

Dept. of Natural Resources: Reminds Wisconsinites to wear life jackets while on the water

Posted on Friday, Jul 29, 2022

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds Wisconsinites and visitors to put safety first by boating sober and wearing a life jacket while on the water.

Nearly 80% of fatal boating incidents involve drowning. Drowning can happen to even the most experienced swimmers. Most people who drown in boating accidents know how to swim but become incapacitated in the water, such as being injured, unconscious, exhausted or weighed down by clothing.

[Alcohol use is a leading factor in recreational boating fatalities.](#) If alcohol is involved in your day of boating, have a designated operator. Operating a boat is no different than driving an automobile.

So far this year, 11 people have died from boating incidents, and another 25 died in 2021. Operator inexperience, inattention, recklessness and speeding are the four leading causes of tragic watercraft crashes. [Boating incident reports to date for 2022 and previous years are available online here.](#)

The easiest and most important thing to remember is to boat sober and wear a life jackets. Statistics show boaters who wear life jackets and take boater safety courses are most likely to stay safe on Wisconsin waters.

New life jackets are much more comfortable, lightweight and stylish than the bulky orange style most boaters know. There are innovative options, such as inflatable life jackets, allowing mobility and flexibility for boating, fishing, paddling or hunting and

are much cooler in the warmer weather.

Follow the basic safety tips below and enjoy Wisconsin's great lakes and rivers with family and friends.

Water Safety Tips

- [Sign up now to take an online boater education course.](#)
- Always wear a properly fitted life jacket with a snug fit and fastened 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, if a wave or current overpowers you or if 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.

Remember always to practice caution when near or on water, and always wear your life jacket. [More boating safety tips are available on the DNR website.](#)