



SAFETY TIPS

2023 Summer Season – Water Safety

The summer season is full of various water activities. While activities associated with water can be fun and relaxing, each one has its own unique hazards. Every year, hundreds of people are killed and many more injured in preventable water mishaps. To combat these mishaps, we must continue to employ deliberate planning and risk management tactics to ensure all water events are executed in the safest means possible. Before engaging in any water activity, identify and mitigate known hazards. The following Safety Tips and best practices are offered to highlight water hazards and keep you safe.

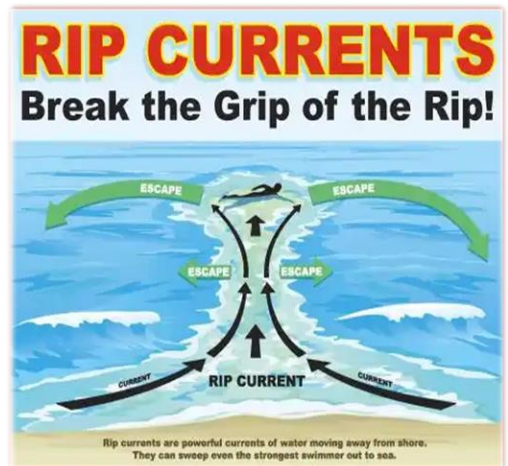


SWIMMING POOL SAFETY: Every day, nearly ten people die from unintentional drowning. Designate a **'Water Watcher'** when friends or family are in or near the water; supervision saves lives! Have an educated level of respect for the water. Ensure young children and inexperienced swimmers wear approved flotation devices when near water. Never mix alcohol and water activities. Alcohol affects our balance, coordination and judgment, and its effects are heightened by sun exposure and heat.

Best Practices: Learn to swim. Never swim alone. Avoid diving into pools, always enter feet first. Don't overestimate your swimming ability. Avoid 'peer-pressure' to enter the water. Don't rely on inflatable pool toys for safety.

BEACH SAFETY: Rip Currents are a common beach hazard. They are powerful currents of fast-moving water. Their speeds can reach up to eight mph. Many people caught in rip currents panic and attempt to swim against the current making them more susceptible to fatigue and drowning. An estimated 100 people a year die due to rip current drownings. If caught in a rip current, don't panic - rip currents don't pull you under. Instead, wave arms or yell to gain the attention of others. Swim parallel with the shore until you no longer feel the pull of the current, then swim back towards the shore.

Best Practices: Never swim alone. Learn to recognize rip currents and escape procedures before entering the water. Swim only where lifeguards are present. Never dive headfirst into surf. Learn the U.S. Lifesaving Association (USLA) standardized flag warning signs and their meanings.



SURFING SAFETY: Follow USLA flag regulations. Most risks faced when surfing can be substantially reduced, if not eliminated entirely, by a combination of awareness, basic fitness, and proper surfing equipment. Avoid getting too close to piers, cliffs, boats, jetties or other surfers. Don't exceed your surfing abilities. Wear appropriate PPE for the environment, e.g., wetsuit, ear plugs, helmet and/or reef shoes. Keep an ankle tow line affixed to surfboard to keep it from hitting others.

Best Practices: Inspect surfing equipment prior to entering the water. Surf with a friend. Monitor weather conditions and tide. Keep hydrated. Self-assess fatigue levels; incorporate rest breaks into surfing sessions.

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BOATING: Boating is fun, adventuresome, and relaxing. But boating can also be dangerous if safety isn't applied. Boat operators must complete a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved boating safety course and ensure life vests are available for all occupants. Children 12 and younger must wear a USCG approved life jacket. Some 77% of fatalities associated with boating accidents are from drowning, and 86% of those were **not** wearing life jackets.

Best Practices: Bring non-alcoholic drinks. Limit boating time to deter fatigue. Wear a life jacket – it's the simplest life-saving strategy for recreational boating, paddling, or towed water sports. File a Float Plan with a photo of your craft.

KAYAKING SAFETY: Check equipment carefully before kayaking. Do not exceed weight capacity of craft. Dress appropriately for the weather and water temperature. Maintain a spare paddle for emergency situations. Be aware of weather conditions, tide and water current changes.

Best Practices: Wear a personal flotation device. Maintain sight of shore. Monitor surroundings. Stay in calm, flat water if a beginner. Keep cell phone in water-tight bag. Be aware of offshore winds which may make it difficult to paddle back to shore. Pack a whistle (1-blast for attention, 3-blasts for help).

BEAT THE HEAT: While everyone loves a sunny day, long term exposure to the heat and sun affects the body in multiple ways. Immediate effects can include painful sunburn, fatigue, dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and potentially fatal heat stroke. Long term effects can include skin cancer and premature aging.

Best Practices: Stay hydrated. Avoid being outdoors during the hottest part of the day. Wear wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses, light-colored clothing, and sunscreen. Use sunscreen rated from 30 to 50 sun protection factor (SPF) and reapply throughout the day. Avoid consuming alcohol while exposed to the sun.

DID YOU KNOW: An average of 3,957 unintentional drowning deaths occurs annually. Approximately 80% of beach rescues are due to rip currents. Males account for nearly 80% of all drowning victims. There is a 1 in 18 million chance of drowning at a beach when lifeguards are present.

RISK MANAGEMENT (RM): Every Marine is responsible for breaking the chain of events that leads to a mishap. Allow sufficient time for detailed planning. Apply RM principles to all water activities. Exercise discipline in avoiding needless risks and their consequences. Always use the 'Battle Buddy' system. Maintain a keen situational awareness. Avoid mixing alcohol and water activities. Self-evaluate stress and fatigue levels often. Make smart decisions and continue to watch out for one another.

RESOURCES:

- **Rip Currents:** [What is a rip current?](#)
- **Water Safety:** [USLA's Top Ten Beach and Water Safety Tips](#)
- **Surfing Safety:** [Safe Surfing | A Guide To Surf Safety & Surfing](#)
- **USCG Boating Safety:** <https://www.uscgboating.org>
- **Kayak Safety:** <https://paddling.com/learn/top-5-kayak-safety-rules>
- **CDC:** <https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/facts/index.html>



Manage the Risk



Protect the Force