



As Winter Comes to a Close, Spring into Water Safety!

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Rivers Project - To the estimated millions of families and individuals out enjoying their spring break and unseasonable warm weather, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers urges you to play it safe while at the beach or around water. While out enjoying the fantastic spring weather, follow these simple top ten tips:

Number 10: Remember "HELP" (Heat Escape Lessening Position) if you fall into cold water and cannot get out. This position is where your knees are drawn up to your chest with your arms grasping them together helping retain body temperature until you are rescued. Wet clothing will not weigh you down in the water because water does not weigh more than water, so don't remove any clothing.

Number 9: Diving could be a neck-breaking experience, so never dive into unknown waters.

Number 8: Any beach that has breaking waves could have the potential to develop rip currents near the shore that can pull even the strongest swimmers out to sea. If you get caught in one of these narrow rip currents, swim parallel to shore until the current stops pushing you out.

Number 7: Never overestimate your swimming abilities, especially in open waters.

Number 6: Swim only in designated areas.

Number 5: Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone.

Number 4: Swim and boat sober. Drinking alcohol doesn't only make you do things that you wished you had not done by impairing your judgment. People under the influence of alcohol have drown because they become disoriented underwater and think they are swimming to the water surface, but in reality they are swimming down.

Number 3: If you are boating, wear a life jacket even if you know how to swim and don't expect to enter the water. Falls overboard are one of the main reasons people drown because your first gasp (gasp reflex) after falling into the water can kill you because it only takes only 1 Tablespoon of water in your lungs to drown. Remember reach, throw, row but don't go if you are trying to save someone. If you're gonna go - go for help.

Number 2: Choose the right life jacket for you and wear it. The new inflatable life jackets are lightweight and the belt-pack style of inflatable life jacket will still allow you to get a great tan.

Number 1 tip that could mean the difference between life and death: Don't let anyone talk you into anything that you don't want to do. You have a brain; use it because peer pressure can kill you. Don't let someone's actions or perceptions influence you to cross your stupid line. If you feel uncomfortable leave the situation and stay alive.

You cannot remove all the risks, but putting safety first and following these simple tips you can enjoy your spring break and summer vacation. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hopes that you have a safe and enjoyable vacation or day activity because you deserve it and your family wants you to return home safely.

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Check out the Mississippi River Water Trail video on you tube at <http://bit.ly/gz4H71> and become a friend of the Mississippi River Water Trail page on Facebook.