

*Office of the Mayor*  
*Foley, Alabama*  
*Proclamation*

**WHEREAS**, many residents engage in boating, fishing, and other recreational activities on the navigable waters around the City of Foley; and

**WHEREAS**, many of those activities involve the use of a recreational vessel of some type, including open power boats, cabin power boats, personal watercraft, and paddle craft such as paddleboards, kayaks, and canoes; and

**WHEREAS**, in calendar year 2024, the most recent year for which data are available, the United States Coast Guard verified 3,887 recreational boating incidents in the United States that involved 556 deaths, 2,170 injuries and approximately \$88 million of damage to property; and

**WHEREAS**, the majority of these accidents are caused by human error or poor judgment and not by the boat, equipment or environmental factors; and

**WHEREAS**, alcohol use remains a leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; and

**WHEREAS**, operator inattention and inexperience are also leading contributing factors in mishaps, causing hundreds of accidents and dozens of fatalities annually; and

**WHEREAS**, where data were known, navigation rules violations were a contributing factor in 55% of incidents, 34% of deaths, and 63% of injuries in 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States Coast Guard considers operator use of engine cut-off switches to be important because when operators of powerboats are ejected or fall overboard, the boat will typically continue to operate, until it runs out of fuel, runs aground, or collides with another boat/object; and

**WHEREAS**, of reported boating accident victims who drowned in 2024, 87% were not wearing a life jacket and a significant number of boaters who lose their lives by drowning each year would be alive today had they worn their life jackets; and

**WHEREAS**, Coast Guard statistics show that, of the accidents where the level of operator education was known, 69% of boating deaths occurred on boats where the boat operator had never received boating education instruction; and

**WHEREAS**, boating safety courses and boating safety campaigns can teach people how to adhere to better boating practice and help them to boat more safely;

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, **Mayor Ralph G. Hellmich** and on behalf of the Foley City Council, do hereby proclaim **May 16-22, 2026** as **Safe Boating Week** and the start of a year-round effort to promote safe boating in the City of Foley.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand  
on this **4th Day of May, 2026**

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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_