

The Golden Rule of Fishing and Boating

The Golden Rule states that you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you. It's a great principle to follow when fishing and boating as well. Here are some suggestions to help make your time on the water—and that of others—more meaningful and enjoyable.

Adjust your speed to conditions. Never run too fast when the water is rough or crowded. Remember, your passengers' safety and comfort are your responsibility.

Respect other anglers' space. Never crowd another fisherman. If you see someone working a bank, anticipate the direction they're moving and let them finish. Never run between an angler and the point or bank they are fishing. Give other anglers and boaters a wide berth.

Honor private waters. If someone shows you their favorite bass spot and asks you not to share the location, respect that request. It's poor sportsmanship to return without permission or to reveal the spot to others.

Ask permission first. When fishing farm ponds or city ponds, always get permission beforehand. Carry out all litter, and leave fences and gates as you found them.

Share the opportunity. Give your fishing partner the same chance to catch fish that you'd expect in return. Don't "front end" or crowd them so they can't reach the structure. Avoid over-competing—especially outside of tournaments. Trying to outfish your buddy is more annoying than impressive.

Respect all types of anglers. Not every boater or fisherman is a bass fisherman. Crappie anglers, pan fishermen, trollers, and others deserve respect. Do not invade their space. Pleasure boaters also deserve their fair share of the water. Be courteous to everyone, not just bass fishermen.

Lend a hand. If someone signals for help, respond immediately. The bass can wait—you may need help or a tow someday, too.

Avoid conflicts on structure. Never attempt to fish the same structure at the same time as another angler. This often leads to tangled lines and frustration. Wait until your buddy is finished before moving in.