



# Be Boat Safe



## Life Jackets are Essential

- Everyone in a boat should wear a life jacket at all times.
- Children 14 and under should also wear life jackets when near open bodies of water and when participating in water sports — water wings and other inflatable swimming aids do not prevent drowning.
- Life jackets should fit snugly. Have your child make a “touchdown” signal — if the life jacket hits the child’s chin or ears, it’s too big or the straps are too loose.

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***In 2009, 18 children under  
13 years of age lost their lives  
to boating and 50% of the  
children died from drowning.***

## General Boating and Water Safety

- While there is no substitute for constant, active supervision of children in and near water, you should also enroll your kids in swimming lessons taught by a certified instructor — however, the ability to swim does not necessarily prevent drowning.
- Don't let kids **14 or under** operate or ride on personal watercraft (such as jet skis).
- Never drink alcoholic beverages while boating — it endangers your safety, as well as the lives of the children you're supervising.
- Don't swim near a dock or marina with electrical hookups and lighting — swimmers can be electrocuted and drown.
- Make sure your boat operator has passed a boating safety course approved by the Coast Guard before letting your child and family ride in the boat.
- Use the Water Watcher card strategy when there are several adults present and children are swimming. This designates an adult as the Water Watcher for a designated amount of time to prevent lapses in supervision. Download a card at **[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)**.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector on motorboats to alert you to dangerous exhaust fume levels.
- Learn infant and child CPR — a 2-hour course can help you give an unconscious child a fighting chance at survival.

