

Coast Guard launching app to help boaters

The U.S. Coast Guard plans to release its first boating safety app on May 16 as the kickoff to this year's National Safe Boating Week (May 16-22).

The app was mainly designed to provide additional boating safety resources for mobile device users. It was not designed to replace a boater's marine VHF radio.

The app will be available on the Apple and Google Play online stores.

Features include: state boating information; a safety equipment checklist; free boating safety check requests; navigation rules; float plans; and calling features to report pollution or suspicious activity. When location services are enabled, users can receive the latest weather reports from the closest National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather buoys as well as report the location of a hazard on the water.

The app also features an emergency assistance button which, with locations services enabled, will call the closest Coast Guard command center.