

BOATING SAFETY TIPS

1. Local knowledge required of the Inlet channel. Inlet conditions can change rapidly. Follow the marked channel and even then be alert for shoaling.
2. Be especially alert for small boats anchored in or near the channel. While illegal, many sports fishermen from outside the area are not aware of local rules and regulations. Operate your boat in a defensive manner.
3. Be aware that because the Sebastian Inlet is both narrow and shallow, currents are extremely strong and forceful. Ask your boat dock captain, Coast Guard Auxiliary vessel, Marine Patrol or other experienced personnel the safest times to enter and exit the inlet. Respect boater advisories issued by the Coast Guard.
4. Many boaters in small craft exit the channel only to experience difficulty trying to reenter the Sebastian Inlet against an outgoing tide. Each year, several dozen small craft are swamped and lost because of the treacherous nature of the inlet.
5. Typically the most hazardous boating conditions for entering or exiting the inlet at the ocean is during an outgoing tide with easterly winds (>15 mph). Waves stand straight up at the mouth of the inlet.
6. Pleasure boaters should also be aware that many commercial fishing vessels use the Sebastian Inlet regularly. For commercial fishermen, time is money and a commercial fisherman may or may not slow down at all times.
7. Be careful and watch for jet skiers. Many jet skiers are young and seeking thrills. Jet skiers attempting to cross the wake of a boat may not be particularly alert to traffic coming in the other direction.
8. Unfortunately, over the years many boaters have experienced incidents of either boats or persons being struck by errant lines from land based fishermen – most often from the north jetty. As you “hug” the north jetty of the inlet, be alert to the activities of land based fishermen.
9. The tides can often be at or above three or four knots, even on the west or landward side of the A1A bridge at the inlet. Many boaters are simply unaware of and unprepared for these conditions and there are dozens and dozens of stories about small boats being pulled out to sea even from the inlet.
10. A heavy rain or high winds can create shoaling overnight. While the Sebastian Inlet District makes every attempt to keep the channel safe at all times, proceed in the marked channel cautiously. Even under optimum conditions, some sections the channel are only six feet deep.