat is caught in rough water, head it so that waves are received on either the left or right side of the bow. The boat should not be allowed to get crosswise. Keep the boat well bailed and get passengers or baggage into the middle of the boat and on the floor to permit the boat to move up and down more readily. On a small lake it may be better to drift across it than to become exhausted trying to make headway against the wind and current. In a swift river current, do not grab for trees or bushes along the bank to slow up.

If the boat capsizes or swamps, try to keep calm. Most small boats will support several persons even though filled with water. A swamped boat, right side up, will support about as many persons as it is designed to carry when afloat. These persons must be in the water clinging lightly to the outside of the boat, and letting the water support most of their weight. If it can be managed, sitting in a swamped boat is advisable. One mistake, often a fatal one, that many make is attempting to swim for shore even though they thought they could do it easily. They should have paddled or rowed for shore instead, or waited for someone to come to their aid.

If someone falls overboard, grab him quickly and hang on if possible. Get him into a life belt if one is available before trying to get him into the boat. If he tries to climb over the side in a panic, balance the boat for him until he gets in or quiets down. If he is some distance from the boat, throw him a life preserver, cushion or rope, before trying to go after him. To get a person on board, take him over the stern if it is square, or near either the bow or stern if the stern is not square. The rescuer should keep low in the boat to avoid the risk of losing his balance and being pulled into the water by the victim and also to keep to a minimum the possibility of the boat tipping over.

Everyone should remember when they climb into a boat, it can give hours of pleasure but can also, in a matter of seconds, take a life forever.