

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

MyHealthTALK

July 2012

Courtesy of Asset Health



BOATING SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT

Spending a beautiful summer day sailing or cruising on a boat is hard to beat. The fresh air is invigorating, the water refreshing, and the sun blazes in a blue sky that seems to go on forever. Whether making your way on the seas or anchored in a picturesque harbor, fun and relaxation are usually along for the ride. Recreational boating is a favorite summer pastime for many, but unfortunately, there are perils on the waters. A combination of environmental stressors and hazards come into play, contributing to preventable boating accidents. Boaters know the drill—no one likes to wear a life jacket but it is the most important safety measure on a boat.

Fatigue comes easily after hours of boating because constant motion forces your muscles to work nonstop just to keep balance. The hot sun, continuous motion, wind, potential noise and tendencies to dehydrate are a dicey mix. Too much sun zaps your energy as your body fights off radiation. To make matters worse for boat operators, the sun's reflection on water creates a glare that makes objects hard to see. Add a few other potential dangers like operator inattention or inexperience, alcohol use, excessive speed, or having no proper lookout and a perfect day can turn into a tragic one.

Environmental stressors while boating can make drinking two beers have the effect of drinking several. Alcohol is a contributing factor in a third of all boating accidents. Water consumption is critical when drinking alcohol because the liver needs water to eliminate toxins.

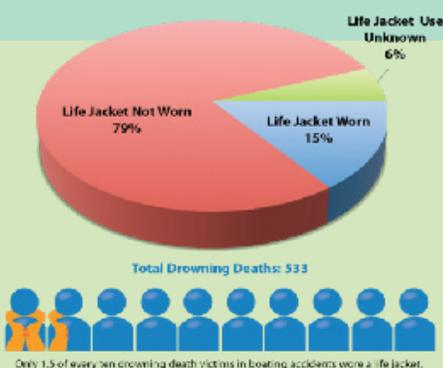
According to the U.S. Coast Guard, there were more than 4,000 boating accidents in 2011, resulting in 758 fatalities. Boating fatalities jumped 12.8 percent last year and are now at the highest level since 1998. Among fatal boating accidents, 70 percent of the victims drowned, and of those, 84 percent were not wearing a life jacket. Practice responsibility and safety whether you are a boat operator or a passenger to get the most out of summer fun on the water.

Sources: National Safe Boating Council
United States Coast Guard

Be Prepared Before Going out on the Water

- Learn the rules of boating. Take a safe boating course online or in your community before taking the helm. Check out courses at: www.boatingbasicsonline.com/ or www.boatingsafety.com/
- Prepare your vessel. A life jacket for every passenger, a first aid kit and distress signals are standard onboard equipment required by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Know your risks. Always check the marine weather forecast before going out in a boat and understand marine watches, warnings and advisories. Weather can change quickly on the water so keep your eye to the sky. Study charts and understand features of the body of water where you will be boating.
- Always have a designated lookout to watch for other boaters, objects and swimmers.
- Be prepared for emergencies. Develop an emergency plan with options for getting your boat out of trouble. Create a float plan and tell someone about your whereabouts or notify law enforcement in case you do not return as scheduled.
- Remember that alcohol and boating are bad companions. Operating a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is against the law and can result in serious consequences. Enforcement of safe boating laws is serious business and summer brings increased patrols on waterways.
- Know speed limits and comply with no-wake zones and warnings.
- Know county and state boating laws.

2011 Recreational Boating Drownings



**ALWAYS
PUT
SAFETY
BEFORE
CONVENIENCE**

Happy Birthday America!

A time-honored American tradition is commemorating Independence Day with a brilliant show of fireworks. Remember to practice safety when igniting sparklers and fireworks to keep festivities fun for everyone. An estimated 9,000 people are injured each year in the U.S. because of fireworks. Children and young adults age 20 and younger have 53 percent of the injuries with the lion's share involving children 15 and younger. More than half of the injuries are burns and most involve the head, hands, fingers or legs. Firecrackers are associated with an estimated 900 injuries; sparklers with 1,200; and bottle rockets with 400 injuries annually. Fireworks are also blamed for an estimated 1,800 fires. Remember, alcohol and fireworks do not mix.

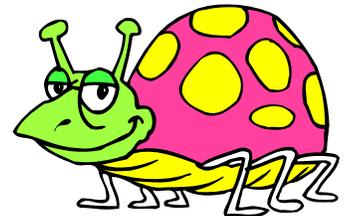
"We anoint their fuses with a tiny amount of fire, and they come alive, playing out their life span in a matter of seconds. In those few seconds, a crack in the universe is opened, giving us a glimpse of the energy locked within all matter."

Bob Weaver, Pyrotechnician

Play it Safe with Fireworks

- Obey the laws. Do not use fireworks if they are illegal where you live.
- Set off fireworks in an open area away from buildings, grasses, dry leaves and flammable materials.
- Read instructions and only use fireworks as intended. Have a hose, bucket of water or another water source nearby for emergencies.
- Spectators should be a safe distance from where fireworks are ignited.
- Do not relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks or "duds." Soak them in water and discard them.
- Never light fireworks in a glass or metal container.
- Never have a portion of your body or clothing directly over a firework while lighting.
- Do not allow young children to play with fireworks.
- Only allow children to use sparklers under close adult supervision.
- Store unused fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- Never ignite homemade fireworks or illegal explosives—they can kill you.

Getting Pests to Bug Off!



- When outdoors, wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts, long pants and a hat. Clothing in earth hues provides camouflage. Avoid blues, floral patterns and floral scents that may attract insects.
- Use non-toxic insect repellants if possible. Plant-derived repellants such as citronella, geraniol and linalool reduce the presence of mosquitoes and other biting bugs. Heavy consumption of garlic or garlic supplements (not the odorless variety) repel mosquitos and other insects. Before using supplements, consult your doctor because they should not be taken by pregnant or lactating women, persons on blood thinning and some other medications, or by those having surgery.
- An option is to spray clothing with repellents containing DEET or permethrin. Mosquitos and other pests can bite through lightweight fabric. Read and follow directions when using repellents. The Mayo Clinic recommends washing repellent from the skin as soon as you come indoors.
- Be aware of your outdoor surroundings. When you see wasp or hornet nests, avoid them and prevent children from playing near them.
- When you've been outdoors for a long time, inspect yourself for ticks or have someone else check for you.
- Protect outdoor areas. Eliminate standing water to prevent mosquitos from breeding. Keep tight lids on garbage containers to deter wasps and hornets.

Treating Insect Bites

- Stay calm! Movement increases the circulation of venom in your bloodstream.
- If a bee, wasp or hornet leaves you with a stinger, pull it out with tweezers or try to brush it off with a small, flat stick.
- Apply a cold pack or ice for 15-20 minutes, once an hour, to reduce pain and swelling.
- Take oral antihistamines to ease itching.
- Use topical lotions with hydrocortisone or calamine, or spray a localized anesthetic containing benzocaine to relieve pain. Read directions carefully if using lotions on young children.
- Dehydration can intensify bite reaction, so drink plenty of water.

Treating Severe Reactions

- Call 911 if someone has breathing difficulties, swelling (of the lips, tongue or throat), hives, dizziness, faintness, confusion, rapid heartbeat or nausea following a sting or bite.
- Check for prescribed medications the person may have with them such as an EpiPen or Twinject (an epinephrine injection) from an anaphylaxis kit and follow directions for use.
- Administer CPR if there are no signs of breathing or movement.