

Boat Show Safety

Boat shows are *supposed* to be fun and profitable. Hundreds are held every year as boat dealers, travel companies and tourism agencies promote boating as a popular leisure activity. Thousands of vendors participate, showcasing their products in elaborate displays that can sometimes present risks to potential buyers.

Keep in mind that the general public will be visiting the show, including people with mobility, eyesight, balance and other issues, as well as children. Plan your display accordingly!

To keep your boat display safe, consider these tips:

- Look for and correct trip-fall hazards involving floor coverings. Anything that could 'catch a foot' must be addressed immediately, including mats, uneven carpet edges and lumpy items hidden under the carpet, like power cords, expansion joints, access hatches, etc.
- Decorative flags and banners should not interfere with customer movement through the display.
- Make sure that every item in your display is independently secured. If one item should fall over, it should not bring everything else down with it.
- Potted plants can be attractive safety tools. Positioning them in front of the hard edges of a jack stand or trailer hitch can protect visitors' feet and legs.
- Families often attend boat shows together. Be sure to consider what objects in your display are at "head height" of a child. Pad any sharp edges or block them with plants, signs or other items.
- Keep all merchandise inside your booth space and out of the aisles.
- Rather than providing a demonstration of a product that could be inherently dangerous, show a video of the product in action instead. Make sure that no item in your display has an active ignition switch.
- Be sure to have enough staffers working the display to oversee both equipment and visitors.



These boarding steps are an unprotected risk to boat show visitors: no railing!



These boarding steps provide a secure handrail on both sides to fully protect visitors.

Boarding Steps

- Prevent falls by installing sturdy steps up to the boats in your display. Steps should also have good handholds. Even low risers with 2-3 steps should have at least one handrail.
- Be sure steps and railings are tightly secured and in good condition.

Elevated Docks

- If elevated 'docks' are part of your display, they should be wide enough so that at least two people can walk next to each other. The wider, the better, as extra width will encourage visitors to stay away from the edges of the dock.
- Leave no unprotected gaps in the areas where the dock abuts other structures in the display. If you can't prevent them, be sure to guard or block them.