

Teacher's Notes

We are delighted to have your students participate in the 12th Annual Safe & Wise Water Ways poster contest.

Water-related accidents are the second leading cause of accidental death among people aged 4–19.

The Department of Boating and Waterways believes safety lessons learned and practiced at an early age serve to protect individuals throughout life; therefore, the primary goal of this contest is to teach students to be safe and wise when near or in the water.

Boating and water-related activities are predominantly recreational, so students enjoy learning aquatic safety skills that prepare them for aquatic recreation. Furthermore, the contest-type format turns students into teachers as they pass on their water safety knowledge to all who view their work.

This year the Department is highlighting the following four boating and aquatic safety themes:

1) Learn to rescue safely!

Accidents can happen near the water and you should learn simple rescues of others without endangering yourself. The three ways to rescue someone are Reach, Throw, or Row.

- + First REACH for the person. Be sure you hold onto someone or something stable and do not lean over the water.
- + If you can't reach them, THROW out something that will float, something they can hold onto that will help them stay afloat until help comes.
- + If you can't Reach or Throw, find an adult who can ROW out to them or go call 9-1-1 to get help. A raft or surfboard are examples of what to Row. Never jump into the water to save someone. Only lifeguards or water safety certified people should enter the water to rescue someone.

2) Alcohol, drugs & boating don't mix!

It is illegal to operate a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs. People who drink alcohol or use other drugs and drive a boat can hurt themselves or someone else. Boat passengers who drink alcohol or use other drugs can lose their balance and fall out of the boat. Alcohol and drugs impair judgment and slow reflexes. This makes it hard to reach when there is danger. Other natural stressors like sun, noise, waves and wind increase the effects of alcohol and drugs.



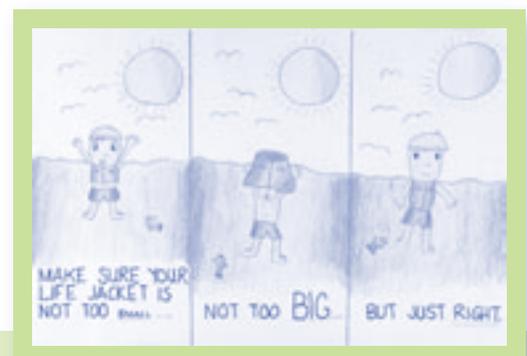
3) Keep our waterways clean!

The waterways belong to all of us. We all have to help keep the water clean because clean water is safe water. Plastic, litter, oils, gas and human sewage can not only ruin the beauty of boating waters, they can injure or kill aquatic life. Some ways to help keep the waterways clean include:

- + Do not throw any litter overboard.
- + Keep a trash bag on your boat, and use it.
- + Pick up someone else's litter.
- + Use the restroom before you go out boating.

4) Wear a life jacket!

Everyone should wear a life jacket when boating. Many jobs and sports require special safety clothing. For example: fire fighters, police officers, football and soccer players. A life jacket is considered wearable safety gear for boaters. The healthy habit of wearing a properly fitting, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket can save your life in an emergency. California law requires children under 12 to wear a life jacket when boating. It is just as important to wear a life jacket as it is for you to wear a seat belt or for athletes to wear the right protective equipment.



Additional skills and knowledge you may consider presenting in your lesson plan include:



Learn to swim:

Everyone can and should learn to swim. Call your local pools, YMCA/YWCA, Red Cross, or swim club to sign up for lessons. Swimming can help save your life and knowing how to swim helps you to keep calm when you are in the water. Boating and other water activities are safer for those who can swim and float.

Learn to float:

Floating is a skill that is as important as swimming because it saves energy and keeps you safe until help comes. Floating should be practiced in a safe place, like a swimming pool, with an observer nearby. If you fall into a river, you should float feet first pointing downstream. This allows you to use your feet to push away from rocks, logs, or other obstacles.

Swim with a friend:

Use the buddy system—never go in or near the water alone. Enter water only where there is a lifeguard present or proper supervision is provided.

Obey pool rules:

- + Do not run on or near a pool deck.
- + Do not play on or near diving boards.
- + Do not jump on or near people in the water.
- + Never enter pool areas that are closed or locked.
- + Never fake an accident or drowning. Discourage horseplay and peer pressure activities.

Recognize the following hazardous water and shore conditions:

- + Strong or rip current—never swim against it, float until the current weakens and you can swim to safety.
- + Uneven bottoms—holes, drop-offs, and debris.
- + Steep or slippery banks—they can cause you to fall into the water.
- + Big waves—they can knock you off your feet.

Learn the boating rules of the road:

There are rules for boating, just as there are rules for driving. These rules include:

- + A person must be 16 or older to operate a motorboat alone.
- + When two boats meet head on, both go to their right.
- + When two boats cross paths, the boat to the right has the right-of-way.
- + Boats must stay away from swimming areas, large ships, shipping areas, water skiers, fisherman, anchored vessels, docks and moorings.
- + Safe boaters are always courteous and cautious.

Stay with your boat:

Even in calm weather, boats can capsize or turn over. If the boat turns over, stay with the boat and try to climb onto the boat as high out of the water as possible. It is easier for rescuers to see an overturned or capsized boat than a person alone in the water. Even on warm days, the water can be cold. Climb out of the water onto the boat to keep from getting too cold.

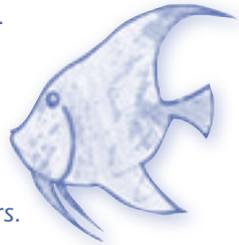
Don't overload your boat:

An overload boat can tip over or sink even when there is no wind and the water is calm. Small boats have a capacity plate that shows how many people and how much weight can safely be put in the boat. Don't overload your boat!

Look before you leap:

Never jump or dive into water when the depth or type of bottom is unknown. Stay away from canals. They have many dangers.

- + Canals are on private property and it is considered trespassing to go near them.
- + Canals have steep, slippery sides and fast water.
- + Drains and garbage under the water can hurt or trap you.
- + Canals are for transporting water, NOT for recreation.
- + Do not swim or boat in a canal!



Classroom activities can be integrated into a boating and aquatic safety lesson. A sample lesson plan could include:

- + Discussion about water near school, home, and in between.
- + Students' role-playing water rescues of self and others.
- + Viewing the appropriate AquaSMART video for your grade level (available by calling the Education Unit, (888) 326-2822).
- + Inviting a guest speaker from the community (e.g. U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadrons, Red Cross, lifeguards, local law enforcement agencies, college aquatic centers, park rangers).
- + Visiting our Website at www.BoatSmarter.com for more information on boating and aquatic safety or to download the poster contest entry form.
- + Entering the 12th Annual Safe & Wise Water Ways Poster contest. Remember, if one student wins, the whole class wins!

