Anchor Drift Alarm App for iOS: Full Review of Boat Knot Meter

Complete review of the best anchor drift alarm app for iOS. Boat Knot Meter uses GPS to detect when your boat drags anchor — free, offline, and dependable.

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What Is an Anchor Drift Alarm and Why Does Your Boat Need One?

An anchor drift alarm is a safety system that monitors your boat's position after anchoring and raises an alert the moment the vessel moves beyond a pre-set boundary. Without one, the only way to know your anchor is dragging is to either stay on deck watching, wake up to the sound of grinding fiberglass on rocks, or be alerted by a frantic VHF call from a nearby boat.

The **anchor drift alarm app for iOS** category has grown significantly as GPS chipsets in smartphones have reached accuracy levels that rival dedicated marine instruments. **Boat Knot Meter: Anchor Watch** stands out from that field as a free, offline-capable, no-account-required solution that genuinely works when your safety depends on it.

Download Boat Knot Meter free from the App Store before your next anchoring.

How the Anchor Drift Alarm Works in Boat Knot Meter

Step 1: Drop Your Anchor and Let the Boat Settle

After anchoring, give your boat time to swing back on the rode and settle into its natural

resting position. The amount of rode you have deployed, wind, current, and tide all affect where the boat ultimately lies. It is important to wait for the boat to settle before locking the anchor point — setting it while still drifting backward will create a false reference position.

Step 2: Lock the GPS Anchor Point

Open Boat Knot Meter and tap the anchor button to fix your current GPS position as the reference point. The app records your latitude and longitude with full GPS precision — typically within 3 to 5 metres on a modern iPhone with a clear sky view. This becomes the centre of your alarm circle.

Step 3: Set the Alarm Radius

Here is where Boat Knot Meter gives you meaningful control. The alarm radius should be set to account for:

- **Scope of rode deployed** — more rode means a wider swing circle
- **Tidal rise and fall** — at high tide, more scope effectively lies on the seabed
- **Surrounding hazards** — how close are rocks, shallows, or other boats?
- **Wind and current direction changes** — if the wind shifts 180°, your boat could be in a very different position

Set the radius generously enough to avoid false alarms from normal swinging, but tight enough to give you meaningful advance warning before trouble develops.

Step 4: Enable Background Mode and Go Below

Once the watch is set, Boat Knot Meter continues monitoring even when your iPhone screen turns off or you switch to another app. This is critical — if background monitoring were to stop when the screen locks, the app would be useless for overnight watches.

Step 5: When the Alarm Triggers

If your boat crosses the alarm boundary, Boat Knot Meter sounds an audible alert — loud enough to wake a sleeping crew member below. The alarm includes a visual indication of which direction you have drifted relative to your anchor point, helping you orient quickly to the situation.

Real-World Accuracy of iPhone GPS for Anchor Watch

One of the most common questions about using a smartphone as an anchor watch is: how accurate is iPhone GPS? The answer, for this use case, is: accurate enough and getting better every year.

Modern iPhones use a combination of GPS, GLONASS, Galileo, and BeiDou satellite systems. In open water under a clear sky, horizontal position accuracy is typically 3–5 metres. This level of accuracy is entirely appropriate for anchor watch. A boat drifting 20, 30, or 50 metres from its anchor point is in genuine trouble — GPS position errors of 5 metres are irrelevant at those scales.

The app also uses a smoothing algorithm that filters out momentary GPS jitter, so you will

not get false alarms from a stationary boat whose GPS reading fluctuates by 2–3 metres over time.

When Does the Anchor Alarm Actually Trigger?

The alarm triggers when the straight-line distance from the current GPS position to the recorded anchor point exceeds the radius you have set. It does not trigger for:

- Normal swinging within your set radius
- Brief GPS position fluctuations (filtered by the app)
- Walking around the boat (your movement relative to the anchor point does not change)

It **does** trigger when:

- The boat drags its anchor and genuinely moves beyond the alarm boundary
- The anchor chain snaps or the anchor gear fails
- Strong current overcomes the anchor hold
- Another vessel drags into your boat and moves you

Battery Performance During Overnight Anchor Watch

GPS is one of the more power-hungry iPhone functions, but Boat Knot Meter is designed to use GPS efficiently. The app does not need to update position at a high frequency for anchor watch — it checks periodically rather than continuously polling. In practice, users running anchor watch overnight with a reasonably charged iPhone (80%+) find the battery adequate for a 7–8 hour watch period.

For longer anchor periods, a portable power bank or a charging cable run from the boat's 12V system eliminates any battery concern entirely.

Comparing Boat Knot Meter to Other Anchor Drift Alarms

Dedicated chartplotter systems from manufacturers like Garmin and Navionics include anchor watch features, but these cost hundreds or thousands of dollars. Marine-specific apps often charge subscription fees. Boat Knot Meter delivers the core function — GPS anchor position monitoring with an alarm — for free, with no ads, no tracking, and no account required. For sailors who want simplicity and reliability without cost, it is the clear winner.

Use Cases Beyond Overnight Anchoring

The anchor drift alarm is useful in more situations than you might expect:

- **Going ashore in the tender** — monitor the mothership remotely while exploring
- **Med mooring with stern anchor** — check your stern line isn't slack or that you haven't crept forward
- **Mooring ball attachment** — some mooring balls are poorly maintained; the alarm tells you if you have slipped off

- **Crowded race anchorages** — tight quarters require early warning of any movement

Download Boat Knot Meter for iOS

If you anchor your boat — even occasionally — you need an anchor drift alarm. Boat Knot Meter provides that protection with no cost, no complexity, and no internet dependency. It is the kind of safety tool that you install once and keep running every time you drop the hook.

Get Boat Knot Meter free on the App Store and never worry about anchor drag again.

Your boat, your crew, and your peace of mind are worth the 30 seconds it takes to download this app. Download it now and set up your first anchor watch before your next passage.

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