



# LIFE JACKETS SAVE LIVES

## ***Ready, set, wear it...***

It is not just a slogan, but a call to take proactive steps to be safe on the water. If your upcoming summer plans include a trip to an area lake or river, the Grand River Dam Authority reminds you to take this action and always wear your life jacket.

According to the latest statistics from United States Coast Guard (USCG), drowning was reported as the cause of death in three-fourths of all boating fatalities in 2015 (latest year of statistics). Approximately 85 percent of those who drowned were not wearing life jackets.

Meanwhile, the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) reports that most drowning accidents are 10 feet or less from a safe place and, in most situations, the person never intended to enter the water. To untrained bystanders, a drowning person may appear to simply be waving, clowning around or just splashing. The three best ways to prevent drowning while boating include always wearing a life jacket, learning to swim and boating sober.

As you gear up for lake or river activities, GRDA encourages you to keep these important life jacket tips in mind:

- **BUY your own personal life jacket and use it. One size does not fit all.**
- **LOOK at the label. It will provide weight, size and use information.**
- **TRY it on to check the fit. Once the straps and buckles are secured, it should not slip over your head.**
- **NEVER use water toys in place of an approved life jacket.**
- **CHECK your life jacket yearly for flotation and fit.**
- **REMEMBER, a child's jacket must fit snugly. They should not 'grow into' it!"**

As for proper life jacket care and maintenance, the National Safe Boating Council offers these tips:

- **Dry it before storing**
- **Store it in a cool, well-ventilated area**
- **Keep it where it can be easily retrieved**
- **Replace it when signs of wear appear**
- **Don't alter the jacket**
- **Don't dry clean or use harsh cleansers**
- **Don't use direct heat to dry or leave in the sun indefinitely**
- **Don't use your jacket as a cushion, a kneeling pad or as a boat fender**

For more information on life jackets, visit [www.safeboatingcampaign.com](http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com).