




Safe Boating Campaign
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Fall/Winter Template: Letter to the Editor

The following is a suggested letter to the editor to share with your local newspaper.

Dear Editor,

Cold-water immersion is the cause of many water-related fatalities. The danger increases as water temperature decreases below normal body temperature (98.6° F). Whether you're a boater, angler, or hunter in <LOCAL COMMUNITY> please practice safety around the water. It's important to understand the unique risks that come with cooler temps.

The <LOCAL ORGANIZATION> is a partner of the worldwide Safe Boating Campaign, led by the National Safe Boating Council. We offer these tips to boaters, anglers, and hunters in our community.

1. Do make sure everyone is wearing a life jacket. Even experienced swimmers will experience shock within one minute in the frigid water and lose muscle control within 10 minutes.
2. Do file a float plan with someone you trust that includes details about the trip, boat, persons, towing or trailer vehicle, communication equipment and emergency contacts. Download a free float plan template at www.floatplancentral.org.
3. Do dress properly for the weather, always wear layers, and bring an extra set of clothes in case you get wet. Remember, dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature.
4. Do use your navigation lights to alert other boaters of your presence in dark and/or foggy conditions. Recreational boats operating at night are required to display navigation lights between sunset and sunrise.
5. Do catch your breath. A sudden, unexpected fall into cold water causes an involuntary gasp (or torso) reflex. It takes less than one-half cup of water in your lungs to drown. If you remain calm, you have a greater chance of self-rescue.
6. Don't panic if you fall into the water. Stay afloat with the help of your life jacket, regain control of your breathing and keep your head above water in vision of rescuers.
7. Don't keep heavy boots on if you're in the water. Look for ways to increase your buoyancy. If you're in the water with others, huddle together with everyone facing inward to help everyone stay afloat and keep warm.
8. Don't apply heat to extremities like arms and legs of a rescued victim. This sudden change in temperature could cause cardiac arrest.

By following these tips, you can safely enjoy your time in the great outdoors.

Sincerely,