



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Pittsburgh District

News Release

Public Affairs Office
1000 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release No. 05-146
May 26, 2005

Contact: Karen L. Auer, 412-395-7106
Karen.L.Auer@usace.army.mil

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District Water Safety Tips – Know Before You Go!

PITTSBURGH – President George W. Bush has proclaimed May 21 through May 27, 2005, as National Safe Boating Week. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District joins the President in urging all Americans to learn more about safe boating practices, wear life jackets, take advantage of boating safety programs throughout the year, and to always engage in proper and responsible conduct while on the water.

Each year, approximately 6,000 people drown in the United States. Drowning is the Nation's second leading cause of accidental death, yet it is possible – just by wearing a life jacket – to reduce drowning deaths. Statistics show that 90 percent of those who drown at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes may have survived if they had done so. Here are safety tips from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District to help recreation seekers keep safe in water-based activities over the Memorial Day holiday weekend and throughout the summer.

For your safety, the Pittsburgh District encourages everyone to observe the rules and regulations at Corps navigation and flood control projects including [Shenango Lake](#), [M.J. Kirwan Dam](#), [Mosquito Lake](#), [Berlin Lake](#), [Loyalhanna Lake](#), [Conemaugh Lake](#), [Mahoning Lake](#), [Crooked Creek Lake](#), [Tygart Lake](#), [Stonewall Jackson Lake](#), [Youghiogheny Lake](#), [Allegheny Reservoir/Kinzua Dam](#), [Woodcock Creek Lake](#), [East Branch Lake](#) and [Tionesta Lake](#).

Alcohol and water don't mix

More than half of all drowning fatalities involve alcohol. Just one beer can impair balance, vision, judgment and reaction time. Research shows that four hours of boating – exposure to noise, vibration, sun, glare and wind – produces fatigue that simulates drunkenness. Boating fatigue combined with alcohol consumption intensifies the effects and increases accident risk. So remember, if fun is planned in, on or near the water, don't drink alcohol.

Boaters!

- ❖ Know your boat and know the rules of the road. Take a safe boating course. Visit www.cgaux.org and www.usps.org for information on boating classes and water safety training.
- ❖ View the U.S. Coast Guard federal regulations governing boating at www.uscgboating.org and know your state laws.
- ❖ Check your boat for all required safety equipment. Visit www.cgaux.org.
- ❖ Carry a set of navigational charts on board.
- ❖ Don't overload the boat (consider boat size, the number passengers and extra equipment before loading).

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!*



- ❖ Follow manufacturer's suggested procedures before starting the engine.
- ❖ Wear a life jacket (Personal Flotation Device, PFD) – don't just carry one on board. Make sure it is U.S. Coast Guard approved and appropriately sized.
- ❖ Check the weather forecast.
- ❖ File a float plan with family or friends who are not on the vessel.

U.S. Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Devices must be carried on board all boats operating on Corps of Engineers project waters. They must be worn by all people on board all boats in accordance with all federal and state regulations.

- **All people onboard:**
 - All boats less than 16 feet in length**
 - All canoes**
- **All children on all boats:**
 - Under thirteen (13) in Pennsylvania and Maryland**
 - Under twelve (12) in New York, Ohio and West Virginia**
- **All non-swimmers**

A Life Jacket Loaner Program for children is available at Tionesta Lake and Tygart Dam. Loaner life jackets are available to any child should you forget to bring one. For details on the Life Jacket Loaner program, contact Tionesta Lake at 814-755-3512 or Tygart Dam at 304-265-3974.

Swimmers! LEARN TO SWIM...LEARN TO SWIM WELL!

- ❖ Watch your children at all times when around the water.
- ❖ Never dive into lakes and rivers...the results can be tragic.
- ❖ Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat.
- ❖ Don't take chances by over-estimating your swimming skills.
- ❖ Reach or throw a flotation device to help someone in trouble. Don't go in the water!
- ❖ Swim only in designated swimming areas.
- ❖ Never swim alone.

Please make your visit to any recreation area a safe and enjoyable one. Taking water safety precautions saves lives.

-30-

www.lrp.usace.army.mil



For more tips on how to be water safe, visit the Corps' water safety web site at <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil>. Freddie the Fish is the water safety mascot for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District. Freddie delivers his water safety message in a coloring book available at www.lrp.usace.army.mil/kids/kids.htm.