

## Draft Recommendations

### Mayor's Boater Safety and Bay Education Task Force

#### Pillar 1: Boater Safety Education

1. Expand Public Awareness Campaigns
  - a. Launch high-visibility campaigns (billboards, airport ads, transit signage).
  - b. Use social media strategies and “shock value” messaging (e.g., The Qualified Captain model).
  - c. Develop multilingual outreach (English/Spanish).
  - d. Partner with media outlets for no-cost PSAs and leverage county resources.
2. Strengthen Boater Education Requirements
  - a. Require proof of passing a state-approved boater safety course before granting county marina slips or ramp decals. (PROS)
  - b. Encourage voluntary education for all operators, not just those legally required.
3. Integrate Boater Safety into Schools
  - a. Collaborate with nonprofits for hands-on education. (Lucy Fernandez Foundation, Monica Bruguera Foundation)
  - b. Link boating safety to swimming programs already promoted by the Mayor.
  - c. Integrate boating education in K–12 settings, promoting lifelong safety culture similar to swim education. (MDCPS)
4. Promote Life Jacket Use
  - a. Expand life jacket loaner stations at marinas and ramps.
  - b. Partner with designers and sports teams to make life jackets appealing.
  - c. Promote seasonal discounts for modern PFDs.
5. Leverage Technology & Social Media
  - a. Implement QR-coded safety signage at boat ramps linking to short safety videos.
  - b. Partner with FWC for geo-targeted digital ads at fuel stations and ramps.
6. Expand Community Engagement
  - a. Host Boater Engagement Days with vessel inspections and safety demos.
  - b. Engage influencers and local celebrities to promote boating safety culture.
7. Address Environmental & Weather Safety
  - a. Incorporate weather safety education in outreach efforts with NOAA/NWS.
  - b. Combine boating safety messaging with environmental stewardship.

#### Pillar 2: Law Enforcement

1. Enhance Enforcement & Compliance
  - a. Increase law enforcement presence during peak boating times through partnerships with FWC and off-duty officers.

- b. Consider enforcing boater safety card requirements for all ages at county facilities.
  - c. Promote use of engine cut-off switches (kill switches) and educate boaters.
- 2. Improve Interagency Coordination
  - a. Formalize pre-weekend coordination among law enforcement agencies for hotspot coverage.
  - b. Create a permanent marine safety committee to sustain collaboration beyond the task force.
- 3. Expand Land-Based Enforcement
  - a. Target illegal charter operations at marinas, docks, and private homes.
  - b. Require verification of business permits (BTRs) and Marine Operating Permits (MOPs).
  - c. Increase officer presence at ramps and popular launch sites during peak times.
- 4. Upgrade Technology for Enforcement
  - a. Accelerate rollout of the Ethos e-citation system and integrate with FWC's database.
  - b. Implement GPS-based marine safety alerts (Garmin pilot program).
  - c. Explore AIS integration for recreational vessels.
- 5. Data Collection & Analysis
  - a. Compile citation, accident, and hotspot data to strengthen advocacy and planning.
  - b. Use GPS and AIS data as "black box" evidence for accountability.

### Pillar 3: Legislative Advocacy

See additional recommendations.

### Pillar 4: Waterway Management

- 1. Restore Navigation Markers
  - a. Return navigation markers to pre-Hurricane Andrew levels for improved safety and orientation.
- 2. Standardize Speed Zone Signage
  - a. Simplify and standardize speed zone signage across Biscayne Bay.
  - b. Integrate speed zone data into GPS systems for better boater compliance.
- 3. Create Additional Managed Areas
  - a. Establish mooring fields and clearly marked anchorage zones.
  - b. Designate specific-use or restricted-use areas (e.g., water skiing, wakeboarding) to reduce conflicts and improve safety.
- 4. Address High-Risk "Attractive Nuisance" Areas

- a. Identify congestion hotspots such as Matheson Hammock, Haulover Inlet, Nixon Beach, Marine Stadium, and North Bay.
  - b. Develop targeted solutions for these areas based on accident data and vessel counts.
5. Expedite Permitting for Mooring Fields
  - a. Implement a streamlined county review process for mooring field permits.
6. Simplify Speed and Restricted Zones
  - a. Rationalize the current complex system of speed zones to make regulations clearer and more enforceable.
7. Request Boating Safety Zone Study
  - a. Recommend that the Mayor request FWC to study whether Biscayne Bay qualifies for additional Boating Safety Zones.
8. Improve Channel and Anchorage Signage
  - a. Collaborate with the state to better define channels and anchorages with enhanced signage.
9. Secure Dedicated Funding
  - a. Identify a sustainable funding source to support waterway management initiatives.
  - b. Create a Boater Safety Fund through partnerships with local foundations.

Additional Recommendations:

Additional recommendations for advocacy at the appropriate state and federal level.

Policy & Legal Reforms

Require training or certification for high-horsepower vessels to ensure operators are qualified and reduce accidents.

- Authorize specialized boating courts or judicial tracks to handle boating violations efficiently and improve legal consistency.
- Link boating violations to driver's license consequences, including implied-consent penalties on refusal for BUI tests.
- Upgrade penalties for fatal boating violations, raising certain offenses to felony status for strong deterrence.
- Mandate stay-away orders or boating suspensions for repeat offenders.
- Close loopholes on bareboat charters, requiring certified operators and proper permitting. Standardize MOP regulations statewide.

Enforcement & Administration

- Permit state-mandated decal or certification programs tied to vessel registration (e.g., Florida Freedom Boater decal) to simplify compliance

- Modernize citation systems statewide, adopting standardized e-ticketing and crash-reporting platforms
- Mandate AIS or GPS alert systems for specific vessel classes to improve tracking, navigation, and incident investigation.

#### Funding & Infrastructure

- Increase state budget to fund staffing and marine assets, including enforcement personnel and patrol vessels.
- Expand grant programs for boater safety, education, and infrastructural upgrades (boat ramps, derelict vessel removal)
- Strengthen Clean Marina program incentives, such as reduced lease fees for marinas adopting best environmental practices