

Press Release

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Corps of Engineers Water Safety Message

Huntington, W.Va..... Memorial Day marks the official start of summer. As a result, millions of Americans will enjoy our country's beautiful lakes, rivers and waters. As the Nation's largest recreational provider, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers encourages everyone participating in water-related activities to make a personal commitment to water safety.

The second leading cause of accidental death in the United States is drowning. However, this risk is significantly reduced just by wearing a life jacket. Statistics show that 90 percent of those who drown at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes may have survived if they had been wearing a life jacket.

Here are safety tips from the Corps of Engineers to help recreation seekers keep safe and have fun while participating in water-based activities over the Memorial Day holiday weekend and the summer.

Alcohol and water don't mix

More than half of all drowning fatalities involve alcohol. Just one beer can impair balance, vision, judgment, and reaction time. Research shows that four hours of boating, exposure to noise, vibration, sun, glare, and wind produces fatigue that simulates drunkenness. Boating fatigue combined with alcohol consumption intensifies the effects and increases accident risk. So remember, if fun is planned in, on, or near the water, don't drink alcohol.

Boaters!

Know your boat and know the rules of the water. Take a safe boating course. Visit <http://www.cgaux.org/> for information on boating classes.

View the Coast Guard federal regulations governing boating at <http://www.uscgboating.org/> and know your state laws as well.

Carry a set of navigational charts on board.

Check your boat for all required safety equipment. Visit <http://www.cgaux.org/>

Don't overload the boat (consider boat size, the number passengers, and extra equipment before loading).

Follow manufacturer's suggested procedures before starting the engine.

Wear a life jacket - don't just carry one on board. Make sure it is US Coast Guard approved and appropriately sized.

Coast Guard law now requires life jackets for children under the age of 12, unless otherwise specified by state law. Know your state law!

Check the weather forecast.

File a float plan with family or friends who are not on the vessel.

Swimmers!

LEARN TO SWIM...LEARN TO SWIM WELL!

Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental deaths in persons 15-44 years of age. Surprisingly, two-thirds of those who drown never had the intention of being in the water.

Watch your children at all times when around the water.

Never dive into lakes or rivers... the results can be tragic.

Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat.

Don't take chances by over-estimating your swimming skills.

Reach or throw a floatation device to help someone in trouble. Don't go in the water!

Swim only in designated swimming areas.

Never swim alone.

Please make your visit to any recreation area a safe and enjoyable one. Taking water safety precautions saves lives.

For more tips on how to be water safe, visit the Corps' water safety web site at <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil> / For a fun cartoon on life jacket safety, visit Bobber the Water Safety Dog at <http://bobber.info/>.