

Water Safety Tips

A child can drown in only 30 seconds, an adult in 60 seconds. Drowning is the leading cause of injury death among children.

At Home

- Home Safety Rule Number One: Always supervise toddlers in the bathroom.
- Never leave a baby or toddler alone while bathing, not even long enough to run to the phone or answer a doorbell. Remember, a child can drown in only 30 seconds.
- Take a safety inventory of your home and yard. Remove items such as five gallon buckets and children's swimming pools after use. Note any drainage areas in your subdivision. Make sure pools, spas, hot tubs, and fishing ponds are barricaded by multiple levels of protection. A child can drown in as little as two inches of water.
- Get involved and volunteer to provide water safety talks with a park ranger to church groups, school groups or other civic groups. Our goal is to save lives.

Around Pools and Lakes

- Learn to swim. It is the first step towards water safety.
- Provide constant supervision and demonstrate safe water practices. Remember: a lifeguard's job is to provide safety, not supervision.
- Teach your children to wait for permission to get in the water.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas.
- Never swim alone.
- Don't over-estimate your swimming skills.
- Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat.
- 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).

Learn "Reach, Throw, Row, Don't Go!"

Most people drown within 10 to 30 feet of safety. Learn these few simple techniques to help someone in trouble and keep yourself safe.

- **Reach:** To help someone in the water, reach first with a fishing pole, towel, boat oar, but don't get in the water yourself.
- **Throw:** Scan your area for items such as an empty milk jug, cooler, 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.

Keep This Checklist On Your Boat

- **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 a description of your boat**
Charts of the area and compasses
Registration certificate or documentation
Personal Flotation Devices (wearable and throwable) - cg approved, good condition, readily accessible, assigned and fitted
Fire Extinguishers - right number, size, and class for boat; charged, not corroded, nozzle clear, bracketed, readily accessible
Visual Distress Signals - current dates on pyros, proper number, batteries good if lights or epirb
Anchors and Line - adequate anchor for bottom, adequate line for water depth
DeWatering device - bilge pump operable, alternative bailing device available
Watch or clock - operable
Boarding ladder (or other means of boarding)
Heaving lines - at least 30 feet with monkey fist
Mooring lines - bow, stern, and spring lines, preferably three-stranded nylon with an eye in one end and of adequate length for your boat and mooring conditions
Bright flashlight or searchlight
Navigation lights - tested and operable, spare bulbs
Batteries - fully charged, encased in plastic boxes or terminals covered, securely fastened down
Sound producing device - horn, whistle appropriate for boat
Alternate propulsion - paddle or oar
Boat hook(s)
FCC license - if VHF radio, radar, epirb or other transmitter aboard and you plan to enter a foreign country
Oil discharge and trash placards affixed - if required by boat size
Bell - if required by boat size
First Aid Kit
Gauges - functional and reading properly
Ventilation - power ventilation operable (blower) and natural ventilations cowls open and clear
Tools and spare parts
Depth sounder, lead line, or sounding pole
Compass
Copy of Colregs (NavRules) - if required by boat size
Spare propeller and lock nut
Sunscreen and sunhat

Extra clothing...wool sweater, gloves, socks and other articles for warming if temperature drops or someone gets wet

Binoculars

AM radio...static on AM forewarns of nearby lightning

Drinking water

Personal needs like prescription drugs

Carry a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers navigation chart. Follow this link to navigation charts from the Corps homepage.

Tips on Life Jackets

- Wear your life jacket. They float-you don't.
- Always choose Coast Guard approved life jackets.
- A snug fit is essential. In addition to checking weight and size requirements, try the life jacket on your child. When picked up by the life jacket shoulders, the child's chin and ears shouldn't slip through.
- Infant and toddler life jackets should roll the child onto his back and keep his head above water. The life jacket should have a rounded flotation collar with a grab strap if possible (United States Coast Guard approved TYPE II).
- Again, let the child select his or her life jacket. Kids and adults are more willing to wear a vest that feels and looks good.
- Check life jackets for tears, loose buckles and straps, dry rot or mildew.

Flooding

- Determine if you are in a flood-prone area by calling your local emergency management office or Red Cross chapter.
- Plan and practice an evacuation route.
- Have disaster supplies on hand, including a battery-operated radio.
- Designate a point of contact for flood situations in case the family is separated.
- Avoid driving in flooded areas.
- If your car stalls, abandon it immediately. If the water exceeds 1/3 the height of your tire, the car is weightless.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.