

Powerboat Handling Advice

1. Anticipate the wind
2. Manage boat inertia
3. Correct for current
4. Keep it slow

Only three things will make the boat go where you ***didn't*** want it to be

a) the wind, b) unintentional inertia, c) unpredicted currents

WIND (the boat will behave similarly in a current)

If the wind is ***not*** in your favour then make allowances for it. (start further upwind, allow for leeway)

If it ***is*** then let it move the boat for you and simply maintain the bearing or attitude of the boat.

INERTIA (the continuing movement of a boat, when the power is taken off)

Turning is not as simple as pointing the boat in a new direction. The whole mass must change direction by overcoming its inertia. i.e. when manoeuvring a 4 tonne boat through 90 degrees, until the mass is moving in the new direction, the 4 tonnes will want to continue in the original direction regardless of the bearing or attitude of the boat and because a boat has no brakes, in order to stop it moving you must apply an equal and opposite force to overcome its inertia. A heavier boat will have greater inertia. Learn it and use it in your judgement or calculations. If the boat is going where you want it to – ***do nothing!*** The object is to get the boat moving in the direction you want it to, whether it be forwards, backwards or sideways, finishing with the boat in the correct position. Use a combination of wind, steering and power. Be patient and observe what is happening before applying any more force. Do not use excessive power, use the minimum power (in short bursts) to induce the required inertia. (To correct the application of too much power, try doing the exact opposite for half the time)

NEVER

- Panic
- Try to power your way out of a hopeless situation (use the boathook and fenders)
- Approach too fast
- Arrive unprepared

ALWAYS

- Know what the wind is doing
- Plan ahead
- Anticipate the difficulties
- Give yourself TIME
- Have a contingency
- Deploy fenders and warps
- Approach at a safe speed
- Use shorter power inputs (applying more short inputs is easier than trying to reverse the effects of applying too much power)

Common Faults in Powerboating

- Being unfamiliar with your boat and not knowing its' characteristics. There is NO substitute for time spent practising.
- Not knowing what the wind is doing and how it will affect the progress of the boat
- Panicking leading to reckless use of power causing damage and a worsening of the situation
- Not thinking ahead to minimise difficulties and allow time for contingencies
- Leaving power on too long. Use short bursts of power, pausing to see the effect before applying more power. Use the power to control the inertia, let the inertia complete the manoeuvre.
- Remember that a boat pivots roughly about its middle so when applying a lateral force to the bow (i.e. with a bow thruster) the stern will move in the opposite direction, so this must be countered to effect a sideways movement or inertia.