

Press Release

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Corps offers Water Safety Tips for summer

HUNTINGTON-- Summer is the perfect time to relax at a recreational area, and with the hot temperatures, everyone is looking for ways to beat the heat. Water activities are particularly popular this time of year, but with increased activity on the water comes an increased risk of danger. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) urges everyone to take extreme caution and put safety first when you are on the water this summer.

Boating Safety

The best way to stay safe is to plan ahead. If you are planning on going out to the lake or river, take a copy of this checklist along:

- Have a “Float Plan”—Let a friend know when you're leaving, where you're going, when you expect to return, what to do if you don't, and provide a description of your boat.
- Have a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for everyone on board. Make sure the PFD is wearable and throwable, Coast Guard approved, in good condition, readily accessible and fitted for adults and/or children.
- Take along maps or charts of the area.

- Have a copy of your registration certificate or documentation.
- Have Fire Extinguishers that are workable and readily accessible.
- Wear a watch or have a clock on board.
- Have a flashlight or searchlight with extra batteries (be sure to keep batteries dry).
- Have a sound producing device (horn or whistle).
- Keep a First Aid Kit on board at all times.
- Wear sunscreen or sun block.
- Take plenty of drinking water.
- Bring extra clothing (sweaters, socks and hats) and blankets in case temperature drops or if someone gets wet.
- Carry binoculars.

Water Safety Facts

The second leading cause of accidental death in the United States is drowning. Statistics show that most drowning deaths occur 10 feet from safety and 50 feet from the shore. While a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) can save your life, these tips can protect you against the risk of drowning:

- Learn to swim—it is the first step toward water safety.
- Never swim alone.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas.
- Teach your children to wait for permission to get in the water.
- Don't over-estimate your swimming skills.
- Discourage habits such as diving into shallow water, playing in drainage ditches, and running on docks or pool decks.
- Learn infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Provide constant supervision and demonstrate safe water practices.

Learn “Reach, Throw, Row, Don’t Go!”

If you see someone in trouble, there are simple techniques you can learn to help that person while ensuring your own safety as well. Just remember “Reach, Throw, Row, Don’t Go!”

- **REACH:** To help someone in the water, reach first with a pole, towel or boat oar—but don't get in the water yourself.
- **THROW:** Scan the area for items such as an empty milk jug, cooler or ring buoys that can be thrown to someone in the water.
- **ROW:** It's not safe to go near a swimmer with the boat motor running. Use the oars to bring the boat close enough to reach or throw something to them.
- **DON'T GO:** Without expert training and experience in lifesaving techniques, you could put yourself in danger along with the person you are trying to help.

Water Safety Links

There are several websites available which give more information on boating and water safety:

United States Army Corps of Engineers: <http://www.watersafety.usace.army.mil>.

National Safe Boating Council: <http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org>.

Coast Guard: <http://www.uscboating.org>.

For more information on water safety, or for information regarding USACE recreational areas, please contact the Public Affairs office at (304) 399-5353.