



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers encourage visitors to have fun, stay safe, and make it home alive

FORT WORTH, Texas – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, in its ongoing initiatives to decrease accidents and fatalities on its area lakes encourage visitors to have fun, stay safe, and make it home alive during the Fourth of July holiday. The Fort Worth District hosts 25 million visitors at its 25 lakes where people enjoy fishing, boating, hiking and more. While outdoor recreation is fun and healthy, the Corps reminds the public that water safety is also important. Swimming in open water is more difficult than in a swimming pool. Statistics show that 90 percent of those who drown at USACE lakes and rivers may have survived if they had worn a life jacket.

The Fort Worth District lakes have experienced 16 fatalities so far this year, which is less than the 40 that occurred for the entire year in 2011. Although boating incidents have been the leading cause of fatalities at Corps lakes in the past, this year the Fort Worth District has seen more swimming and wading incidents which are historically more common. These incidents are often due to sudden drop-off and swimmers misjudging the water while swimming and boating.

Last year we had four different double drowning incidents and one drowning this year where a visitor lost his life attempting to rescue someone in the water or attempting to swim after a boat or inflatable object being blown away. If you see someone in trouble in the water, remember, “Reach or throw, don’t go.” Reach for the person with a pole, a long stick, a boat paddle, even a towel, in order to reduce the chance that the panicked victim will drag you under with him. If you cannot find something to reach with, or if the person is too far to reach, throw something that floats, such as a life jacket or a floating toy. Even a small closed water cooler can keep someone afloat long enough for a rescue. While one fatality is one too many, the Fort Worth District is increasing its initiatives and efforts to lessen those incidents by at least 50 percent.

“It’s important to expect the unexpected,” said Col. Charles H. Klinge, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District. “Even the best swimmers can underestimate their ability to swim and can quickly get into trouble, that’s why it is so important wear a life jacket in and around the water.”

With the upcoming holiday, the Corps’ goal is to urge visitors to go out and enjoy the lakes, but also educate them on following water safety rules and avoid risky behavior in and around the water. The Corps anticipates these efforts will help prevent a fun outing from turning into a tragic accident.

While having a blast this holiday here are some water safety tips to help ensure you return home to those you love.

- **Wear a life jacket.**
 - Statistics show that 90 percent of those who drown at USACE lakes and rivers may have survived if they had worn a life jacket.
 - Drowning is the nation’s second leading cause of accidental death.
 - Accidents happen, even to responsible boaters. A life jacket can provide time for rescue.

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- **Know your swimming ability.**
 - Swimming in open water is more difficult than in a swimming pool because a swimmer can tire more quickly and get into trouble.
 - Conditions can change quickly in open water.
 - Swim in designated areas and wear a life jacket. A life jacket will help conserve energy and provide flotation.
- **Be a “Water Watcher.”**
 - When on or near the water watch your children.
 - A child can drown in 20 seconds
 - Drowning happens quickly and quietly. A drowning victim’s head will be back, they will be gasping for air, they will not be yelling, and their arms will be slapping the water as though trying to climb out of the water.
- **Avoid exhaust fumes around boats.**
 - Carbon monoxide, an invisible killer, can accumulate anywhere in or around boats regardless of what type of boat. Install and maintain carbon monoxide detectors on and inside your boat. Maintain a fresh circulation of air through and around your boat at all times.
 - Early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include eye irritation, headache, nausea, weakness and dizziness. Know the signs and stay alive.
 - Avoid areas around boats where exhaust fumes may be present. Do not let friends swim under or around the boarding platform where fumes can accumulate.

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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 design and construction at military installations in Texas and parts of Louisiana and New Mexico. Visit the Fort Worth District Web site at: www.swf.usace.army.mil and SWF Face book at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fort-Worth-District-US-Army-Corps-of-Engineers/188083711219308>