



PRESS RELEASE

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90 Days of Summer Safety: Nobody's Waterproof
Play it safe on the water

Aug. 5, 2009 (*Fort Worth, Texas*) In Texas there were 197 boating accidents in 1997, according to the U.S. Coast Guard, resulting in 46 deaths and 164 injuries. More than two-thirds of all fatal boating accident victims drowned, and of those, ninety percent were not wearing a life jacket.

Enjoy your time on the water this summer, but remember: nobody's waterproof. Follow these tips from the Texas Parks and Wildlife and Lower Colorado River Authority to play it safe on the water.

- **Never swim alone.** Most drowning victims don't yell for help; instead, they panic and slip quietly under water. Ask friends and family to keep an eye on one another in and around the water and learn to recognize the signs of someone in trouble.
- **Always wear a life jacket.** Everyone SHOULD wear one, and children under 13 years of age MUST wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- **Know the rules of the road.** A boater education class can bring you up to speed on the latest boating laws and rules in Texas.
- **Boat safely.** Know where you are on the water and be aware of your surroundings at all times. Know how to read and follow buoy signs.
- **Have proper equipment onboard.** And make sure it works correctly! Some equipment is required by state law.
- **Drink responsibly and designate a driver for the boat and a safe ride home.** Many drowning accidents involve alcohol, which affects your coordination and judgment - even more so when you're boating or swimming. Try to avoid alcohol on the water. If you do drink, do it responsibly. Designate a sober boat operator and keep an eye on those who are drinking. And always drink lots of water to stay hydrated - especially when drinking alcohol.
 - It's illegal to operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs in Texas.
 - The penalties for boating under the influence (BUI) can include large fines, revocation of operator privileges and serious jail terms.
 - A boat operator is likely to become impaired more quickly than a driver on land, drink for drink. That's because the marine environment – motion, vibration, engine noise, sun, wind and spray – accelerates a drinker's impairment. These stressors cause fatigue that makes a boat operator's coordination, judgment and reaction time decline even faster when using alcohol.
 - Most recreational boaters don't operate a boat every day and are less experienced and less confident on the water than on the highway.

- **It's not kid stuff!**
Children under 13 may not operate a personal watercraft unless accompanied onboard by someone at least 18 years of age.
- **The 50-foot rule: maintain a safe speed!**
Your personal watercraft may not be operated within 50 feet of another boat, person, platform or shore unless you're operating at headway, or no wake speed. Watch your wake and don't jump wakes of another boat—you risk a ticket and an accident!

Information provided by www.nobodyswaterproof.com, sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife and Lower Colorado River Authority.

90 Days of Summer Safety

MedStar EMS encourages the community to enjoy their summer activities safely through 90 Days of Summer Safety. Each week from June 15 through September 7 a new summer-themed safety topic will be highlighted with tips and information. Topics include firework safety, drunk driving awareness, and tips for avoiding heat stroke. Check www.medstar911.org each week for the latest Summer Safety topic.

About MedStar

MedStar is the exclusive emergency and non-emergency ambulance service provider to 15 Tarrant County cities including Blue Mound, Burleson, Edgecliff Village, Forest Hill, Fort Worth, Haltom City, Haslet, Lakeside, Lake Worth, River Oaks, Saginaw, Sansom Park, Westover Hills, Westworth Village, and White Settlement. Established in 1986, MedStar provides advanced life support ambulance service to 421 square miles and more than 860,000 residents in Tarrant County. MedStar responds to about 100,000 emergency calls a year with a fleet of 47 ambulances.

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