



VIDEO NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Corps of Engineers urges public to wear life jackets during water recreation this summer

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA – With the summer recreation season officially beginning this Memorial Day weekend, the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District](#) reminds the public to always wear a life jacket when boating, swimming or recreating in, on, or near a body of water.

Drowning is the sixth leading cause of unintentional injury death for people of all ages, and the second leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 14 years, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). However, it is possible to reduce drowning deaths just by wearing a life jacket. Statistics show that 90 percent of those who drown at Corps of Engineers lakes may have survived if they had worn a life jacket.

“As the leading provider of outdoor recreation on all federally-managed public lands, the Corps of Engineers is dedicated to promoting and educating the public on water safety,” said Col. Jeff Hall, Savannah district commander. “The Savannah district has three of the best recreation areas in the nation along the upper Savannah River – lakes [Hartwell](#), [Richard B. Russell](#) and [J. Strom Thurmond](#) – in addition to the many Low Country rivers, and the Atlantic Ocean. We want everyone to have fun this summer, but never forget that safety always must be at the forefront of your mind.”

Here are some tips from the Corps of Engineers to help recreation seekers stay safe over the Memorial Day weekend and the summer:

Alcohol and water don't mix

[U.S. Coast Guard statistics](#) show that alcohol is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents. Just one beer can impair balance, vision, judgment, and reaction time. Research shows that four hours of boating, exposure to noise, vibration, sun, glare, and wind produces fatigue that simulates drunkenness. Boating fatigue combined with alcohol consumption intensifies the effects and increases accident risk. Make sure the captain or person handling the boat is experienced and competent, and avoids alcohol at all costs.

Boating Safety

- **Wear a life jacket! Don't just carry one on board – WEAR IT!** Make sure your life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard-approved, appropriately sized for the user, and in good condition. Visit www.safeboatingcampaign.com/
- Coast Guard law now requires life jackets for all children age 12 and younger, unless otherwise specified by state law.
- Know your boat and know the rules of the road. Operator errors account for 70 percent of boating accidents. Visit <http://cgaux.org/boatinged/> for information on safe boating classes.
- View the Coast Guard federal regulations governing boating at <http://www.uscgboating.org/> and know your state laws as well.

- MORE -

WATER SAFETY

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- Carry a set of navigational charts on board and use them.
- Check your boat for all required safety equipment. Visit <http://cgaux.org/vsc/> for a checklist.
- Don't overload the boat (consider boat size, the number passengers, and extra equipment before loading).
- Follow manufacturer's suggested procedures before starting the engine.
- Check the weather forecast and plan accordingly.
- File a float plan with family or friends who are not on the vessel. This is essentially a description of where you plan to go on your boat and at what times, so that you can be found in case of an emergency.

Swimming Safety

- Surprisingly, two-thirds of those who drown never had the intention of being in the water.
- Watch your children at all times when around the water.
- Never dive head first into lakes and rivers. The results can be tragic.
- Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat.
- Don't take chances by over-estimating your swimming skills.
- Reach or throw a floatation device to help someone in trouble. Don't go in after them.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas.
- Never swim alone.
- For a fun children's cartoon on life jacket safety, visit Bobber the Water Safety Dog at <http://bobber.info/>

MEDIA NOTE: VIDEOS AVAILABLE IN QUICKTIME FORMAT

Produced Soundbite from Savannah district Park Ranger David Quebedeaux of the J. Strom Thurmond Dam and Lake can be accessed at <ftp://ftp.usace.army.mil/pub/sas/VIDEOS> In folder WATER SAFETY SOUNDBITE.

RT :18 "...Those drowning didn't have to happen."

Produced Non-narrative news story from Savannah district Park Ranger David Quebedeaux of the J. Strom Thurmond Dam and Lake can be accessed at <ftp://ftp.usace.army.mil/pub/sas/VIDEOS/VIDEOS>, titled THURMOND-Q WATER SAFETY.

RT :45 "...I'm having fun, too."

Watch the full water safety video clip on Savannah District's YouTube channel at:

<http://www.youtube.com/savannahcorps#p/a/u/1/3E3hTf8TFog>

For questions related to video, contact Sandra Hudson at 912.652.5760, Sandra.d.hudson@usace.army.mil

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' [Savannah District](#) manages [three lakes and hydroelectric dams](#) along the Savannah River. It also oversees a multi-billion dollar [military construction](#) program at 11 Army and Air Force installations in Georgia and North Carolina. Corps' projects range from barracks, hospitals and clinics to equipment shops, headquarters buildings and aircraft hangars. The Savannah District also has oversight and maintains additional civil works projects – from the Savannah and Brunswick harbors to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

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PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS



Erin Parnell, park ranger at Richard B. Russell Dam and Lake, Calhoun Falls, S.C., helps children try on life jackets during a water safety program at the Corps' 23rd Annual Kid's Fishing Day.



David Quebedeaux, park ranger at J. Strom Thurmond Dam and Lake, teaches children at Maxwell Elementary School in Thomson, Ga., to always wear their life jacket when they are in, on or near water.



Tanya Grant, park ranger at Hartwell Dam and Lake (Hartwell, Ga., and Anderson, S.C.) encourages visitors to always wear life jackets while swimming or boating. If they don't have their own life jacket, visitors can borrow one through the Corps' Life Jacket Loaner Program.