



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Army Corps of Engineers reminds visitors to practice water safety

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As millions of Americans plan visits to our nation’s lakes and rivers, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reminds visitors of the importance of practicing safe, sensible, and thoughtful activities in, on, and around open water.

Tragically, people lose their lives while visiting USACE-managed lands and waters every year. Most of the tragedies are water related. The public’s help is needed to reduce the number of fatalities at the more than 400 USACE-managed lakes and river projects nationwide. USACE personnel stress the importance of water safety year-round when talking with visitors, but especially during the summer season because that is when most public recreation fatalities occur.

People of all ages are strongly encouraged to practice water safety this summer. Before entering or being around open water (lakes, rivers, ponds, etc.), keep these things in mind because they could save your life or the life of someone you care about.

- *Expect the unexpected* – Accidents can happen within seconds, so always be prepared for the unexpected. If you are ejected from a boat, fall, or jump into water that is colder than 70 degrees, you can inhale water from involuntary gasping, hyperventilation, panic, and sometimes vertigo that can cause you to drown. You can also be knocked unconscious if you are ejected from your boat or fall into the water along the shoreline while fishing.
- *Wear a life jacket* – By providing time to be rescued, it will help ensure you survive an unexpected fall into the water. It can also save your life if you become exhausted due to fatigue, waves, or current while swimming. An adult can drown in 60 seconds, and it takes a strong swimmer 10 minutes to put on a life jacket after entering the water. Statistics show that numerous drownings could have been prevented if a life jacket would have been worn, Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns.
- *Wear Engine Cutoff Device While Boating* – If thrown out of a boat, there is always the danger of being struck by a spinning propeller, especially since an unoccupied boat can often start traveling in circles after the operator is ejected. Wearing an engine cut-off switch lanyard or electronic fob immediately stops the engine after ejection so that the operator can regain control of the boat.
- *Know your swimming abilities* – Be aware that swimming in open water is different from swimming in a pool, and your swimming ability decreases with age. It is never too late to take swimming lessons and learn to swim well. Several people every year drown while swimming to retrieve boats, hats, and toys. Let those things go because they are not worth losing your life over.

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- *Alcohol and water are a deadly combination* – Alcohol induces an inner ear condition (caloric labyrinthitis) that can cause you to become disoriented when underwater and not realize which way is up. If you jump or fall in the water, you can become disoriented and swim down instead of up to safety, causing you to drown. This is more likely to happen if you have been consuming alcohol.
- *Understand “boater’s hypnosis”* – It is a condition brought on by the effects of sun, wind, noise, vibration, and motion experienced during a day of boating. Boater’s hypnosis can slow your reaction time almost as much as if you were legally intoxicated. Adding alcohol to this condition intensifies the effects.
- *Be Aware of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning While Boating* - Carbon monoxide poisoning is not limited to boats with enclosed cabins. It has proven to be deadly on open motorboats too. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless toxic gas produced when a carbon-based fuel burns, such as gasoline, propane, charcoal, and oil. Carbon monoxide can kill you while you are on or in the water near a boat, so use a marine carbon monoxide detector; always maintain fresh air circulation; seat children in the forward-most seating on a boat; shut off boat motors to avoid unnecessary idling; be aware of emissions from other boats; and seek medical attention immediately if you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning.
- *Watch Your Children* – Constantly supervise your children whenever they’re in, on, or near open water. Always keep them within arm’s reach. To keep them safe keep yourself safe by ensuring you and they wear properly fitted life jackets whenever enjoying your favorite outdoor water recreational activity.
- *Air Temperature and Water Temperature are not the same* – The water temperature in rivers and lakes can be significantly colder than the air temperature and jumping or falling into cold water can be a dangerous shock to your body, so it’s important to wear a properly fitted life jacket to increase your chances of survival. Keep in mind that although the air temperatures are rising, water temperatures are slow to rise, and some lakes and rivers have cold water temperatures year-round.

Learn more water safety tips by visiting www.PleaseWearIt.com and following Please Wear It on Facebook and Instagram.

USACE is one of the nation’s leading federal providers of outdoor and water-based recreation, hosting millions of visits annually to its more than 400 lake and river projects. It’s estimated that 90 percent of the USACE-operated recreation areas are within 50 miles of metropolitan areas, offering diverse outdoor activities for all ages close to home. For more information on USACE recreation sites and activities, visit www.CorpsLakes.us.