

HENNEPIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

News Release



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Hennepin County Sheriff's Office **urges holiday water safety measures**

September 2, 2011 (Minneapolis) – The Labor Day holiday weekend is typically the busiest time for boating and swimming throughout Hennepin County. The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office is urging people to create a water safety plan because lakes and swimming pools may be especially crowded over the holiday.

Citizens are urged to take additional precautions throughout the busy Labor Day weekend. Parents need to be extra vigilant and actively supervise their children who are in the water -- or near the water.

Safety reminders for boating:

* Boaters should slow down and make an extra effort to act in a courteous manner on crowded lakes and rivers.

* Designate a sober boat operator prior to your day of boating.

* State law requires that children under age 10 must wear a life jacket while the boat is underway. It is highly recommended that all children wear life jackets during boating.

(More)

* State law requires that life jackets are available for all people on board the boat. It is recommended that all boaters wear life jackets while boating. 80% of boating deaths could have been prevented if the victims had been wearing life jackets. (U.S. Coast Guard estimate)

* Be aware of the danger of a boat propeller. People in the water, who are re-entering the boat, have been injured by props.

Safety reminders for swimming:

* Parents and caregivers must use ACTIVE supervision when children are in or near the water. In 70% of cases where toddlers drowned, one or both parents were nearby. Being nearby isn't enough. Parents must focus on kids and avoid distractions such as texting or talking with other adults.

* For toddlers, parents should be at least within arm's reach of their child in the water.

* Active Supervision is ALSO needed even when there are lifeguards on duty.

* Be aware of the potential for drowning in swimming pools. Most drownings and near-drownings take place in swimming pools and hot tubs.

* Teach your kids to swim. Adults must know how to swim too.

* Inexperienced or non-swimmers may wear life jackets in swimming pools. Adult supervision is still needed. Do not rely on water wings or other inflatable devices.

* Learn CPR.

* Never swim alone.

* Keep safety equipment near pools, such as a shepherd's hook. If attempting a rescue, hand something to the struggling person so they can be pulled to safety. Remember that a struggling person may put a rescuer at risk by pulling them down into the water.

* Use safety precautions with backyard kiddie pools. (One child drowns every five days in portable pools.)

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