

# Wear a Lifejacket

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# How can you choose not to?



For  
**Water Search  
And  
Safety**

It's summertime in Canada, and as heat waves move across the country many people take to the water any way they can. From air mattresses and foam noodles to canoes and kayaks to sleek sailboats and cabin cruisers, folks are looking for a cool breeze and the splash of water on their faces.

After a weekend of fun at a cottage or beach it can be a sober shock on Monday morning to open a news item about yet another tragedy on the water. Reckless behavior certainly makes for compelling headlines but the majority of boating and swim fatalities occur quietly (and quickly) as a result of simple errors or casual neglect of standard safety protocols.

- 1. Wear a Lifejacket**
- 2. Don't Drink & Boat**
- 3. Tell Someone Where and When**
- 4. Check the Weather**
- 5. Keep a Lookout**

Naturally we don't wish to cloud our good times with friends and family by contemplating what might go wrong. But without a few sensible rules that everyone agrees to and follows as their baseline for water activity, "slippage" happens in our alertness, restraint and common sense.

The result is predictable and preventable and very real.

In 90% of boating fatalities the victim was not properly wearing a lifejacket. In 70% of fatalities the victim fell overboard or was in a small boat that capsized or swamped.

More media reports are paying attention to the role lifejackets can play in keeping water recreation safe. Those who organize events in and around water are also stepping up by recognizing the standard of care for participants and requiring lifejackets be worn and alcohol be confined to land after the day is done. New federal regulations require that lifejackets in the boat must fit all occupants correctly, (especially children) and fines have increased for failure to do so.

The Cook-Rees Memorial Fund continues to encourage individuals to choose to wear a lifejacket in their own boat and ensure the safety of guests or crew by asking them to do the same.

The website [wearalifejacket.com](http://wearalifejacket.com) (a project supported by Cook-Rees) is undergoing an update which will be completed soon and bring even more information about new designs, harmonization of international standards, how to select the right lifejacket for your activity and why wearing a lifejacket at all times (especially in a small boat) is the choice that matters.

## Links

**The Cook-Rees Memorial Fund**  
[wearalifejacket.com](http://wearalifejacket.com)