



PHOENIX CHILDREN'S *Hospital*

Water Sports Safety



DON'T UNDERESTIMATE WATER'S DANGER

Many people enjoy water sports. Boating, personal watercrafts (jet-skis), and tubing are fun ways to play, especially during hot weather.

Tragic water accidents happen quickly. The most common reason for these accidents is lack of safety knowledge. Remember, never underestimate water's ability to take your life.

PLAY IT SAFE — USE PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES!

BOATING

A majority of boating deaths are due to capsizing, falling overboard, and collisions.

Boat Safely

- 75 percent of all deaths on the water involve people who do not wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD, also known as life vests).
- Make sure there is one PFD for each person on the boat.
- Wear a PFD at all times, even when getting in and out of the boat.
- Choose the right size. Children need a child-sized vest that fits snugly.
- Choose the right PFD for your activity:

Type 1: Float best. Will turn an unconscious person face up. Use in open, rough water when rescue may be slow in arriving. Type 1 devices only come in two sizes: adults weighing over 90 pounds and children weighing less than 90 pounds.

Type 2: Will float a person face up. Type 2's are more comfortable than Type 1. Use when boating on calm waters when rescue will most likely arrive quickly. Several different sizes are available for children.

Type 3: Requires the user to get himself in a face-up position. Use when boating on calm waters and for various water sports when rescue will arrive quickly. Test it before boating. Children may need to learn to lean their head back when wearing this type of PFD.

Remember, PFDs:

- Help you from getting too tired to swim.
- Help you stay afloat if you are injured or unconscious.
- Help keep you warm.
- Help rescuers find you because of the bright color.

Take a Safe Boating Class. Call the Arizona State Game and Fish Department for a list of available classes and times. Attending a class may lower your insurance rate.

Know how to operate your boat.

Have a float plan. Let a friend or family member know:

- Where you are boating.
- When you expect to return.
- Who is going with you.
- What your boat looks like.

Avoid using alcohol.**Take along safety equipment:**

- PFD for each person on board.
- Whistle — Attracts attention and lets others know where you are.
- Flashlight — Lets other boaters know where you are in bad weather or darkness.
- Bucket — Can be used to bail out water.
- Mirror — Can be used to signal others during daylight.
- Blanket — Can be used to keep warm in case clothes get wet.
- First Aid Kit.
- Rope — Can be used to help a person overboard back into the boat or to secure the boat.
- Two oars — Can be used if the motor does not work.

PERSONAL WATERCRAFTS

Most personal watercraft (PWC) accidents happen because the person has little or no experience, excessive speed, and improper procedure. Serious injuries occur from collisions with swimmers, other watercraft, or structures (such as piers or docks).

Remember, 60 percent of these accidents occur with people who are renting the jet ski for only a few hours.

Ride Safely

- No one under age 12 should operate the ski. Not only is it against the law, it's dangerous.
- Wear a personal floatation device.
- Wear eye protection to keep water spray from interfering with your vision.

- Attach a whistle to your life jacket so you can summon help if necessary.
- Take a safety course. (Contact the Arizona Department of Game and Fish for more information.)
- Stay at least 100 feet from other boats and personal watercrafts.
- Never operate the PWC without the safety lanyard attached to you. The lanyard immediately shuts off the engine if you fall.
- Never use a PWC at night.
- Never use a PWC if you have been drinking any amount of alcohol. PWCs require top mental and physical performance.
- Do not jump wakes, weave, or change directions suddenly. Be predictable and you'll be safer.

TUBING

Tubing has become very popular in Arizona. Each year, more than 150,000 people enjoy "floating" down the river between the warm weather months of May through September. Injuries and drownings do occur.

Float Safely

- Children should be eight years or older and 4 feet tall.
- PFDs (Personal Flotation Devices) are a necessity for ALL children, ALL non-swimmers, ALL "out-of-shape" swimmers, and any person questioning whether or not he or she needs one.
- Drink plenty of water! At least 1-2 bottles of water per hour during the float trip. (No glass containers!)
- Wear tennis shoes or special water shoes to protect your feet from cuts, scrapes and bruises when walking in the river.
- Apply sunblock before and during the float trip.
- Wear sunglasses, hat and shirt to protect your skin.
- Do not tie your tubes together. Instead, group together by holding onto each other's tube.
- Be alert! Paddle ahead of time to avoid floating into sharp brush and large rocks.
- Avoid using alcohol.
- Cover your tube with a sheet or towel. Remember the tube gets very hot.



Drowning Prevention

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