

Water Safety



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Southwestern Division

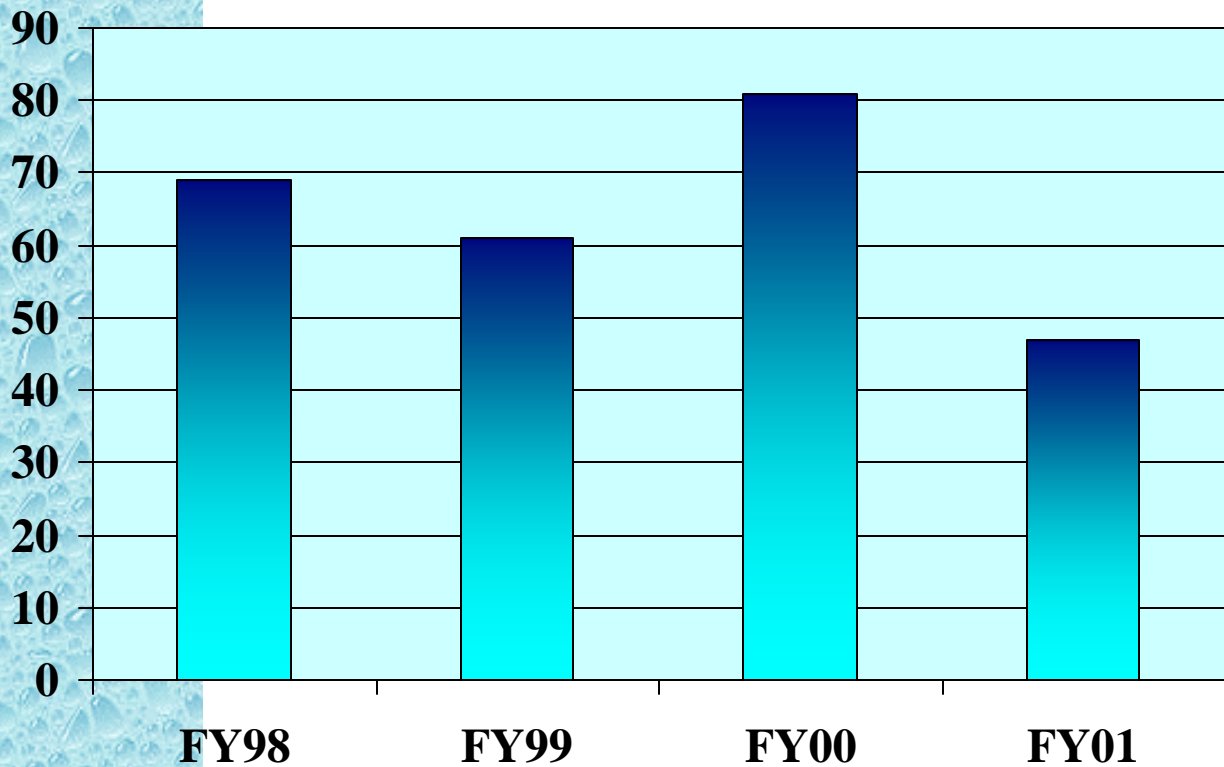
Media Kit

Forty-five drownings have occurred on Corps lakes in the Southwestern Division*.

Deaths by Drowning in 2001 **45**

Wearing Lifejackets **ZERO**

Fatalities on Corps Lakes in the Southwestern Division



*Information as of August 2, 2001.



Public Service Announcements

ON LONG HOLIDAY WEEKENDS, YOUR JET SKI, OR PERSONAL WATERCRAFT, CAN BE A BLAST TO TAKE OUT ON THE LAKE. BUT REMEMBER, IT IS A BOAT, AND YOU ARE ITS SKIPPER. BE RESPONSIBLE. KNOW THE RULES OF THE ROAD ON THE WATER. BOAT SAFELY AND PUT ON YOUR LIFE JACKET. REMEMBER, IT WON'T WORK IF YOU DON'T WEAR IT. BE SAFE. COME HOME AFTER A WEEKEND ON THE LAKE. THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS CARES ABOUT YOU! THINK SMART FROM THE START...WEAR A COAST GUARD APPROVED LIFE JACKET!

WHEN YOU'VE HAD A FEW DRINKS, YOUR REACTION TIME IN AN EMERGENCY ISN'T GOING TO BE WHAT IT NEEDS TO BE. IF YOU'RE GOING TO THE LAKE THIS WEEKEND, APPOINT A DESIGNATED NON-DRINKING DRIVER FOR YOUR BOAT. TOO MANY PEOPLE DIED IN BOATING, JET SKIING AND SWIMMING ACCIDENTS. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE DRUNK TO DROWN...BUT IT HELPS. THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS CARES ABOUT YOU! THINK SMART FROM THE START...WEAR A COAST GUARD APPROVED LIFE JACKET! IT WON'T WORK IF YOU DON'T WEAR IT!

WE ALL KNOW THAT HOT WEATHER DOESN'T GO WELL WITH HOT TEMPERS. SO MOST OF US HEAD TOWARD THE LAKE TO COOL OFF AND RELAX. THE BAD THING IS THAT ALL THE TEMPERS GATHER AT THE LAKE SO WHEN YOU VISIT THIS YEAR, REALIZE THAT OTHER FOLKS WANT TO RELAX TOO. BE OVERLY COURTEOUS AND CAREFUL. THE LAKE IS FOR EVERYONE'S ENJOYMENT. A WRECKLESS BOAT OR CARELESS SWIMMER OR SKIER CAN CAUSE A NICE OUTING TO TURN INTO A DISASTER BY INJURING OR KILLING SOMEONE IN AN ACCIDENT. USE YOUR COMMON SENSE AND BE SAFE.



Frequently Asked Questions

When do children need to wear a lifejacket.

Children should always wear a life jacket around the water. If they are under thirteen years of age, they must wear a Coast Guard-approved lifejacket while aboard any motorboat smaller than 26 feet in length, unless the boat is anchored, made fast to the shore, or grounded.

Aren't inflatable swimming aids just as good as lifejackets.

Unfortunately, inflatable aids, air mattresses, etc. have an alarming tendency to develop sudden leaks. Also, small children have an amazing ability to quickly remove, or suddenly fall off of, inflatable devices. A correctly-fitted and properly-worn Coast Guard-approved lifejacket will not slip off of a child (or an adult, for that matter).

Can children operate a personal watercraft.

State law specifically prohibits children under 13 from operating a personal watercraft unless accompanied on board by a person at least 18 years of age. Children from 13 to 16 years of age may operate a personal watercraft if they are accompanied by a person over 18.

Why are personal watercraft considered to be so dangerous.

These jet ski-type watercraft are not necessarily dangerous, but do have some unusual operating features. Like most vessels, they have no brakes. More importantly, all steering control to the vessel is lost when the throttle is released. Since releasing the throttle in an emergency situation is almost instinctive, safe operation of a personal watercraft requires more education and training than most other vessels.

How can children best help each other when they go around water.

That's easy: Learn to swim!
People aren't born knowing how to swim; they have to learn. Until you become a good swimmer, you can't take care of yourself if you unexpectedly step or fall into deep water.



Safety Tips

Each year, approximately 6,000 people drown in the U.S. Since most drowning victims had no intention of being in the water, and since most people drown within 10-30 feet of safety, it is important that you and your family learn to swim. It is also important to follow some simple but crucial guidelines if you are going to be near the water.

Four major causes of drownings

1. Not wearing a life jacket
2. Abuse of alcohol
3. Lack of sufficient swimming skills
4. Hypothermia

Boating

- ? Take a safe boating course.
- ? Check the weather forecast.
- ? Put on your life jacket and leave your alcohol behind.
- ? File a float plan with a friend.
- ? Check your boat for all required safety equipment.
- ? Check your electrical system and fuel system for gas fumes.
- ? Follow manufacturer's suggested procedures before starting up.
- ? Carry a navigation chart and know your waterway.
- ? Follow the navigation rules of the road, buoys and other aids to navigation.
- ? Be a safe boater; always post a sharp lookout.



Swimming

- ? Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat.
- ? Don't take chances by overestimating your swimming skills.
- ? Swim only in designated swimming area.
- ? Never swim alone.
- ? Never dive into lakes and rivers. Every year in diving accidents more than 8,000 people suffer paralyzing spinal cord injuries and another 5,000 die before they reach the hospital.
- ? Remember, it only takes a few seconds for a small child to wander away, so please watch your children at all times.
- ? More than half of all the people that drown have consumed alcohol prior to their accident, so don't drink alcohol if you are planning to have fun in or on the water.

Cold Water Survival

Many suspected drowning victims actually die from cold exposure or hypothermia, a condition in which the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Violent shivering develops which may give way to confusion and a loss of body movement. To avoid hypothermia:

- ? Dress warmly with wool clothing.
- ? Wear rain gear and stay dry.
- ? Seek a warm environment at the first sign (mild shivering) of hypothermia.

If you fall in the water:

- ? Don't discard clothing.
- ? While wearing your life jacket, draw your knees and arms together into the HELP (Heat Escape Lessening Posture) posture.



Phone Numbers

Southwestern Division Public Affairs Office (214) 767-2510

Little Rock District (501) 324-5551

Tulsa District (918) 669-7366

Fort Worth District (817) 978-2196

Galveston District (409) 766-3004

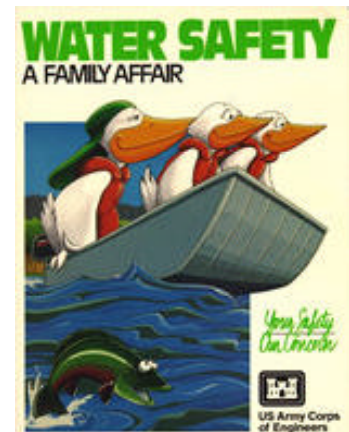
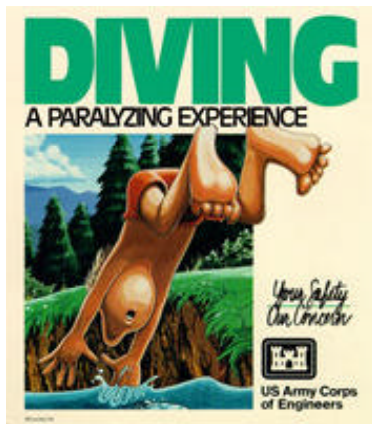
Web Site

Check out our main web site for great water safety information and much more.

www.watersafety.usace.army.mil

Clip Art

You can find this clip art on our website at www.usace.army.mil/wsart.htm.



PAM

Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis

Naegleria fowleri

The organism is a single cell protozoa (amoeba), *Naegleria fowleri*, that is the causal agent for PAM. The route of entry into the body is through the nasal cavity and children are the most susceptible to the disease. The organism travels through the nasal cavity directly to the brain where it causes an almost always fatal infection similar to bacterial or viral meningitis.

The freshwater amoeba is found all around the world in soil and fresh water and has even been found in swimming pools. The organism has been identified at several locations around the Tulsa area. The amoeba is most active when the water temperature is greater than 80 degrees.

PAM infection **can only occur** when a number of conditions occur at the same time:

- a. The amoeba must be present in the water.
- b. The amoeba must be able to multiply to large numbers. (Greater than 80 degrees water temperature in stagnant, calm waters.)
- c. Water containing the amoeba must get up the victims nose. (Water must be forcefully inhaled. The PAM infection can not result from swallowing water containing the pathogenic amoeba.)

PAM infection can be prevented by following a few common sense precautions:

- a. Never swim in stagnant or polluted water. Stay in deeper more open areas of the lake.
- b. Avoid underwater swimming and hold your nose or use nose plugs when jumping into natural waters.
- c. Swim in properly maintained pools.

Thankfully, PAM is extremely rare. Less than three cases are reported each year nationwide. Every year many more deaths and injuries result from diving into shallow waters, or natural waters that hide rocks and debris, while using alcohol or drugs, while boating or swimming, and from leaving children unattended in water for even short periods of time.

Unfortunately, in addition to pathogenic freshwater amoebas, there are other protozoa, bacteria, and viruses in fresh water all capable of infecting swimmers with everything from mild stomach discomfort to severe gastrointestinal illness. Some of these organisms are found naturally in lakes and streams while others are carried from wastewater sources including septic systems and runoff from animal and wildfowl areas. Amazingly, few infections are reported by lake visitors.

If the water feels warm and there is no wave action or water movement, bacteria can be expected to be present and one should be cautious about swimming. Persons who do allow their children in lakes, ponds, and streams at this time should be aware of meningitis symptoms.

Symptoms include:

- ? **Severe headache**
- ? **high fever**
- ? **stiff neck**
- ? **nausea**
- ? **vomiting**
- ? **seizures**
- ? **hallucinations as the condition worsens**

For more information contact your local health department or state environmental quality office.

Children are NOT Waterproof!

45 people have drowned in 2001 at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes in the Southwestern Division.*

9 of these victims were 16 years old or younger

*For FY 2001

Please follow these precautions:

- Keep a watchful eye on children.
- Don't use inflatable floats or toys as lifesavers.
- Learn to swim.
- Never swim alone.
- Use a lifejacket.
- Swim in designated areas only.
- Never consume alcohol while boating or swimming.
- Watch for tree stumps and other obstructions in low water.



US Army Corps
of Engineers ®

**Have fun this
summer and return
home safely!**

¡No descuide sus niños cerca del agua!

45 personas se han ahogado hasta ahora en 2001 en lagos del Corps of Engineers en Division del Sur Poniente.*

9 de estas victimas tenían 16 años de edad o menos.

*Por FY 2001

Si le gustan las actividades cerca del agua, por favor observe las siguientes recomendaciones:

- Vigile a los niños en todo momento.
- No use flotadores o juguetes inflados como salvavidas.
- Aprenda a nadar.
- Nunca nade solo.
- Use un salvavida.
- Nade en areas designadas.
- Nunca consuma alcohol mientras este manejando barcos, o nadando.
- Tome precaución con troncos y otras obstrucciones cuando los lagos están bajos.



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®

**Diviértase y regrese a
su casa con
seguridad.**