

## Avoiding Propeller Strike Injuries

Most propeller strike accidents result from operator error. Victims include swimmers, scuba divers, fallen water-skiers, and boat operators and passengers. Most propeller accidents can be prevented by following basic safe boating practices.

1. Maintain a proper lookout. The primary cause of propeller strike accidents is operator inattention.
2. Make sure the engine is off so that the propeller is not rotating when passengers are boarding or leaving a boat.
3. Never start a boat with the engine in gear.
4. Slow down when approaching congested areas and anchorages. In congested areas, always be alert for swimmers and divers.
5. Learn to recognize warning buoys that mark swimming and hazardous areas.
6. Keep boat away from swimming and diving areas.
7. Make sure that passengers are seated properly before getting underway. Some operators of larger boats with several passengers have caused injuries by putting the engine in gear while people were still swimming or diving from the boat.
8. Never ride on a seat back, gunwale, transom, or bow.