

Safety Newsletter

May 2023
ISSUE

"Self-insured Workers' Compensation Fund Members"

NATIONAL WATER SAFETY MONTH

National Water Safety Month in May prepares us for recreational activities.

Water is an attraction during the summer months. Whether we're drawn to lakes and rivers or public pools and water slides, safety is a necessary concern. We use the water for leisure, sport, and general outdoor relaxation. Boating with or without motors, swimming, fishing and many other kinds of recreation take place in and around the water.

- Protecting children around water should always be a number one safety concern.
- An adult should always be supervising children around water, whether it's a pool, lake.
- Follow all facility rules and don't rely on flotation devices for keeping your child safe.
- In the water, make sure an adult joins the child.
- Follow Safety Boating Tips



Boating Season 2023: Water Safety Tips to Know

Warm weather means more Sunday fun days on a pontoon boat or pulling out family kayaks and canoes to cruise local rivers. However you prefer to spend time on the water during summer 2023, safety first.

Life-jackets. Life-jackets. Life-jackets.

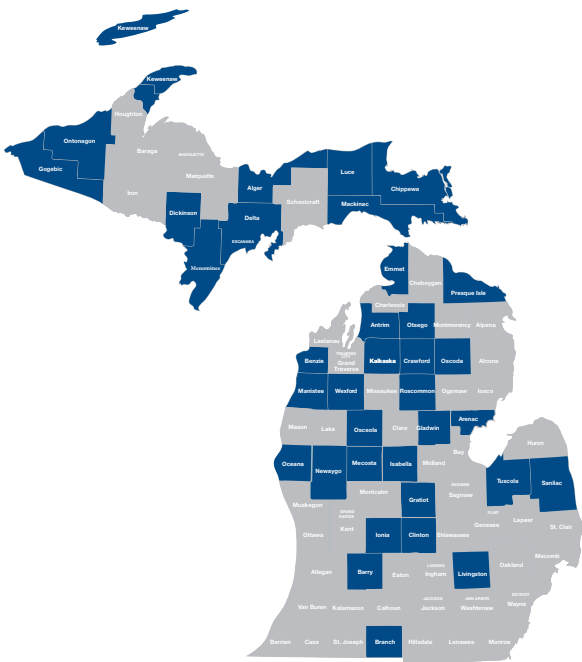
Life-jackets. It doesn't matter if you're a beginner or veteran swimmer, wearing a life-jacket (or at the very least, having them nearby) should always be at the top of your safety list. The council recommends having life jackets on children under the age of 13 while swimming or during other activities on open water. This also holds true for adults while boating.

Engine Cut-off Device.

Things happen. Better to be safe than sorry. Emergencies can arise on the water at any time. Whether you drop something into the water, or worse, a person goes overboard. An engine cut-off device — often worn around your wrist or attached to your life-jacket — ensures the boat's engine will shut off instantly.

Don't Booze and Boat.

Yes, a BUI is most definitely a thing. So, no "Boating Under The Influence." According to the council, BUIs accounts for one-third of all recreational boating fatalities. We all want to have fun on the water, but just like with a car, getting behind the wheel while under the influence is a big no-no. Alcohol impacts vision, balance, coordination, and judgment. Increasing the likelihood of accidents. Know that it's illegal to operate a watercraft under the influence of both drugs and alcohol in every state. The Coast Guard enforces a federal law that provides BUIs, too. Including all boats: canoes, rowboats and ships.



CONTACT US TODAY! (800) 258-1152 | www.michigancountieswcf.org



Timothy K. McGuire
MCWCF Administrator
tmmac24@gmail.com



AJ Hale
CompOne Risk Mngt Services
ajhale@compone.net

Boating Season 2023: Water Safety Tips to Know (cont.)

Be Aware of Carbon Monoxide Exposure.

Most people don't associate boats with producing carbon monoxide, but they certainly do. Because it's an odorless and colorless gas, you likely won't know if it's being emitted. The best thing to do to remain safe on the water is to avoid swimming anywhere near the rear of a motorized vessel, or sitting along the swim deck/platform while the boat motor is running.

Have a Plan, Ways to Communicate Beyond the Boat.

Again, you never know what could happen during your outdoor water journeys. It's always great practice to let someone back ashore know your route plan as well as how long you plan to be on the water. You'll also want to make sure any communication devices like phones, emergency locator beacons, or walkie-talkies are charged, have a signal, and work properly.

Bring Charged Communication Devices.

Having charged communication devices on-board can make an enormous difference when unforeseen situations happen. The ability to contact the coast guard when in distress is crucial. The coast guard monitors very high-frequency radios 24 hours a day to handle emergency situations. So, before embarking on a boating excursion, make sure you have a quality communication device with a high-frequency range.

Avoid Risky Locations.

Just as risky locations for swimming should be avoided, the same is true while boating. In many situations, visible sign boards indicate the level of danger in certain areas to prevent boaters that are new to the area from venturing into such spots. A careful boater should be able to decipher the meaning of these sign boards and steer away from these areas.

WATER SAFETY 10 Water Safety Tips

1. Never Swim Alone

Swimming should only happen when a lifeguard is on duty. Lifeguards don't just watch the people in the pool, lake or ocean. Their job is also to watch the water and advise swimmers on any safety concerns and questionable conditions that might arise. They are also trained to respond quickly when something happens.

2. Supervise Children When They're in the Water

We understand that parents need to relax too. But when your children are in the water, it's time to be alert. As a general rule of thumb, a parent should be within arm's reach of a young child at all times. This rule is true whether they're swimming in a pool, lake, ocean or bathtub. Parents of older children should stay close and keep eyes on their children at all times. Even ones who are strong swimmers need supervision because they're prone to trying tricks, flips and dives — all things that can be dangerous in the water.

3. Don't Play Breath-Holding Games

While swimming, children shouldn't hold their breath for a long time, as this can cause drowning and has several other severe risks. Make sure children understand competing to see who can hold their breath underwater, and other similar games, can be dangerous and should not be part of any water-related activities.

4. Always Wear a Life Vest

Young children or inexperienced swimmers should always wear a Coast Guard-certified life jacket around water. There are plenty of products on the market claiming to help children stay afloat, such as water wings, floaties, pool noodles, etc., but these are not a substitute for life preservers or lifesaving devices in a genuine emergency. Use these products only when a parent or trustworthy adult is within arm's length of the child using them. Also, remember a life jacket or other flotation device should never be an excuse to ignore other water safety guidelines. Life jackets alone are not enough when it comes to staying safe around water.

5. Don't Jump in the Water to Save a Friend

If a child sees their friend struggling to keep their head above water, their first instinct may be to jump in to help. However, doing so could lead to both people drowning. The Y's Safety Around Water program recommends the "reach, throw, don't go" technique, which involves using a long object to pull a struggling swimmer to safety. By using this technique, children can help their friend without putting themselves at risk.

6. Enter the Water Feet First

Severe injuries can occur when kids jump or dive headfirst into shallow water. Make sure your child understands the proper way to enter and exit the pool. If they're interested in jumping and diving, make sure to teach them the correct way to do it, as well as point out the areas where it is safe to do so. If your pool does not have an area designated for diving, do not allow it, no matter how deep the water.

7. Stay Away From Pool Drains

It is a good idea to show your child what the pool drain looks like and explain to them the importance of staying clear before they even begin playing. Children's hair, bathing suits and even limbs have become stuck in broken or faulty drains, which can lead to drowning or serious injury. Teach children to stay away from these areas in pools, especially if a drain is missing a cover or appears otherwise broken. If you notice one that seems to be operating incorrectly, report it immediately.

8. Stay Within Designated Swim Areas

Whether you're swimming in a pool, ocean or lake, staying within the designated swim areas is vital to staying safe. Teach children about ropes and why people use them to divide a pool. Never encourage a child to swim in water deeper than their abilities will allow, and, especially if you're swimming in a lake or ocean, always follow guidelines local lifeguards have established. They are familiar with the water and, in the case of lakes and oceans, know enough about how it changes from day to day to make wise and up-to-date safety recommendations.

9. Avoid Using Alcohol

This advice applies mainly to older children and parents. As children become teens, talking with them about alcohol becomes more and more essential. Alcohol impairs judgment, coordination and balance. It affects a person's ability to swim well, and it can even lower body temperature. Images of teens and young adults enjoying alcohol poolside are common on television and in movies, leaving your real-life teens a dangerous picture to copy, so make sure your teens understand the truth behind mixing water play with alcohol.

10. Learn CPR

While we hope your family will follow all these guidelines and stay safe in the water, the unfortunate truth is that accidents happen. If a drowning incident or pool-related accident occurs, bystanders are typically the first available to react and respond. As a parent supervising children, it's critical for you to be familiar with lifesaving techniques, including CPR for children and adults.

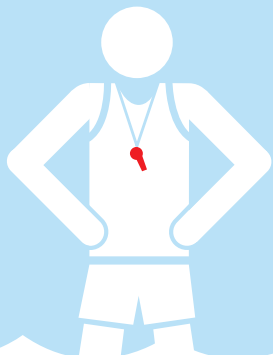




**American
Red Cross**

Water Safety Tips

**Swim in
designated
areas
supervised
by lifeguards.**



**Always swim
with a buddy.**



**If you go boating,
wear a life jacket!**



**Install and use barriers around
your home pool or hot tub.**



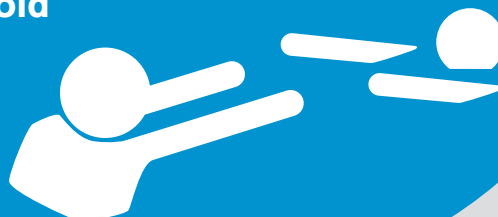
**Actively supervise
children whenever
around the water.**



**Reach or throw
aid to distressed
swimmers – don't go!**



**Always stay within
arm's reach of young
children and avoid
distractions.**



**Keep toys not
in use away
from the pool
and out of sight.**



Be water smart! Learn how at [redcross.org/watersafety](https://www.redcross.org/watersafety)

VESSEL & EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

Take Time to Reflect on Safety. Safe Boating Begins with You.

Float Plan*

Name

Phone Number

Vessel Description

Destination, Date & Time

Please use the back of this document for additional trip details.

Return Date & Time

*Leave a copy of your float plan with your marina or a friend. Take a picture and send it by text or email so they can notify the Coast Guard if you do not return within a reasonable amount of time after your scheduled return date and time.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal papers; operator's certificate or license (if required) on board, current | <input type="checkbox"/> Mooring lines and fenders in good condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ship's papers; registration or documentation certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Paddles or oars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life jacket suitable for each person on board, readily accessible, in good condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool kit and spare parts (including light bulbs, fuses) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Throwable floatation aid immediately available | <input type="checkbox"/> Bilge free of fuel vapors and excess water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguishers conveniently placed, fully charged, in good condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel supply full |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visual distress signals with current expiration dates | <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel system free of leaks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horn working | <input type="checkbox"/> Engine oil and transmission fluid levels correct |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bell (if required) on board | <input type="checkbox"/> Battery fully charged, fluid level full |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anchor and anchor line appropriate to area, depth, conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic gear in good condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compass properly adjusted | <input type="checkbox"/> Engine drive belts tight, in good condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charts for the area, up to date | <input type="checkbox"/> All navigation lights working |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Steering and shift mechanisms in good condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boat hook | <input type="checkbox"/> Outboard motor mountings tight (if appropriate) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab rails, lifelines in good condition |



COAST GUARD
FOUNDATION

VESSEL & EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

The Coast Guard Foundation supports the men and women of the United States Coast Guard who protect America's shores and save lives at sea. Learn more about our mission and find out how you can help at www.coastguardfoundation.org.

This guide covers only basic boating elements and does not guarantee the safety of your vessel or its passengers. Please refer to the U.S. Coast Guard for further safety guidelines and requirements for recreational boats.

Additional Resources:

United States Coast Guard Boating Safety
<http://www.uscgboating.org>

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary
<http://www.cgaux.org>

Information Source:
http://bdept.cgaux.org/wp/?page_id=1032