



## Water Safety

### Water Safety

#### Watch your children

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. Remember, it only takes a few seconds for a small child to wander away. Children have a natural curiosity and attraction to water. It only takes a child an average of 20 seconds to drown.

Only swim in designated areas!

The official home of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Bobber the Water Safety Dog (which contains cartoons, coloring, and a lock game for children) can be viewed at the following link: <http://www.bobber.info/>.

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!*





# Huntsville Center *Safety Gram*

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Each year, approximately 6,000 people drown in the U.S. Since most drowning victims had no intention of being in the water, and since most people drown within 10-30 feet of safety, it is important that you and your family learn to swim. It is also important to follow some simple but crucial guidelines if you are going to be near the water.

### **Before getting underway:**

- Take a safe boating course.
- Check the weather forecast.
- Put on your life jacket and leave your alcohol behind.
- File a float plan with a friend.
- Check your boat for all required safety equipment.
- Check your electrical system and fuel system for gas fumes.
- Follow manufacturer's suggested procedures before starting up.
- Carry a navigation chart and know your waterway.
- Follow the navigation rules of the road, buoys and other aids to navigation.
- Be a safe boater; always post a sharp lookout.

### **Cold Water Survival Tips**

Many suspected drowning victims actually die from cold exposure or hypothermia, 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. To avoid hypothermia:

- Dress warmly with wool clothing.
- Wear rain gear and stay dry.
- Seek a warm environment at the first sign (mild shivering) of hypothermia.

### **If you fall in the water:**

- Don't discard clothing.
- While wearing your life jacket, draw your knees and arms together into the HELP (Heat Escape Lessening Posture) posture.

### **Swimming Tips - Please remember:**

- Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat.
- Don't take chances by overestimating your swimming skills.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas.
- Never swim alone.
- Never dive into lakes and rivers. Every year in diving accidents more than 8,000 people suffer paralyzing spinal cord injuries and another 5,000 die before they reach the hospital.
- Remember, it only takes a few seconds for a small child to wander away, so please watch your children at all times.
- More than half of all the people that drown have consumed alcohol prior to their accident, so don't drink alcohol if you are planning to have fun in or on the water.

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### Buoy Identification

Know and Obey All Buoys and Markers

For additional safety information, you may access the National Water Safety Program at:  
<http://watersafety.usace.army.mil/safetytips.htm>



Information provided by HQUSACE and Little Rock District.



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