



## Firstmate® User's Guide

August 2009

### Classic 7-button Pro Model



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### User's Guide

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## First Things First

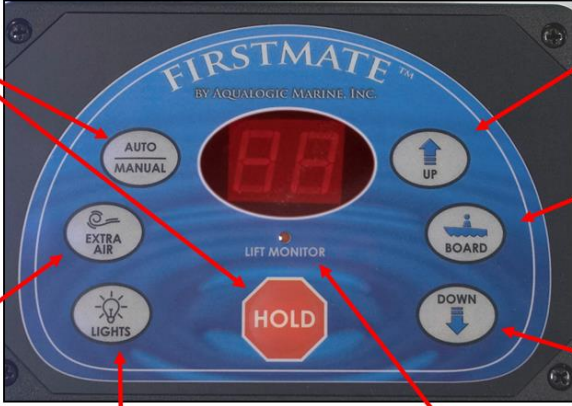
1. If your Firstmate® PRO remote has been packaged with a lift purchase, your Firstmate® may not be programmed. Please contact the factory if the “Lift Monitor” button is not flashing.
2. **MOST IMPORTANT:** If the “Lift Monitor” button **IS NOT** flashing, it is not detecting your lift. Be sure the last button pushed is the “UP” button. This should activate the “Lift Monitor”.
3. Thank you for supporting and purchasing our product.



## Firstmate® 7-Button Pro Model Display

Operate your Lift from the Dock or Water





**AUTO / MANUAL MODE**

Change modes by holding both [Auto / Manual] & [HOLD]

Auto Mode: Sensor is enabled  
Saved programming on  
*\*Display dashes alternate*

Manual Mode: Sensor disabled  
Saved programming off

**WANT TO GO UP?**

Touch of a button,  
Raises lift, then will turn itself off

**WANT TO BOARD?**

Touch of a button,  
Safely load passengers,  
warm up engines as your boat's in water, but not floating.

**EXTRA AIR**

Top off air in lift tanks  
(10 second increments for more buoyancy)

**DOCK LIGHTING**

*\*Feature Obsolete\*  
Updated 2022*

**COMING IN OR GOING OUT?**

Touch of a button,  
Lower lift all the way, then will turn itself off.

**LIFT MONITOR**  
(your baby sitter)

LED blinking: Lift Monitor is on  
No LED: Lift Monitor is off  
*When lift is in the Up position & in Auto mode, press "Up" to activate.*

**Manual Override Handle(s)**

Operates the same as a manual system, turn # of handle(s) at the same time to desired position. Turn handle(s) to Hold to close valve(s)

- Get your boat off hoist if no electric on dock
- or
- To bypass the system's electronics



You are now the proud owner of the



Thank you for purchasing our product

Register at [firstmatecontrols.com/pages/product-information](http://firstmatecontrols.com/pages/product-information)

# Warning

No user serviceable parts are located inside your **Firstmate®** unit.  
Installation and service should be performed by a qualified electrician only.

Only use a GFI (Ground Fault Interrupt) outlet for powering your **Firstmate®** controller or the Auxiliary module.

**To avoid the risk of electric shock, always disconnect power to your dock before installing the Firstmate® or any of its components.**

**Use only cordless tools for installation.**

**Failure to follow these instructions may result in injury or death.**

Always tie your boat up to your dock, Firstmate, Inc assumes no liability for damages resulting from the user's failure to securely restrain their watercraft.

Verify that the boat's plugs have not been removed before operating the Firstmate®.

Never use your remote control without being present at the lift. If your lift is not raising or lowering in a level position, stop the lift and correct the problem.

Stay clear of the lift while it is in operation.

Caution must be used when storing your vessel in the board position as rough water conditions may lift the boat off the lift.

**Power requirements: 20 Amp per blower motor.**

# User's Guide

Before you begin:

- Read all warnings prior to programming or using your **Firstmate®** lift controller.
- Read this entire manual before programming your unit.
- Know which hoses control the Port, Starboard & Center tanks on your lift.



Terminology:

## Manual Mode:

LED display dashes [- -] are blinking **together**

When in 'Manual' mode, sensor technology / Lift monitor is deactivated.

## Auto Mode:

LED display dashes [- -] are blinking **back & forth**

When in 'Auto Mode', sensor technology / Lift monitor is activated.

## To switch between either Auto or Manual Mode:

Hold down both [HOLD] & [AUTO/MANUAL] buttons until the LED display blinks rapidly.

**NOTE: In order to program desired Lift Positions, unit must be in 'Manual mode'**

## Programming the DOWN position

1. Hit the **DOWN** button on the control box to activate the handles to the down position.

The lift is in the down position when:

- Lift has completely expelled all air from tanks & water is spitting from exhaust fittings in back of Firstmate®. This is normal! Water is only going through our L-port valve.
- When chains are completely extended on the back of the lift.

2. Press the **HOLD** button & handles will move to hold position.
3. Press and hold (approximately 3 seconds) the **HOLD** and **DOWN** buttons at the same time until the display reads "**SA**". The down position is now saved. \*\*

### Programming the BOARD position

1. Hit the **UP** button on the control box to activate the handles to the Up position.  
Raise the boat to the desired boarding position.
2. Press the **HOLD** button. Handle(s) will move to hold position.
3. Press and hold (approx. 3 seconds) both the **HOLD** and **BOARD** buttons until the LED display reads "**SA**". The board position is now saved.

**Note: Your boarding position will fluctuate.**

**\*Boat full of gas vs. empty. Boat full of passengers vs. one or two passengers.**

There is no step for programming the UP position. The Firstmate® recognizes the UP position when the sensor tube is completely out of the water.

HOWEVER, if you wish the lift to bubble the tanks, see Programming Extra Air.

**Extra Air Display** means: The amount of time it takes the lift to get to a desired "UP" position once the Firstmate® raises the lift.

For example: 1 (10 seconds of extra air), Pressing the **UP** button again and the display will read 2 (20 seconds of extra air).

Each time the up button is pressed, the display will increase by one digit (increasing the extra air to blow by 10 seconds).

Each time the **DOWN** switch is pressed, the display will decrease by one digit (decreases extra air time by 10 seconds). This can be adjusted at any time, at any position.

### Programming EXTRA AIR

1. Press and hold the **HOLD** and **Extra Air** switches until the display reads "**EA**" (Extra Air).
2. Press the **UP** or **DOWN** switch until display reads "4".
3. Save the setting by pressing and holding the **Extra Air** switch, the display will read "**SA**".

**This setting is now saved for the next time the lift in the DOWN or BOARD position.**

**If the tanks still do not bubble or if the lift is not shutting off soon enough, change Extra Air number.**

When done programming: **Put the system back in 'Auto' Mode (see above).**

## Using the Key fob:

- Note that the Key fob is not capable of programming any functions. All settings are programmed using the control functions on the control box.
- To prevent the accidental activation of a button on the keyfob, you must press and hold down the buttons for approximately 1-2 seconds for the **Firstmate®** to accept the command.
- The keyfob buttons correspond to the following functions:

**UP** = UP

**BD** = BOARD

**DN** = DOWN

Both "**UP**" and "**DN**" = LIGHTS On/Off if optionally equipped.

## Using your Firstmate®

- Read all warnings prior to operating your **Firstmate®**.
- **Always secure your boat to your dock when not in use, Firstmate assumes no liability for resulting damage.**
- Anytime the lift is in operation; the strobe light will turn on.
- While the Firstmate® is in operation you can stop the lift by pressing any other key on the key fob or by pressing the HOLD switch on the controller.
- Pressing the LIGHTS switch will toggle the optional light module on/off.
- While the **FIRSTMATE®** is trying to raise your lift to either the BOARD or UP position but does not detect movement of the lift within fifteen minutes, the blowers will turn off and the display will read "**JA**" (Jammed lift). This prevents the blowers from running for extended periods of time in the event of a catastrophic leak.
- While the **FIRSTMATE®** is trying to lower the lift to the BOARD or DOWN position but does not detect movement of the lift within fifteen minutes, the valves will be closed and the display will read "**JA**" (Jammed lift).
- If the **FIRSTMATE®** detects a leak condition, it will automatically raise the lift. The display will alternately read "**AL**" and "**01**". The number will increase each time air is added to your lift.
- To reset the Alarm indication, press the **HOLD** button.

**Note: The leak detection is operable only when the lift has been raised to the up position and the UP button is the last button used. The lift monitor LED will flash when the Firstmate® controller is in the lift monitoring mode.**

### Auto Mode:

- When in the **Auto mode**, LED display dashes [- -] are blinking **back & forth**.
- When in the auto mode, after the lift reaches the desired level, it will shut off automatically.
- When the controller is placed in the auto mode, the key fob is also in the auto mode.

### Manual mode:

- When in the **Manual mode**, LED display dashes [- -] are blinking **together**.
- When in the Manual mode, the controller will stay active until a second switch is pressed i.e., if the lift is sent up or down, the valves will stay open until a second switch is pressed.
- When the controller is placed in the manual mode, the key fob is also in the manual mode.

### To switch between either **Auto or Manual Mode**:

- Hold down both [HOLD] & [AUTO/MANUAL] buttons until the LED display blinks rapidly.

### Using the Manual Override Handles:

Manual override handle(s) may be used to raise or lower the lift. This action is used to bypass the electronics.

Turn to the desired function [handle(s) will be difficult turn. This is normal.]

When the lift has reached the desired level, turn the handle to the HOLD position.

**Caution: Do not control the valves independent of one another in opposite functions (one valve up, other valves down) as you may roll the lift.**

### Programming Tips:

When programming the "**EA**" (Extra Air), start with 40 seconds (#4 on display), and then check the lift height. Add Extra Air as required to achieve the desired lift height.

After launching your boat, press the board button. The lift will be raised to the up position with minimum air in the tanks and take less time to lower the lift when you return. When the lift is in the UP position and you want to add extra air, it can be done without entering the manual mode of operation by pressing and holding the **EXTRA AIR** switch for 5 seconds. The Firstmate™ controller will then add 10 seconds of extra air. To stop the unit, press the HOLD switch.

## Lift Dynamics:

When your boat and lift combination is in a transition state (i.e., rapid movement between the UP and Board positions, or the BOARD and DOWN positions) it is not possible to stop the lift from continuing the upward / downward movement until it has reached a neutral buoyancy position.

The weight of your boat will affect the location of your UP and BOARD positions. A heavily laden boat with full gas tanks will stop at lower levels than the same boat with nearly empty tanks.

## Troubleshooting

### **Firstmate® not blowing itself back up.**

1. Be sure sensor is activated. Last button **must** be “UP” button.  
**Red LED “Monitor Light” should be flashing.**
2. Is sensor hose attached from the lift to Firstmate®?
3. Is sensor tube (white tube on lift) out of water? May need to adjust up or down.
4. To test Lift Monitor: With “Lift Monitor” light flashing, turn handle(s) **at the same time** to DOWN. Once sensor tube gets down in water before boat is floating, Firstmate® should activate auto blow up & shut itself off and read “AL01”. Press Hold button to clear alarm. Press UP button to turn “Lift Monitor” light back on.

### **Lift is down and nothing happens when the “UP” button is pushed.**

**CAUSE: Firstmate® was turned off by operator prior to completing cycle & thinks it is still in the “UP” position.**

Hit BOARD or DOWN button on remote or control box & let the Firstmate® cycle through & shut itself off. Then hit UP button (blower should turn on)

or

**CAUSE: There may be water in the sensor hose.**

1. Turn the handles inside the blower box to “UP” (if two handles, TURN AT THE SAME TIME). Get the lift back in the UP position. Turn Handles to HOLD or press the HOLD button on control box.
2. Remove blower box cover, disconnect sensor tube from under control box. Blow air through sensor tubing to remove water. Send the lift back down. If the same thing happens, there is probably a leak in the sensor hosing and will need to be replaced.

**Lift will not go down (no air coming from back of Firstmate®):**

1. Lift may have air lock.
2. Turn override handle (with red pointer) to “UP” until lift tanks bubble. Then turn back to “HOLD”

**IF TWO HANDLES – BE SURE AND TURN AT THE SAME TIME.**

This will blow the air from the hoses back into the lift tanks.

3. Hit “DOWN” on control box (inside lid), or hit “DOWN” on key fob, or turn handle(s) to “DOWN”. Should now hear air from back of Firstmate®.

**Blower will not shut off or seems to run way too long:**

1. Re-adjust the “Extra Air” setting (see 3.2 above). Lift may have been programmed without boat on lift.
2. Check display on control box. Are both dashes blinking together (manual mode) or separately (auto mode)? See Programming tips – 2.0.

**No range – Remote will only work at very close range:**

1. Replace battery. Even if light is still showing, range is affected when battery gets low.
2. Be sure to check both key fobs. On key fob: does a light come on? If not, key fob may have water damage or may be the battery. Remove screw from back of fob & replace with A23 battery (see parts description below).
3. Check if receiver is mounted to dock upright
4. Is there an antenna attached to the receiver? If so, push antenna & cable into receiver to make sure there is a tight connection.
5. Open key fob case to see if water has gotten on electronics (will show rust)  
If rust is showing, contact customer service to mail back to factory.

**Firstmate® comes on by itself & lift is up:**

One of two things: Mother Nature or electrical current.

1. **Mother Nature:** Unplug cable (running up dock post) to the receiver & check to see if contacts are clean (no green from mildew or rust from moisture). Plug back in.
2. **Electrical:** Voltage to dock may be low or electric surge.  
If problem persists, call for service.

## **FIRSTMATE® OPTIONS:**

Expandable Systems – Valve Upgrade Kit



Standard Remote – Convert to PRO remote



Key Fobs – Additional key fobs available



Strobe – External Strobe Kits to maximize viewing distance & range



Solar Lift Controls – Go Green!



**See web site or call for pricing**

## Warranty Statement:

Thank you for purchasing your **Firstmate®** system.

Your system is covered by a two-year Parts and Labor warranty \*\* as follows:

The warranty period starts on the date of the sale. In the case of equipment installed by an authorized commercial contractor, the warranty begins on the date of site acceptance.

This warranty is provided for the sole benefit of the original consumer and is not transferable.

This warranty is applicable for product purchased and used in the fifty states of the USA and the District of Columbia only. It is not applicable in the possessions or territories of the USA or in any other country.

This is the only express warranty, which Firstmate, Inc. makes in connection with the **Firstmate®** system, and its accessories. Any implied warranty applicable to this product including the warranty of merchantability is limited to the duration of the express warranty.

Firstmate, Inc. excludes and shall not be liable in any event for incidental or consequential damages. Some states do not allow limitations on how long an implied warranty may last. Therefore, these limitations and exclusions may not apply to you.

This warranty gives you specific legal rights. You may also have other rights, which vary, from state to state. In the event any of the provisions of this warranty are bound by statute or by applicable administrative or judicial entities to be unenforceable, all remaining provisions shall remain in full force.

### Owner's Responsibilities:

1. Please read the Owner's Manual completely. The information provided in the manual, covers installation, operation, safety precaution and, where applicable, routine maintenance.
2. Should warranty service be required you will need to be able to produce reasonable proof of purchase. Please save your sales receipt or other similar document. In the case of contractor installed equipment, a photocopy of the site acceptance document would be considered acceptable.
3. Notify Firstmate, Inc. of any alleged defect promptly upon discovery.
4. Return the product to an authorized dealer, service center or to Firstmate, Inc. All shipments must be PREPAID. No Collect shipments will be accepted. Products repaired under warranty by Firstmate, Inc. or designated service center will be returned to the sender PREPAID.
5. Product returned for service (in or out of warranty) MUST have a Return Authorization that may be obtained from Firstmate, Inc.
6. At Firstmate, Inc.'s sole discretion, warranted materials may be repaired or replaced.

### Exclusions:

1. Product sold by retailers or contractors NOT authorized by Firstmate, Inc. and product whose trademark, name or identification numbers have been altered or removed are not covered by this warranty.
2. Product not specifically marketed for installation in areas exposed to the elements (sun, wind, rain, etc.) is not covered for defects that are attributable to this type of installation.
3. Product failures that are the result of abnormal strain, negligence, misuse, improper installation or operation, or failure to follow instructions contained in the owner's manual. Abuse, modification, or accidental damage is not covered by this warranty, nor is damage resulting from floods, lighting, earthquakes, hail, etc.
4. RFI/EMI (interference/noise) caused by improper grounding or the improper use of either certified or uncertified equipment is not covered by this warranty.
5. Product that has been, or has attempted to have been, repaired by anyone other than Firstmate, Inc or a party authorized by Firstmate, Inc.

\*\* The General Ground Fault Interrupter (GFCI) comes standard on our product for liability purposes. It is not an integral part of the Firstmate® system. Therefore, **the GFCI only carries a 60-day warranty.**