

Safe Boating Hints for the Salton Sea

The Salton Sea--over 35 miles in length, over 12 miles wide and approximately 228 feet below sea level--presents the boater with wind and water conditions not likely to be encountered in other areas. Awareness of these conditions will contribute to your pleasure and safety when boating on the lake.



Windstorms

As the sea is comparatively shallow, sudden strong winds--especially from November through April and occasionally during the balance of the year--create short, heavy swells three to six feet high, making small boat operation unsafe. Dust clouds or thunder clouds usually indicate the approach of strong winds. If winds begin to rise, an experienced boater will put on a life jacket and set a course for shore. High waves may cause extensive damage to boats left on the shoreline. The State Recreation Area on the northeast shore uses a flashing red light to warn boaters of unsafe wind conditions.

Sandstorms

Occasional dense sandstorms, which can reduce visibility to zero, are an additional hazard. No boating activity should be attempted during these storms.

Summer Weather

The sea is located in an area where the high summer temperatures require protection against sunburn and sunstroke. On the average, the temperature will exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit more than 110 days out of the year. Wearing a hat or other head covering is advisable. Drinking water should be carried on board.

Capsizing or Swamping

In cases of capsizing or swamping, boaters who stay with their boats are much easier to find. In addition, much of the sea has a soft mud bottom, which makes wading ashore very dangerous.

Swimming

Boaters have had accidents here while swimming, when sudden gusts of wind have drifted their boats beyond reach. A securely anchored boat or one with a competent operator remaining aboard will make swimming safer.

Obstructions

The land around the sea is flat and many obstructions such as fenceposts and concrete abutments lie close to shore. Those obstructions which can be seen during periods of calm may be covered by water during a storm, creating additional hazards for the boater attempting to maneuver along the shoreline.

Even when calm, the Salton Sea waters may conceal a variety of underwater hazards, such as trees or rocks. In some areas, submerged rock jetties extend several hundred yards into the water.

When You Need Assistance

There are several ways to obtain assistance. The quickest remedy may be seeking the aid of a passing boat. Flares, smoke, blinking lights, or waving arms are common methods of signaling an emergency.

For emergency communication, some marinas have citizen band radios and monitor either Channel 19 or 11. The California Department of Parks and Recreation--Salton Sea Recreation Area, and the local county sheriffs in the area can provide emergency assistance. These agencies can be reached by calling 9-1-1.

Seven-Point Safety Checklist

1. Check the weather.
2. Have drinking water aboard.
3. Check the loading and trim of your boat.
4. Have signaling devices for both day and night use.
5. Check your fuel supply.

6. Show all hands the location and use of emergency equipment.
7. Let someone reliable on shore know where you are going and when you expect to return, so they can notify authorities if you are overdue.

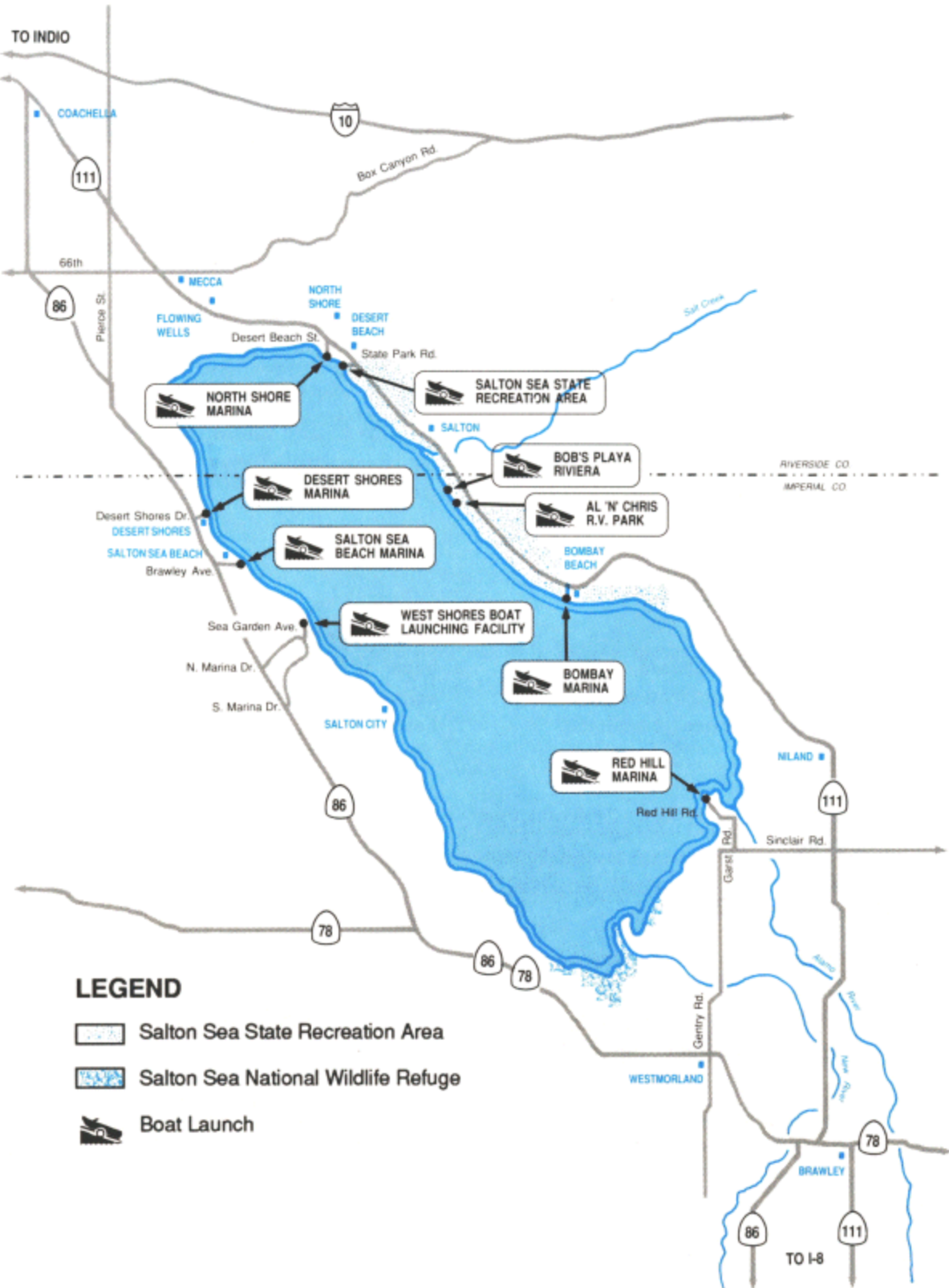
Advice regarding weather, obstructions and other conditions can be obtained from local residents and marinas.

Alcohol



Alcohol is a contributing factor to many boating accidents, injuries, and fatalities. Studies indicate that the hazardous side effects of alcohol are more pronounced when operating a boat. Alcohol, combined with wind, boat noise, vibration, wave action, and sun-glare, has a tremendous adverse influence on your judgment and response time in boating. Do not drink and operate a boat.

Salton Sea and Vicinity

NOTE: Not to be used for navigational purposes
Call ahead for current conditions



LEGEND

-  Salton Sea State Recreation Area
-  Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge
-  Boat Launch

The material in this leaflet does not cover all hazardous conditions which maybe encountered on the sea. Circumstances may arise requiring the use of additional equipment and the exercise of independent sound judgment to assure safety of the operator and others on board.