



IMPORTANT PUBLIC NOTICE:

The incident and death at the Lockport Cave and Underground Boat Ride on June 12, 2023, is sad and tragic. Our sympathy goes out to all who were affected by this unfortunate situation.

Most of our members operate tour boats on bodies of water throughout NY State.

All of the tour boats on the NYS Canal System are certified and regulated by the US Coastguard. The Lockport Cave tour is located near the Erie Canal, but not directly on the Erie Canal. Their company is not under US Coastguard certification or inspections because the water within the cave is not considered "Navigable Waters of the United States" and wasn't required to be USCG inspected.

All passenger vessels/tour boats on the NYS Canal System carrying more than 6 passengers, are designed by marine architects and each vessel must undergo US Coastguard stability testing. To make sure all the equipment, including personal floatation devices (PFD's), firefighting equipment, Captain/Crew drug testing, and all other strict protocols are up to date and in good working condition, USCG regulated vessels are inspected annually by the United States Coast Guard and are issued a certificate of operation by the United States Coast Guard following a successful inspection. All these vessels have passed consecutive annual seasonal inspections. Captains and Crew are required to train new Deckhands ahead of time and to practice Man Overboard, Fire & Abandon Ship safety drills at least monthly and to demonstrate these safety drills and emergency procedures to USCG Inspectors annually. The operators (Captains) of these vessels must have US Merchant Mariner licenses. All tour boats on the NYS Canal system are very highly regulated and all of the USCG certified vessels in New York State have outstanding safety records.

Prior to the start of every tour, safety instructions and passenger requirements are announced by the USCG Licensed Captain for each vessel. This information to passengers includes the location of life preservers, safety on the upper deck, and any other safety protocols necessary for passengers on each individual boat. It is extremely important that all passengers pay close attention to those instructions. Do not ignore this information by choosing to speak with family, friends, or tour group members at that time. Safety is always our top priority.

Captain Tammee Poinan Grimes
President, NYS Tour Boat Association