

Ready, Set, Boat

One of six Stations in the Passport Program: an Introduction to Fishing and Boating

Read before the Event

Objectives:

At the end of this station participants will:

- ✓ Be able to picture themselves boating and participating in boat-related recreation,
- ✓ Know the essential equipment needed for an outing in a boat,
- ✓ Know what boat capacity is about and where the capacity plate is located,
- ✓ Understand that loading a small boat, like a canoe or jonboat, involves balancing the cargo and people.



Background for the Volunteer:

You board your boat and escape for recreation on the water. Your jonboat carries you into the fluid motion of the river current seeking a favorite backwater for fishing; your power boat skims the water with both speed and freedom pulling your wide-eyed offspring on skis; your canoe slips silently into a placid lake gently allowing you into the world of river otters and moose and loons; your sails ripple in the wind, buffeting you with a combination of ancient knowledge and sleek technology. How did you prepare for these sublime moments? What did you take with you? Can you picture yourself boating?

This station explores the wide ranging activities available for boat owners and renters. Some people hesitate to take the first steps toward either renting a boat or boat ownership because boating has not been traditional in their families. Here is an opportunity for them to put themselves into a boating scene and overcome an initial barrier to recreation and enjoyment on the water. There are many boating activity pictures provided. Choose the ones that people in your area can do.

The second part of this station asks the participants to load a boat with a selection of **basic equipment** to prepare for a day on the water. It is designed to give the participants the opportunity to make some decisions and the presenter (you) a chance to guide their choices. These boating basics start with the law's requirements but the law varies from state to state. Inform yourself of your state's requirements. The basic equipment list includes:

Fire Extinguisher – If the boat uses gasoline as a fuel

Appropriate Life Jackets for all passengers – To be worn at all times

Signal Horn or other sound producer – Loud enough to be heard ½ mile away

Throwable Lifesaving Device – A Boat Cushion or Ring Buoy already tied to a rope to throw to someone in the water, no time to tie it in an emergency

Day/Night Marine Flares and a Mirror – As visual distress signals to other boats

Flashlight – Back-up lighting if your navigation lights fail, floating ones available

Paddle or oars – Back-up propulsion if the motor fails

Dock Line and Anchor – To keep your boat where you want it

Drinking Water, Sunscreen, Sunglasses, Hat – Help with heat, sun and wind

Bailer or Hand Pump – A bucket, a scoop cut from a large plastic bottle, a dishpan or another durable container is fine, a hand pump is easier

First Aid Kit – With appropriate contents for your activities

Navigation Equipment: Compass and GPS – Darkness, fog or the twists of a channel can be disorienting

Plastic bag – For trash

Pre-planning: Permission from parent; Float Plan; a Marine Weather Report
Communications Devices – 2-Way Marine Radio or Cell Phone

The **capacity plate** on your boat indicates how many passengers the craft is designed to safely hold. Overloading puts the gunwales (sides of the boat) too close to the water making it difficult to maneuver and unstable. Although there are boats without capacity plates, most boats have them close to where the boat captain sits. The plates list not only how many passengers but also how much cargo the boat can safely hold. Cars have seatbelts for the number of people the vehicle is designed to hold. Boats have the proper number of seats to correspond to the boat's passenger capacity. Bench seats can be misleading though: just because there is room on the bench for three youngsters it does not mean it is safe to pack that number of passengers into the boat. Weight matters.

When you are loading a boat you must balance the cargo and people's weight both from side to side and front to back. This keeps the boat sitting properly in the water and easier to handle. This is especially important in small boats, like canoes, kayaks, jonboats or small sailboats.

Your state, the U.S. Coast Guard, BoatU.S. Foundation and the U.S. Power Squadron all offer **boating education courses** either in person or online, for individuals or for families to take together. The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) reviews and approves the content of the boating education courses, including the online courses, so look for the NASBLA approval.

Since we are trying to make it easy for people to get information, it would be helpful to have a list of places where participants can take courses in your area and places where they can either rent boats or other equipment to get them started. Some areas have special programs to loan life jackets and fishing equipment. Some areas have water skiing and other clubs that sponsor novices and give instruction. Showing a list during this presentation provides a necessary "heads-up" but a copy should also be included in the "goodie bag" the participants receive at the end of the Passport Program.

This Station's program follows the Materials section below. It appears in two forms, a script and an outline, so you can choose the one that will help you most with your presentation. If you feel more comfortable using a script, use the part directly following the Materials section. Those presenters who would rather read through the script and then use an outline as a guide will find a suggested outline following the script.

Teaching Tips for Ready, Set, Boat:

Before starting the first activity, Boating Charades, you will ask your group to brainstorm activities that they could do from a boat. Making the list gets them to think about boating activities before the Charades cards are distributed. In brainstorming there isn't a discussion about each activity named, the ideas are just written down to make a list. As long as the activity legitimately is done from a boat, then it can go on the list. If someone offers something wildly inappropriate, respond with, "Can you think of something else?"

Boating Charades has lots of illustrations of boating activities. Choose the ones that are popular in your area for the participants to act out. Any unused cards should be shown, one at a time, at the end so the participants get a hint of some of the other ways people spend time boating. Since the illustrations are fairly small, hold them up close enough to the participants so they can be seen or pass them around.

Make sure all of the needed props and equipment are handy. Lay them out so you can find them easily. Prepare in advance. If you need the script for the first couple of times through you might consider putting it on a clipboard with a rubber band to keep it from flapping in the wind. Have some rocks or weights on hand to anchor your props in case a breeze comes up.

Engage both the parents and the kids in your activity. Adults generally need to be invited to participate. A talking group of parents in the background is very distracting and these activities are designed to include all members of the family, so invite them in and sit them down with the group.

The second activity, Boat Basics, requires a box of boating stuff for the participants to select and put onto the boat. We have provided photos of all of the items in case you do not have access to some things. Please gather up as much of the real stuff as possible rather than using the photos. It is much more exciting to put a real boat cushion or dock line on the boat than the picture of either one. The pictures will fill in for items you cannot get from your closet or borrow from friends.

Check your state's boating regulations to see what required items must be on your boat. Some states require a fire extinguisher if there is a gasoline engine. Some require day/night marine flares to signal if you need assistance. Some require a

throwable lifesaving device (ring buoy, boat cushion, or throw bag) that should be attached to a rope. You will need to know your state requirements for Boat Basics.

As part of Boat Basics three participants should be designated as Passengers and one as the Captain. That's four humans that can be loaded on the boat along with the equipment. The fun begins as the four people are placed on the boat. There are only one adult-size life jacket and one child-size life jacket. In spite of the fact that the capacity plate says we can have 4 people onboard there should be only 2 allowed to get on. The Captain should be old enough to satisfy the requirements in your state. And, the Captain should have a boating safety certificate (one of the photos) in his/her possession showing he/she has taken a boating safety course. These complications of loading the boat should be utilized to make the activity full of interaction among the participants trying to put the right stuff on the boat. Encourage them to figure out what they need to make this a pleasurable boating day. If someone wants to remove items that others have put on the boat then that is legitimate as long as the reasoning is sound. A discussion might result that really gets the participants thinking about what they will need.

Give positive reinforcement. The Boat Basics activity is set up so mistakes will be made and reconsidered. Inject some humor and make it fun. Really involve the kids in the action and the questions. If you see their eyes start to wander, ask a question to get them back on track.

Seat your audience on the ground or on a tarp, facing you. Make sure they are not looking in the direction of some other interesting and distracting activity.

Watch your timing. Take as long as the activity needs to make your points and to let the participants have fun while doing the activities. If you have time left over at the end then go on to an Extension. Extensions are provided at the end of each station script but you need to prepare them and collect materials for them ahead of time.

If one child is distracting the others by being wiggly or talkative, give him a task to help you in some way. Make sure it is a task that requires him to be still. You might have him hold up one of the props so everyone can see or be in charge of balancing the load on the boat. If the child is too young for the group, let him/her play with one of the props.

Materials needed:

- Comfortable and attractive life jacket for the presenter to wear throughout the program

Boating Charades:

- Piece of easel paper and marker for brainstorming a list of boating activities
- Laminated 6" x 6" pictures of the following activities are included in the *Passport Materials Kit* or you can download and print them from www.NationalFishingandBoatingWeek.org. Use the ones that are popular in your area for charades. Bring any equipment you have with you to show the participants.

Waterskiing
Kayaking
Canoeing
Tubing
Fishing
Whitewater Rafting

Wakeboarding
Swimming
Watching Wildlife
Sailing
Boat Building
Riding Personal Watercraft

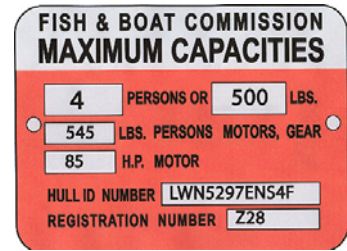
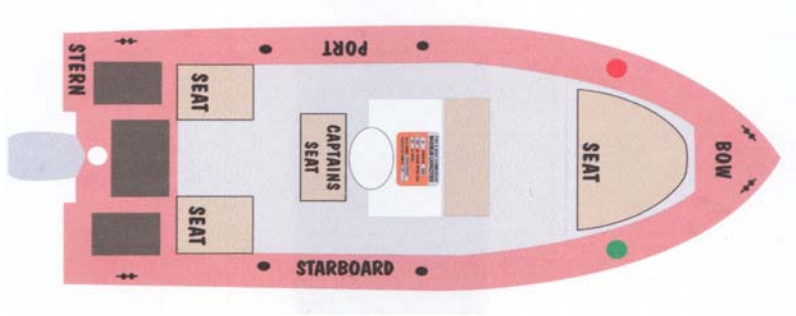


- Information sheet listing: where people in your area go to do the above activities, any clubs that sponsor novices, and where to find courses in boating safety. Are there boat or equipment rentals available? Where? List should be duplicated for the “goodie bag” each participant receives at the end of the Passport Program. Check with your Event Host about this handout.

Boat Basics:

- Boat Mat from *Passport Materials Kit* or downloaded and printed from www.NationalFishingandBoatingWeek.org, with capacity plate, navigation lights (red, green, and white), seats for four people; or a real boat

Boat Mat with capacity plate looks like this:



● Box with the following items: (real stuff is preferred but laminated pictures are available in the Kit if you do not have access to some of the real stuff). These photos also can be downloaded from www.NationalFishingandBoatingWeek.org.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Paddle or Oar | Signal Horn |
| Bailer or Hand Pump | Navigation Equipment: Compass, GPS Unit |
| First Aid Kit | 2 life jackets (1 adult, 1 child) |
| Hat, Sunglasses, Sunscreen | Dock Line |
| Fire Extinguisher | Nautical Chart |
| Floating Flashlight | Parent Permission/Float Plan/Weather Rpt. |
| Trash Bag | Boating Safety Certificate (Capt. & family) |
| Drinking Water | Throwable Lifesaving Device with rope attached (ring buoy or boat cushion) |
| Anchor | Day/Night Marine Flares, Mirror |
| 3 signs that say "Passenger" | Communications Devices: 2-Way Marine Radio, Cell Phone |
| 1 sign saying "Captain" | |



Add a bunch of things you have around that do not necessarily belong on a boat (whatever's handy), so there is a selection for the group to make. Some things could be funny (like a rubber chicken) so you can grab it and toss it out along with your comment, "What's that doing in here?" The participants might justify any of the objects as useful, but the point is to get them to put the essential stuff on the boat.

- 4 lengths of string to attach to passenger and captain signs to hang them around participants' necks

SCRIPT STARTS HERE

Estimated time for the **Boating Charades** section: 5 minutes

Presenter says words in bold; participants give answers in italics;

Presenter and participants do the actions in the boxes.

Watch for check marked “√ Objectives” in the left column to see that you are covering the essential information. Left column also has room for your notes.

**Tips, Objectives,
Your Notes, etc.**

► **Teaching Tip:**
Sit everyone down facing you. Include the adults in your activity.

√ **Objective:**

Be able to picture themselves boating and participating in boat-related recreation.

SCRIPT:

I'm (your name).

- **Who thinks boating would be fun?**
- **Who would want to go water skiing or fishing or wakeboarding?**

Me too! I love boating.

- **I have a marker and sheet of paper.**
- **I'll write down activities that you can think of to do with a boat.**
- **Can anyone start us out with something that can be done from a boat?**
- **I'll start the list with “fishing.” What else can we do from a boat?**

Make a list of the activities they say. Write large enough so everyone can see and add to the list. Stop when the ideas slow down.

One of the things you need to do before you actually get to go boating is to imagine yourself doing that.

We're going to try on a few boating activities by acting them out in Boating Charades. We will see if the others can guess what you are imagining.

► **Teaching Tip:**

Small group? Do not use partners. Let each person do the Charades alone.

► **Teaching Tip:**

Help teams who are having a hard time figuring out what actions will work to describe their activity.

The cards I am going to hand you have pictures of people doing activities from a boat. These people could own this boat or they might be renting it for the day.

- The rest of us will try to guess what kind of boating recreation you are acting out.

You and a partner will get a card so you can act out what the boating activity is. Get a partner to work with and I will give you a card.

Pass out one card per pair (or singly if your group is small) and let them have a minute to figure out what they will do.

I'll give you a minute to decide how you will act out the activity you see on the card.

- Try to see yourself actually doing the activity that is pictured.
- Who wants to go first?

Take turns having each pair demonstrate their activity while the group guesses what that activity is. As each one is identified you might add information on where people can go locally to participate in this activity.

Watch the time. Do as many as you can do in 5 minutes.

Did you ever see someone else doing something and think, "I want to DO THAT"?

► **Teaching Tip:**
The cards are small.
Hold them up close so
everyone can see.

It is possible for you to do that too.

- I have a list of places to go where you can try out some of these ideas yourself.
- You can go to (fill in) to do (fill in). The list will be in the “goodie bag” you get at the end of the Passport Program.

Show the remaining cards one at a time or pass them around to show activities they could learn to do. Describe the action for those who have not seen this particular activity.

Continue: Estimated time for this section (**Boat Basics**): 10 minutes

Tips, Objectives,
Your notes, etc.

SCRIPT:

**Who wants to load a boat for fun on the water?
We are giving you a taste of what it is like to have a
boat.
We'll pretend we rented this one.**

Show the boat mat or your real boat.

Use nautical terms if you
wish: left = port
right = starboard
front = bow
back = stern
toilet = head
kitchen = galley

**Just like learning to drive a car, learning to drive a boat
takes practice, so do not expect you will know
everything instantly. But, we can get you started.**

**The best way to get more information is to take a
boating course either online or with our state. These
classes are low cost or free and will make you a better
boater.**

✓ **Objective:**
Know what a boat capacity is about and where the capacity plate is located.

✓ **Objective:**
Understand that loading a small boat, like a canoe or jonboat, involves balancing the cargo and the people.

Look at this boat and see what it already has for equipment. What do you see?

- **Motor?** Okay we don't need to bring that from home.
- **Seats?** Yes, don't need to bring chairs
- **Lights?** Yes, and what do you notice about them? Cars have white lights on the front and red lights on the back. What do boats have?

They are red on this side and green on the other side, white at the back.

- **Capacity Plate?** Let's read that and see what it says.

Read the capacity plate with the participants. Help them understand what each entry means. (HP means horsepower, LBS means pounds)

- **How many people is this boat designed to hold?** *Four.*
- **How many seats are there on the boat?**
Four!

Now we are going to load this boat with the stuff you would bring from home to go into it.

- For an outing, you might want a lunch and lots of other things to take with you.
- We also need people to go on the boat.
- I need four volunteers to be passengers.

Choose four people to hold the signs saying "passenger" or "captain" showing they are eligible to be put on the boat.

- Here is a sign showing that it is possible for you to be put on the boat. When it comes time to choose something to go on the boat, someone can decide to put you on the boat instead of one of these things.

Stand the “passengers” and “captain” near the boat. Make it a point to choose a captain who is old enough to operate a boat in your state.

Loading a boat is not exactly like loading a car.

- **Keep in mind that since it is floating on water instead of standing firmly on land you must be very careful to balance the load.**
- **Weight low and in the middle is most stable. So, when you put an item in be sure the load is even.**

We are going to have fun today on the water. Here is a box of stuff and some people you could put on this boat.

Grab the “silly” item you placed in the box. (Rubber chicken? Christmas wreath?) Toss it out!

What’s that doing in there? We won’t need that!

Place the box with items to choose from near the boat. Have the participants, one at a time decide what to put into the boat.

They will definitely need your state’s required items:

Some states require:

- Signal horn
- Throwable device
- Fire extinguisher
- Life jackets for every person on the boat

✓ **Objective:**

Know the essential equipment needed for an outing in a boat.

I want you to load the boat first with the stuff you think is required or necessary.

- **Decide what to take and leave behind the stuff that might be convenient, but isn’t necessary.**

- Who wants to be first? Pick something and put it on the boat
- The next person can take something off the boat if you think someone else made a mistake or put something new or a person on the boat.

When you have your boat loaded we'll see if you were able to get the essential stuff.

Okay, go. Who's second?

Third?

Fourth?

Fifth? (Until you have everybody)

(If they haven't selected a captain or passenger)

We need some people to have fun on this boat. It shouldn't go by itself.

There are only 2 life jackets. As people are loaded, let them make a mistake and put people on who do not have a life jacket. Then ask some questions to get them to reconsider.

You're done? Okay, we'll see if your boat has the necessary equipment. Does anyone want to make any changes before I check the boat?

What do you think the absolutely essential equipment is?

Give them a chance to reconsider. Then check for the equipment your state requires. Take off items that are not required.

► **Teaching Tip:**
Have the participants move quickly, either putting something on the boat or taking something off.

Requirements vary from state to state. Check your local boating regulations.

Now that we have the required stuff onboard, everyone pick up one additional thing you think would be good to have on the boat for your outing.

When the participants have selected an item for the boat, discuss each thing and what it does with them.

Why do you need this, etc.?

Life Jackets: proper number and size for passengers, being worn by all passengers

Signal Horn: to get the attention of other boaters

Throwable Lifesaving Device (ring buoy or boat cushion): to help someone who accidentally falls into the water, line already attached because there isn't time to do it in an emergency

Fire Extinguisher: sometimes required if you have a gasoline engine

Boating Safety Certificate: for every member of the family

Day/Night Marine Flares or a Mirror to signal other boats that you need assistance

Dock line & Anchor: to keep your boat in one place

Paddle or Oar: so you can get to shore even if the motor isn't working

Bailer or Hand Pump: to get water out of the boat

Navigation Equipment: Compass and/or GPS Unit: so you know which way you need to go

First Aid Kit: you don't plan to need it but if you do it is good to have one

Flashlight: in case you are out after dark, some can float

Nautical Chart: to show what is under the water surface

Hat, Sunscreen, Sunglasses: So you can have fun in the sun. Nobody likes sunburn.

**Communications Devices: 2-Way Marine Radio,
Cell Phone: for weather reports
and emergencies**

**Water: sun and wind make drinking water
important. Avoid dehydration!**

**Pre-Trip Planning: Permission Slip/Float Plan: to
leave with someone on land and a Marine
Weather Report**

**Plastic bag for garbage: keep our fishing and
boating places trash-free**

**Now it is time to put this stuff on the boat. As you put
your item on the boat remember to balance the load.
Think about where you are putting it in the boat.**

Check for balance between the weight of the
passengers and the equipment. Comment about
their good choices; help them rethink the poor
ones.

You did a great job with loading the boat.

- **Congratulations! You did it.**
- **We're ready for the next station.**
- **Your Group Guide will ask you some questions
and then you can go.**
- **Remember to take a boating course with your
family. Bye.**

Group Guide's Questions

Ask these questions before taking the group to the next station:

What would you do if you rented or owned a boat? *waterski, fish,
wakeboard, kayak, canoe, tube, raft, ride personal watercraft, sail, watch
wildlife, swim*

**If you were the Captain of this boat what would you need to do besides
driving the boat?** *Take boating safety course; provide life jackets for
everyone; put right equipment onboard; balance the load*

OUTLINE STARTS HERE

Introduce yourself and the Ready, Set, Boat program (5 minutes for this and Boating Charades)

- Who thinks boating would be fun?
- I have a marker and piece of paper to write down boating activities.
- What kinds of activities can you do from a boat? I'll start with fishing!
(brainstorm and write down activities)

Boating Charades

Before you go you need to imagine yourself boating.

- We will try on a few boating activities and see if the others can guess what you are imagining
- We have pictures of people doing activities from a boat
- You might either own or rent the boat

Here's a card with an activity.

- Get a partner (or work alone if the group is small)
- I'll give you a minute to figure out how to act this out
- Try to see yourself doing the activity
(Pass out pictures, take turns acting out the activity and guessing)

You can do these things too (show your list and tell where)

- You will get a list in your "goodie bag" at the end of the Passport Program
(Show the remaining cards, one at a time, to show other activities they could learn to do.)

Boat Basics (10 minutes)

This is a taste of what it is like to have a boat

- Just like learning to drive a car, it takes practice: do not expect to know everything about a boat instantly
- Best way to learn is to take a boating safety course.
- Classes are low cost or free and will make you a better boater.

Look at this boat and see what it already has

Motor?
Seats?

✓ **Objective:**
Be able to picture themselves boating and participating in boat-related recreation.

✓ **Objective:**
Know what a boat capacity plate is about and where the capacity plate is located.

✓ **Objective:**
Understand that loading a small boat involves balancing the cargo and the people.

✓ **Objective:**
Know the essential equipment for an outing in a boat.

Lights? (compare to light colors on car)

Capacity plate?

read it and discuss

look at abbreviations and explain

(HP= horsepower; LBS = pounds),

compare # of seats to capacity of boat for passengers

Let's see what we need to bring from home to put on this boat

- It comes with these things but we need more stuff.
- What about People? (choose 4 boaters, give them signs, do not let them get on the boat yet)
- Not the same as loading a car, it is floating so balance the load - keep weight low and in the middle.

Load the boat

- Take stuff that is necessary, that our state requires
 - Grab "silly" item and throw it from the box saying, "What's that doing in here? We won't need that!"
 - Each person will choose something to go on the boat; next person can take it off if you think they made a mistake.
 - Tell us why you think this is necessary as you are putting it on the boat.
 - Okay, go. Who is first? second? third? etc.
 - When you get it loaded, I'll check to see if you have the essential stuff. (Your state's requirements)
 - Captain right age? Boating Safety Certificate?
 - Everyone is wearing life jacket?
- (When they are done, discuss each choice and what stuff they were required to have, and what the stuff is used for)
- We have the required stuff. Now get something that would be good to have with you in a boat.
 - Put that item on the boat. Balance the load.
 - Comment about good choices, rethink others.

Congratulations! You did a great job.

Ready for the next station as soon as you answer the Group Guide's Questions. Bye.

Group Guide asks questions.

Extensions: (If you have more time . . .)

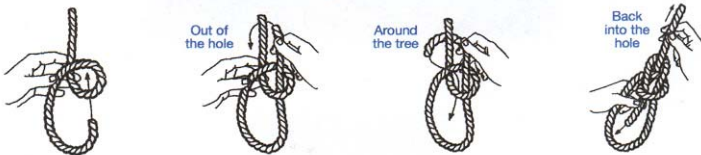
Don't Rock the Boat:

For programs stranded on land, balancing a canoe on two inner tubes is a good way to simulate being on the water. Careful action is needed when boarding a small craft and distributing the load. Participants can get a feel for the need to not stand up or make large movements. Volunteers stationed at each end of the canoe to stabilize it as needed can keep participants from taking a spill.

Boating Knots:

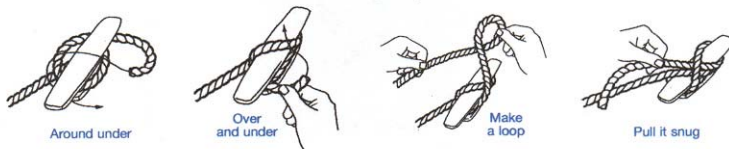
An easy boating knot is the **bowline**. With the rope lying in front of you, make a loop in the rope. Run the end of the rope up through the bottom of the loop, around the standing line and back through the loop. Tighten it up.

The Bowline holds tight and comes apart easily.



The **cleat hitch** involves making a figure 8 over the cleat, a knob (with 2 projecting points) on the boat to tie it to the dock. The rope goes around the base of the knob once, then up and over the top diagonally, then under one projection, and back over the top diagonally in the opposite direction. At this point make a loop and secure it over the opposite projection. The end of the rope should not be free if you have made the loop in the right direction. The rope end should come out from under the diagonal line of the figure 8.

The Horn Cleat Hitch keeps your boat securely tied.



Buoys and Nautical Rules of the Road:

Both buoys and nautical rules of the road are essential information for beginning boaters. If you have time, add some activities to help participants identify and understand the different buoys they will encounter in your area. If you have a horn, let the participants practice giving a short blast and passing on the port (left) side, giving two short blasts to pass on the starboard (right) side and helping them understand which craft have a right-of-way over power boats.