

# Dept. of Natural Resources: Labor Day boating safety reminders

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**MADISON, Wis.** – Life jackets save lives! The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources wants to remind the public to wear life jackets as they get out and enjoy Wisconsin's waterways over the Labor Day holiday.

As summer draws to a close, 19 people have died in boating accidents in Wisconsin in 2020. Sixteen of those were drownings. Fourteen of the those people were not wearing life jackets, and one person's life jacket was incorrectly secured.

"Our hearts break for the families and friends of those who don't make it home," said DNR Chief Conservation Warden Casey Krueger. "These are painful reminders to remember your safety when you plan an outing that involves any Wisconsin waterbody."

The DNR does not track all drownings – only those fatalities linked to the use of a recreational activity item, such as a boat, kayak or canoe. Boating incident reports to date for 2020 and previous years, as well as the annual overall recreational incidents, can be found [here](#).

"The notion that you can put a life jacket on as an emergency is happening is unrealistic. Things can go wrong in an instant," said DNR Recreation Warden Jason Roberts. "Wardens have responded to numerous drowning deaths only to find a life jacket stuffed inside a kayak or floating near the capsized canoe. Or in some cases, the person voluntarily leaves the vessel without a jacket and fails to make it back."

## **LABOR DAY WATER SAFETY TIPS**

- Always wear a life jacket when you're on or near the water. Life jackets will keep you on top of the water if you walk off an unexpected drop-off, or a wave

or current overpowers you or you fall out of a boat.

- Enjoy the waters sober and know your limits. Alcohol blurs a person's judgment, reaction time and abilities.
- River shorelines and sandbars pose unseen dangers. Higher, fast-moving water can tax an individual's boating, paddling and swimming skills.
- Keep an eye on the weather and let someone know where you are going.

Click [here](#) for more boating safety tips.