

Safety 24/7 Education

Water Safety



At Georgia Transmission Corporation, we are encouraging everyone to keep water safety top of mind and reduce water-related accidents. Not including boating incidents, on average about 10 people die from drowning every day in the United States, according to the National Safety Council.

The safety topics covered in this document include lakes, beaches, pools, boats, and life jackets. This document should serve as a reminder for everyone to follow the included guidelines to stay safer in and around water.

Lake Safety: Boating Safety Tips

Tip 1: Wear a life jacket.

It can be tempting to ditch the life jacket, especially if you feel confident in your abilities as a swimmer. But even when a life jacket isn't required, it's a good idea to wear one. Accidents on the water cannot always be predicted or prevented, and even strong swimmers may unexpectedly find themselves in a dangerous situation. Federal regulations require that all children under 13 years of age wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket at all times while out on the water. Boats are also required to have U.S. Coast Guard approved life jackets for every person on board.

View page 3 for more information about life jackets.

Tip 2: Understand watercraft navigational lighting after dark.

While every state's watercraft lighting rules may vary slightly, all states require watercraft (including boats, kayaks, canoes, etc.) to comply with certain lighting rules after dark. These lighting rules are generally in effect from dawn until dusk, and during periods of restricted visibility such as during fog or rain. Lighting requirements depend on the length of the watercraft but, generally speaking, powerboats are required to have sidelights, a masthead light and a stern light. Sailboats must have a sidelight and a stern light, and rowed or paddled boats must have a white light that can be displayed to avoid collision. Before heading out on the water, check the lighting requirements in your state.



Tip 3: Make sure your boat is prepared.

There are many items that need to be checked and rechecked on any boat. Schedule a Vessel Safety Check with your local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadrons before you hit the water. Every Vessel Safety Check is conducted free of charge.

Tip 4: Know the signs of drowning.

When many people think of drowning, they imagine the person in distress thrashing and flailing around in the water. In reality, drowning usually happens fast and silently. Signs of a person actively drowning include silence (children who are hyperventilating won't be screaming for help), a head that is tilted back towards the sky as it searches for air, and arms that are moving downward as the drowning person attempts to push their bodies upwards on something solid that is not there.

Tip 5: Be sure you know your boat's capacity.

If you have too much on your boat, the boat may become unstable and capsize.

Tip 6: Know state boating laws.

Rules and laws can differ from state to state and violations can result in ticketing, fines, or jail time.

Tip 7: Check the weather.

Everyone knows that a sunny summer day can quickly morph into an afternoon of thunderstorms in many regions across the country. It's important to check the forecast before you hit the water, but even if that forecast is clear, continue to keep your eye on the skies. Thunderstorms can create dangerous wave and wind conditions, and a lightning strike to a vessel could be deadly. When it looks like thunderstorms may be developing, the responsible thing to do is to head back to shore.

Tip 8: Stay hydrated and protect yourself from the sun.

On a hot summer day it's possible to lose up to a liter of water an hour through sweating and evaporation. Dehydration can lead to symptoms such as headaches, leg cramps, and dizziness. Severe dehydration can be serious and lead to unconsciousness. While enjoying your time on the water, don't forget to hydrate, even if you don't feel thirsty. It's also necessary to protect yourself from the sun by wearing sunscreen, sunglasses and a wide brimmed hat, and by taking breaks in the shade.

Tip 9: Know your hand signals when water skiing or tubing.

Water skiing and tubing while being towed by a boat is a fun and popular lake activity. But before your boat speeds off into the open waters pulling a skier behind it, make sure that everyone understands hand signals so that those on the boat can communicate with those on the water. Hand signals allow non-verbal communication (such as "get me back in the boat," "I'm okay," and "I'm done") and can allow the person on the water to tell the boater to go faster or slower, or turn left or right.

Tip 10: Dress properly.

Always dress for the weather, wearing layers if cooler weather, and bring an extra set of clothes in case you get wet.

Tip 11: Always file a float plan.

File a float plan with someone you trust that includes details about the trip, boat, persons, towing or trailer vehicle, communication equipment, and emergency contacts.

Tip 12: Always follow navigation rules.

Know the "Rules of the Road" such as operator's responsibility, maintaining a proper lookout, safe speed, crossing, meeting head-on, and overtaking situations. Know what's going on around you at all times, and always travel at safe speeds for the environment.

Tip 13: Beware of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Gasoline-powered engines on boats, including onboard generators, produce carbon monoxide (CO), a colorless and odorless gas that can poison or kill someone who breathes too much of it. Be sure to install and maintain a working CO detector, never block exhaust outlets, and always dock, beach, or anchor at least 20 feet away from the nearest boat that is running a generator or engine.

Tip 14: Keep in touch.

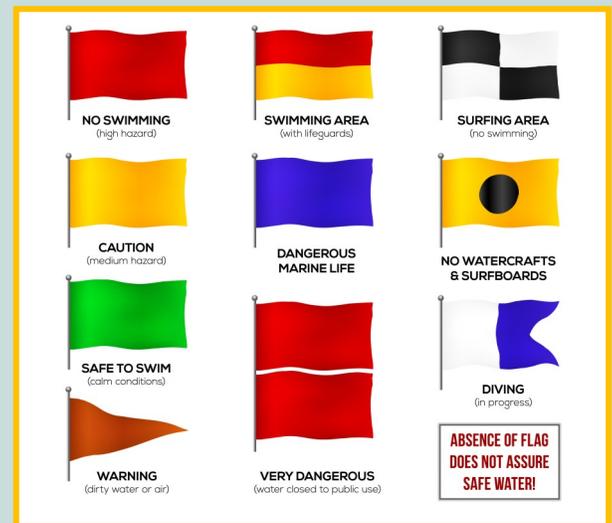
Communication devices can be the most important piece of

emergency equipment on board a vessel, especially in case of emergency. Be sure to have at least two communication devices that work when wet, such as satellite phones, emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRB), VHF radios, and personal locator beacons (PLB). And, know how to use it.

Beach Safety

Beach Safety Flags and Signs

Every beach has permanent and occasional hazards that you will need to look out for. Lifesaving services use safety flags to help identify these hazards and to indicate supervised areas.



Beach safety signs can be different shapes and colors. They tell you about the beach and conditions.

Warning signs are diamond-shaped and yellow and black. They warn you about hazards at the beach such as 'unexpected large waves' or 'swimming not advised'.

Regulatory signs are a red circle with a diagonal line through a black image. They are used to inform you about prohibited activities at that beach such as 'no swimming' or 'surfboard riding between flags prohibited'.

Information signs are square shaped and blue and white. They are used to provide information about features at that beach such as 'patrolled beach' or 'surfboard riding'.

Safety signs are square-shaped and green and white. They are used to indicate a safety provision nearby or to provide safety advice such as 'emergency telephone', 'first aid' or 'lifesaving equipment'.

Rip Currents

Rip currents are strong currents beginning around the shore that run away from the beach. Being caught in one may feel like you are in a flowing/moving river. Not all rip currents flow directly out to sea. Some may run parallel to the beach before ultimately heading out to sea.

- If you find yourself in a rip current, follow these steps:
- Do not panic.
- Raise an arm and call out for help, you may be rescued.
- Float with the current, it may return you to a shallow sandbank.
- Swim parallel to the beach or towards the breaking waves until you escape rip current.



Children Safety

While lifeguards and lifesavers watch over you and your children when in the water, children require constant parent/adult supervision when visiting the beach or when they are around any body of water. Most parents think water safety is first and foremost on their minds whenever they are enjoying summer activities with their children, but when the unthinkable happens, caregivers often say, "I only looked away for a second." You should:

- keep them within arms' reach at all times
- put them in bright swimming suits which are easy to see
- identify an easy to find point on the beach, where the child can go to if you are separated

Pool Safety

Stay Close, Be Alert, and Watch

- Always watch children and never leave them unattended
- Keep children away from pool drains, pipes and other openings
- Have a charged phone close by at all times
- If a child is missing, check the pool first
- Share safety instructions with family, friends and neighbors
- Even if a lifeguard is present, parents and caregivers should still take the responsibility of being a designated Water Watcher

Learn and Practice Water Safety Skills

- Learn to swim and make sure kids do, too
- Know how to perform CPR on children and adults
- Understand the basics of life-saving so that you can assist in a pool emergency

Have the Appropriate Equipment

- Install a fence of at least four feet in height around the perimeter of the pool or spa
- Use self-closing and self-latching gates
- Ensure all pools and spas have compliant drain covers
- Keep pool and spa covers in working order
- Have life-saving equipment such as life rings

Do You Have the Right Life Jacket?

Try It On

- Check the manufacturer's ratings for your size and weight.
- Make sure the life jacket is properly zipped and/or buckled.
- Check for fit by raising your arms above your head while wearing the life jacket and ask a friend to grasp the tops of the arm openings and gently pull up. A snug fit in these areas shows the life jacket fits properly.

Important Reminders

- Make sure your life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Double check that your life jacket is appropriate for the water activities. Read the label!
- Check your life jacket is in good serviceable condition, with no tears or holes.
- Life jackets meant for adult-sized people do not work for children. If you are boating with children, make sure they are wearing properly fitted, child-sized life jackets based on their weight.

Some state laws vary, but it is always safe to assume, no matter what the age to always wear your life jacket. On recreational boats, children under 13 years old must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket unless they are below decks or in an enclosed cabin.