



**US Army Corps
of Engineers
Fort Worth District**

News Release

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers encourages water safety for holiday weekend

FORT WORTH, Texas – Drowning is one of the nation's leading causes of accidental death, yet it is possible -- just by wearing a properly fitted life jacket -- to reduce drowning deaths. Statistics show that 90 percent of those who drowned at Corps of Engineers lakes may have survived if they had worn properly fitted life jackets. Park Rangers in the Fort Worth District incorporate water safety training into all aspects of public outreach and education, but accidents can and do occur. It is vital that visitors know and practice personal, water and boating safety when in or around the water.

Here are safety tips to help recreation seekers keep safe and have fun during water-based activities over the Memorial Day holiday weekend and the summer.

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 you plan on having fun in or near the water, don't drink alcohol.

Boaters!

Texas has more square miles of inland water than any other state and there are approximately 595,000 registered boats in Texas, ranking it 6th in the country.

- Know your boat and know the rules of the road. Take a safe boating course. Visit <http://www.cgaux.org> for information on boating classes.
- View the Texas Parks and Wildlife state regulations governing boating at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>
- Check your boat for all required safety equipment. Visit <http://www.cgaux.org/>
- Don't overload the boat (consider boat size, the number of passengers, and extra equipment before loading).
- Follow manufacturer's suggested procedures before starting the engine.
- Wear a Coast Guard approved, properly fitted life jacket - don't just carry one on board.
- Texas law requires life jackets for all children age 13 and younger.
- Check the weather forecast.
- File a float plan with family or friends who are not on the vessel.

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

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

- Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental deaths in persons 15 to 44 years of age. Surprisingly, two-thirds of those who drown never intended to be in the water.
- Watch your children at all times when in or 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.
- Always swim with a buddy.

Other websites of interest:

Fort Worth District facility closure list - <http://www.swf-wc.usace.army.mil/drought/drought.htm>

Texas Boating Regulations and Boat Safety Course Online - www.boat-ed.com/tx

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Boating Laws - www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/boat/laws

For a fun cartoon on water safety, visit Bobber the Water Safety Dog at <http://bobber.info/>

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About the Fort Worth District : The Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was established in 1950. The District is responsible for water resources development in two-thirds of Texas, and military design and construction in Texas and parts of Louisiana and New Mexico. Visit the Fort Worth District web site at: www.swf.usace.army.mil .