



NEWS RELEASE

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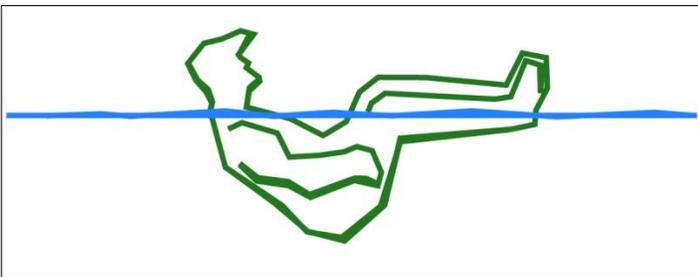
Preparation and quick thinking can save hunters' lives

SAVANNAH, Ga. – Needless drowning deaths of hunters who fall into lakes and streams can be prevented with a little preparation and fast thinking, according to officials with the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District](#).

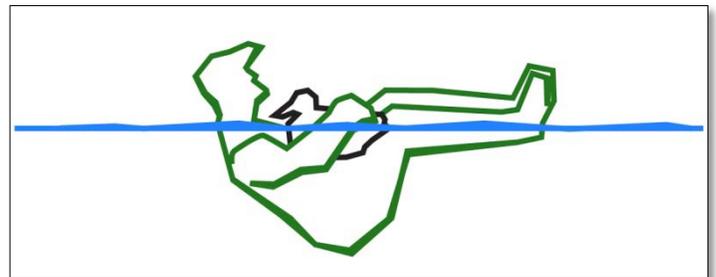
“Duck hunters or waterfowlers may not think of themselves as boaters, even though they use boats to position decoys in the water,” said Park Ranger Asher Alexander. “They may not consider a life jacket as a necessity; but hunters drown needlessly every year.”

Hunters should always wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) while traveling to and from the hunting blind, according to Alexander. Camouflage life jackets are available and offer adequate flotation. “Likewise, fisherman should always wear a PFD while fishing from a dock or a boat,” he said.

In a water emergency, hip boots or waders can keep a hunter afloat for hours if the hunter takes action quickly, Alexander explained. By keeping the knees bent in a seated position, the crease will trap air inside the waders to keep the person afloat for hours, allowing the person to propel backward to return to the boat. Additionally, floating duck decoys can be held while maintaining this position to increase buoyancy (see illustrations). Waders, however, should never be considered a replacement for a personal flotation device, Alexander said.



If you fall into the water while hunting, you can turn hip boots or waders into an improvised flotation device by keeping the knees bent in a seated position. This will trap air inside the waders to keep a person afloat for hours.



Hunters can further increase buoyancy in this position by holding floating duck decoys close to each side of the body near the chest.

Hypothermia also factors into planning for a hunting or fishing trip. Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Violent shivering develops, which can lead to confusion and a loss of body movement. Wearing warm clothing and headgear, rain gear to stay dry, a PFD, and waders can help retain body heat to prevent hypothermia.

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The Corps of Engineers also reminds hunters:

- Never overload the boat. Check the boat's capacity plate. Any attempt to overload makes the boat more likely to capsize. Hunting boats are typically small (under 14 feet) and may have flat bottoms, which are particularly unsuitable for rough water. Avoid crossing large, open bodies of water and stay as close to shore as possible when traveling to and from hunting locations.
- Have plenty of fuel, as the boat will likely use more fuel when carrying heavy hunting items such as decoys, dogs, and ammunition.
- Check the weather before the hunting or fishing trip. Windy or stormy weather increases the risk of capsizing.
- Hunting regulations vary by state. Be sure you are familiar with the rules and regulations before you go hunting. View South Carolina hunting regulations at: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/hunting.html>
View Georgia hunting regulations at: <http://www.georgiawildlife.com/hunting>

Throughout the hunting season, the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District](#) wants everyone to be safe while hunting, fishing or participating in other recreational activities at Savannah River lakes [Hartwell](#), [Richard B. Russell](#) and [J. Strom Thurmond](#).

For hunting information at Hartwell Dam and Lake Project, visit:
<http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/lakes/hartwell/hunting.html>

For hunting information at Richard B. Russell Dam and Lake Project, visit:
<http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/lakes/russell/hunt.html>

For hunting information at J. Strom Thurmond Dam and Lake Project, visit:
<http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/lakes/thurmond/hunt.html>

ABOUT US: 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 maintenance facilities, 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.