

Christopher Pulichene Debunks Five Common Myths That Put Boaters and Renters at Risk

Christopher Pulichene, a marine tourism professional working in boat rentals and watersports operations in Key West, Florida, shares the misconceptions that create unsafe conditions on the water.

Florida City, Florida Aug 18, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - The Myths That Lead to Trouble on the Water

Boat rental operations in the Florida Keys see thousands of visitors every season. Many arrive excited and ready to enjoy the water. But according to Christopher Pulichene, a watersports professional with experience in both cruise ship programming and coastal boat rentals, a handful of common myths repeatedly put guests in uncomfortable or even dangerous situations.

"People aren't just paying to use a boat. They're paying for peace of mind, reliable equipment, and helpful guidance," Pulichene says. Understanding the reality behind these misconceptions can make the difference between a memorable day and a stressful experience.

Myth One: If the Weather Looks Clear Now, It Will Stay That Way

Many renters assume calm skies at check-in mean smooth sailing all day. They book based on the morning forecast and expect conditions to hold steady. In coastal and tropical environments, weather can shift rapidly. Afternoon thunderstorms, sudden wind changes, and choppy water often appear with little warning.

The Reality: Weather in the Florida Keys and similar destinations is highly variable. Conditions that seem perfect at 9 a.m. can turn rough by noon.

Practical Tip: Check the marine forecast before heading out, not just the general weather. Look for wind speed, wave height, and any small craft advisories. If you are renting, ask the staff about typical afternoon patterns and plan your trip for the calmest window.

Myth Two: Boating Experience From Years Ago Means You Are Ready Today

People who operated a boat once or twice a decade ago often believe they can jump back in without review. They skip the orientation, wave off safety briefings, and assume muscle memory will carry them through. But boats vary widely in handling, and rules or equipment may have changed since their last outing.

The Reality: Every boat handles differently. Controls, trim, throttle response, and turning radius are not universal. Even experienced boaters benefit from a quick walkthrough on unfamiliar equipment.

"I've learned that taking an extra few minutes to explain something properly saves time later. When people understand how everything works, they feel more comfortable and enjoy themselves more," Pulichene explains.

Practical Tip: Even if you have boating experience, take the full orientation. Ask questions about the specific boat you are renting. Practice a few basic maneuvers near the dock before heading into open

water.

Myth Three: Renting the Biggest or Fastest Boat Makes the Trip Better

Bigger and faster often sound more exciting. Many renters choose the largest boat available, thinking it will impress their group or provide more fun. In reality, larger boats require more skill to maneuver, burn more fuel, and can be harder to control in tight areas or rough conditions. Speed adds risk, especially for inexperienced operators.

The Reality: The best boat is the one that matches your skill level, group size, and the day's conditions. A smaller, easier-to-handle craft often leads to a more relaxing and safer experience.

"Safety always comes first. Sometimes the best recommendation is choosing an activity that better matches someone's experience level or today's weather conditions," says Pulichene.

Practical Tip: Ask rental staff which boat they recommend for your group and experience level. Be honest about your comfort on the water. Choose a boat you can control confidently, not one that looks impressive in photos.

Myth Four: Life Jackets Are Optional Once You Leave the Dock

Some renters believe life jackets are only required for kids or non-swimmers. Others assume that as long as jackets are on board, there is no need to wear them. This myth is dangerous and often illegal. Many jurisdictions require life jackets for all passengers, and unexpected falls or accidents happen quickly.

The Reality: Life jackets save lives, even for strong swimmers. Accidents, sudden weather, or medical emergencies can make swimming impossible. Wearing a life jacket is both a legal requirement in many areas and a simple step that drastically improves safety.

Practical Tip: Put on your life jacket before you leave the dock. Make sure everyone in your group does the same. Adjust straps so jackets fit snugly. Treat it as standard procedure, not an emergency backup.

Myth Five: You Can Anchor or Explore Anywhere Without Consequence

First-time boaters often assume they can drop anchor wherever it looks pretty or pull up to any beach they see. They do not realize that anchoring on coral, entering protected areas, or disturbing seagrass beds can cause serious environmental damage and result in fines. Many areas have strict no-anchor zones or require mooring balls.

The Reality: Marine environments are fragile. Anchoring incorrectly damages ecosystems that take decades to recover. Many popular destinations have designated zones, marked channels, and protected habitats.

Pulichene notes, "I think operators have an opportunity to teach responsible boating while creating memorable trips. Helping people enjoy the water today also means protecting it for future visitors."

Practical Tip: Before you anchor, ask your rental operator for a map of safe anchoring zones. Look for sandy bottom areas and avoid coral or seagrass. Use mooring balls when available. If you are unsure, ask before you drop anchor.

If You Only Remember One Thing

Ask questions before you leave the dock. Rental staff have seen what goes wrong and what goes right. A few extra minutes of honest conversation about your experience, the weather, and the boat can prevent hours of frustration or danger on the water.

Share This List and Try One Tip Today

If you are planning a boat rental or watersports outing, share this myth list with your group. Pick one tip and commit to it before your next trip. Whether it is checking the marine forecast, taking the full safety briefing, or wearing your life jacket from the start, small changes create safer and more enjoyable experiences for everyone on the water.

About Christopher Pulichene

[Christopher Pulichene](#) is a marine tourism professional working in boat rentals and watersports operations in the Florida Keys. He has spent several seasons supporting watersports programming aboard cruise ships throughout the Caribbean and transitioned to land-based coastal work in the Florida Keys. His work combines technical boating knowledge with hospitality and guest service skills developed through structured tourism environments. Chris is focused on building long-term experience within the marine tourism industry and is working toward eventually operating his own small-scale watersports business in a coastal destination.

Media Contact

Christopher Pulichene

*****@chrispulichene.com

<http://chrispulichene.com>

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