



## Boaters! Before Getting Underway, know your boat and know the rules of the waterways.

- Take a safe boating course.
- Check your boat for all required safety equipment.
- Consider the size of your boat, the number of passengers and the amount of extra equipment that will be on-board. **DON'T OVERLOAD THE BOAT!**
- If you will be in a power boat, check your electrical system and fuel system for gas fumes.
- Wear your life jacket – don't just carry one on board.
- Leave your alcohol behind. Work to increase your safety, not increase your risks!
- Check the weather forecast.
- File a float plan with a member of your family or friend.

Each year, approximately 6,000 people drown in the United States. Drowning is the **SECOND** leading cause of accidental deaths for persons 15-44 years of age. What is really surprising is that two-thirds of the people who drown never had an intention of being in the water! Most people drown within 10-30 feet of safety. It is important that you and your family learn to swim.

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

- Don't take chances, by over estimating your swimming skills.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas.
- Never swim alone.

Watch Small Children! Remember, it only takes a few seconds for a small child to wander away. Children have a natural curiosity and attraction to water. Each year about 200 children drown and several thousand others are treated in hospitals for submersion accidents, accidents which leave children with permanent brain damage and respiratory health problems.

Cold Water Survival! Your life may depend on a better understanding of cold water. Many suspected drowning victims actually die from cold exposure or hypothermia. Hypothermia is a condition in which the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Violent shivering develops which may give way to confusion and a loss of body movement. If you fall in the water, in any season, hypothermia may occur. It's important to remember:

- Don't discard clothing. Clothing layers provide some warmth that may actually assist you in fighting hypothermia. This includes shoes and hats.
- Wear your life jacket! This helps hold heat into the core areas of your body, and enables you to easily put yourself into the **HELP** position. **HELP** (Heat Escape Lessening Posture) by drawing limbs into your body; keep armpits and groin areas protected from unnecessary exposure – a lot of heat can be lost from those areas, as well as the head.

For more tips, visit the US Army Corps of Engineers National Water Safety Program website at <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil/>

The four major causes of drownings are:

- ✓ Not wearing a life jacket;
- ✓ Abuse of alcohol;
- ✓ Lack of sufficient swimming skills;
- ✓ Hypothermia

***Wear your  
life jacket!***

