



**-Securing your Boat-  
Guidelines and Standards**

Specific points on cleating, spring lines, bow lines, hurricane basics and general preparation, all pertaining to securing your boat.

## Securing your Boat

### I. Cleats

- A. A cleat allows a line to be easily adjusted and then held fast. No other knot under a load does this.
- B. If two lines are used on one cleat, place the line most likely to need adjustment on top.
- C. A line with an eyelet can be used on a cleat. This may allow more (enough) room for a second line to be cleated on top. Eyelets are beneficial only to allow more room. The eyelet is difficult to remove and impossible to adjust (under a load). Make ready an extra line and sharp knife.
- D. One length of rope has one purpose. A long rope cleated in the middle and used for a spring line and a bow line should never be done.
- E. Check your dock cleats, if they can be kicked from side to side (and they move) they must be tightened.
- F. The load on your boat and dock cleats should be shared using independent lines on separate cleats. The more the better.

### II. Spring Lines

- A. Set your spring lines to STOP the boat from coming closer than three feet from the main dock.
- B. Two independent spring lines should be made long enough to extend from outside pilings to a cleat at midship. (Usually the longer the better). If your boat does not have midship cleats you will need longer lines to rig spring lines to your bow and stern cleats.
- C. Bow and stern lines are stressed (shocked) with wave action. Three strand nylon ropes stretch and reduce the shock on cleats and your line. However, a low stretch line will hold your position exact, while unaffected by waves and shock.
- D. Bowline knots placed over more bowline knots (on a piling) are hard to remove and wave action causes chafe to all lines.
- E. A cow hitch will keep the line from falling lower on the piling, no piling hook is needed. Cow hitch will not chafe since it grips piling. All cow hitches should be separated with no overlap.

### III. Bow and stern lines

- A. If a line with an eyelet is used, place the eye on the boat's cleat and NOT the dock. If an adjustment is needed, no boarding will be necessary. Besides, riding the nose of a bouncy boat doesn't make it easier.
- B. Set all bow and stern lines to keep boat off finger pier. Fenders are a "fall-back" measure. A boat "riding" its fenders rarely fares well. (Did I say NEVER?)
- C. Winches are very useful for line adjustment in strong wind. Designate any winch that may be useful in this way. Make the winch available by freeing them of sheets and tying elsewhere.
- D. Four bow lines and four stern lines are required.
- E. Two extra lengths of rope should be made ready by coiling and stowing (in plain sight) in cockpit.
- F. Use chafe guard as needed. A hose simply slipped over a dock line should be secured with tape or string, otherwise surges and waves can ratchet it off.
- G. Fall-back lines do no harm and may be useful in later adjustments.
- H. Snubbers may be very useful but should be governed.
- I. No lines to cross fairways.
- J. The routing of all lines should be well planned. Otherwise, chafe may occur. Do not allow any line to interfere with swim ladder or electrical connection. They tend to get ripped from the boat.

### **Suggested Minimum Boat length/Line Diameter**

<u>LOA (ft)</u>	<u>Min Diameter</u>
Up to 35'	1/2"
36' - 44'	5/8"
45' - 54'	3/4"
55' - 64'	7/8"
Over 65'	1" or larger

**Guidelines under a Tropical Storm Warning. The Condition of all lines should be judged acceptable (subjective), don't kid yourself.**

#### **IV. High wind adjustments**

- A. Boat winches are best tool. Free them ahead of storm. Plan the route the line will take.
- B. A three part block (Boom Vang) is a matter of making the device ready ahead of time.
- C. Come-alongs are fairly awkward and can be dangerous if not experienced with this tool. These tools are rated for load; make sure it is rated heavy enough. "Snatching" can foul the device. Many are difficult and tricky to release under load; back lash can break hands and arms.
- D. Muscles may be effective. More people/more muscle. Know your limitations and work together with a plan.

## Tropical Storm Response

A general timeline beginning before a named storm through a hurricane watch and warning.

### I. Now

- A. Volunteers for storm crew can sign up at Ships Store
- B. RPM must have current phone numbers for the owner and/or caretaker(s) of the boat.
- C. Survey your boat slip and dock area. Report needed repairs to RPM.
- D. Make a list of all the supplies you will need both personal and boat related
- E. Fill fuel tank
- F. Make all dock lines ready. Know where they are and what condition they are in.
- G. Tie your boat to a standard to withstand strong summer thunderstorms lasting up to a few hours.  
Don't underestimate these severe storms.
- H. Ask for help if needed.

### II. During a Tropical Storm Watch

- A. Complete "Boat owners Checklist" (Next Page)
- B. Tie your boat to a high standard.
- C. Ask for help if needed. Offer help if able.
- D. The boat owner or a designated caretaker will be responsible for securing your boat.
- E. Get storm track forecast, use it to plot wind direction ahead of time.
- F. VHF-16 USCG announces an advisory to VHF-22
- G. VHF-5 Boat owners and Crew (low power setting)
- H. The proposed order of an evacuation plan will be announced. Advisory updates will be given by RPM.
- I. RPM Staff will be working or on call
- J. Feel free to extend this list for yourself

### III. Tropical Storm Warning

- A. Storm Crew Volunteers- call to assemble.
- B. Securing boats will be first priority.
- C. Use "Boat owners checklist" to confirm
- D. Tie your boat to an ideal standard. (Do your best)
- E. Review "Securing your Boat" as needed.
- F. Again, please ask for help and offer help.
- G. Top off water tank.
- H. Continue to monitor advisories.
- I. Given unsafe conditions, be prepared to leave RPM.
- J. Keep posted to weather forecast
- K. River House and all front-side businesses will be closed.
- L. Westside bathhouse will be closed
- M. Feel free to extend list as needed

# **Boat Owners Storm Checklist**

-Remove these items from your boat (1<sup>st</sup>)

-Headsails, All canvas, isinglass and dingies on davits

-Remove ANY unnecessary and lose items. Bicycles, deck furniture, cushions, life rings, overboard polls, grills, coolers extra anchors, unused fenders, fishing gear. Coil and stow water hose and electric chord. Remove, stow or secure any loose item on your boat period.

-Lock or Pin Dock Box

- Secure your boats hatches

-Close through-hull valves

-Plug un-valved through fittings

-Pump out holding tank and fill water tank

## **Personal Storm Gear**

-Rain suit and good deck shoes

-Non folding knife (sharp) Holstered (working crew no points)

-Fid (working crew)

-Waterproof flashlight tethered new batteries

-Loud whistle, tethered

-Sharp, holstered, no folding knife (no point)

## **Stuff you want on board**

-Flashlight batteries

-Medical supplies

-Charged cell phone

## **Weather info updates**

-TV

-Web

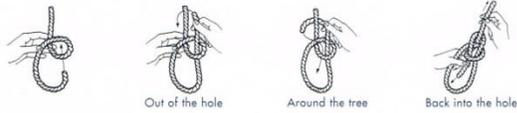
-Radio

-VHF NOAA

-Lots of dry socks

-Phonograph (iPod, whatever)

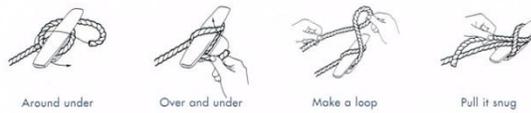
The Bowline holds tight and comes apart easily.



The Reef Knot (a.k.a. Square Knot) ties two lines together.



The Horn Cleat Hitch keeps your boat securely tied.



The Clove Hitch easily ties your boat temporarily to a piling.



[DiscoverBoating.com](http://DiscoverBoating.com)

**If you can't tie a knot, tie a lot!**

## Wind

Wind swirls and curls and flows.

Wind veers and sheers and goes.

Wind Builds.

Wind Kills.

So be prepared,

Don't count on luck.

Strong wind blows,

And strong wind sucks.

# Addendum to Securing Your Boat

## Lines

- The length of all lines should be long enough to allow adjustment both in and out. Two to three feet should be left beyond the cleat to allow for adjustment.

## Electrical Cords

- Cheap electrical cords with broken insulation are **dangerous and possible deadly**. Inspect your cord.
- Always turn breaker off when connecting/disconnecting power cords from boat or dock.
- Avoid using cleats to secure or route cord. Cleats should be reserved for line.
- Allow at least **5 feet** range in tide when routing electrical cord(s). If expected storm tidal range is to exceed 5 feet you should consider unplugging to avoid damage to your boat, cord and dock electrical pedestal.
- Power cords in the water can cause electrolytic corrosion to your boat and your neighbor's boat. It can also cause death to a swimmer/diver. **Please, keep your electrical cord out of the water.**