



# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers encourages visitors to make water safety a priority this summer

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – As Americans head to lakes and rivers for the 2026 recreation season, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is reminding everyone to make water safety part of every outdoor adventure.

USACE manages more than 400 lake and river projects nationwide and welcomes millions of visitors each year. While those visits create opportunities for recreation and family memories, preventable tragedies still occur on public waters annually, many involving people not wearing life jackets.

Statistics from the last five years regarding public recreation fatalities at USACE lake and river projects show that 91% of victims were not wearing a life jacket, 92% were male, 88% were age 18 or older, and nearly half were swimming in undesignated areas.

“The recreation areas operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are provided for visitors to get outside, enjoy nature and create wonderful memories,” said Maj. Gen. Jason E. Kelly, USACE deputy commanding general for civil and emergency operations. “If your plans this summer include activities on the water, take appropriate precautions. Wear a life jacket, swim in designated areas, recreate responsibly and encourage your family and friends to do the same.”

“Too often, accidents happen without warning and in just a matter of seconds,” said Heath Kruger, USACE National Water Safety program manager. “A properly fitted life jacket remains one of the simplest and most effective ways to save a life. Whether you are boating, fishing, swimming or enjoying time near the water, preparation and awareness matter.”

USACE encourages visitors to follow these important water safety reminders:

- Wear a properly fitted life jacket when boating, fishing, paddling or spending time near the water.
- Never swim alone and always swim in designated areas when available.
- Keep children within arm’s reach whenever they are near open water.
- Avoid alcohol while boating or swimming.
- Be aware that water temperatures can remain dangerously cold even during warm weather.
- Use engine cutoff devices while boating to reduce the risk of runaway vessels and propeller injuries.
- Learn your swimming limits and understand that open water conditions differ from pools.

Learn more water safety tips by visiting [PleaseWearIt.com](http://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, offering diverse outdoor opportunities close to home for millions of visitors each year. More information about USACE recreation sites and activities is available at [CorpsLakes.us](http://CorpsLakes.us).

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