

**1. *Select a safe ship.***

Vessels that have come into service since 2010 meet stringent international Safe Return to Port requirements to ensure that an engine-room fire doesn't knock out power to the entire vessel. For information on sanitation you can check the Centers for Disease Control's report card on cruise ships at [cdc.gov/nceh/vsp/](http://cdc.gov/nceh/vsp/).

**2. *Take drills seriously.***

In an emergency you want to know where to muster, or gather; where to find spare life jackets; how to interpret alarms; and how to enter a lifeboat. Always know where you are on the ship—and pay attention to fire alarms. Most serious shipboard incidents are the result of fires.

**3. *Supervise children.***

Cruise ships generally do not employ lifeguards: In October 2013 a 6-year-old Florida boy drowned in a swimming pool during a Caribbean cruise on the *Carnival Victory*. A few months earlier a 4-year-old had suffered severe brain damage after a near-drowning accident on a Disney ship.

**4. *And teenagers.***

According to the International Cruise Victims Association, sexual assault is the most common crime reported on cruise ships, and many of the victims are teenagers. For more information visit the organization's website, [internationalcruisevictims.org](http://internationalcruisevictims.org).

**5. *Don't drink alone.***

Alcohol flows free and heavy on a lot of ships—that's part of the appeal for many passengers. But being alone and intoxicated are both risk factors for man-overboard incidents. You can consult [cruisejunkie.com](http://cruisejunkie.com) to learn more about man-overboard accidents.

**6. *Know your rights.***

When you step on board a cruise ship, you are effectively entering a foreign country; U.S. laws do not apply. But, thanks to the 2010 Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act, crime victims can go directly to the FBI for help. Call 202-324-3000 to report a crime.