



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY
EXPERIMENT STATION

MAFES DAWG TRACKS

One-half of all recreational boating fatalities happen in calm water. These fatalities occur close to shore and are caused by drowning. Also, in most cases, life jackets are stowed on board, but not worn. But no matter if it's recreational boating or boating as part of your job task ...

Responsible boaters wear their life jackets!

- **CHECK FOR PROPER FIT.** Lift the shoulders of the life jacket to make sure it does not slip above the chin or ears. It should feel snug, yet comfortable. A properly fitted life jacket keeps your head and shoulders above water. You will be able to swim with it, too.
- **FASTEN UP.** Fasten up all buckles, zippers and straps. Adjust straps so that the jacket fits snugly.
- **WEAR IT!** A life jacket only works if it's worn. If you will not wear it for yourself, then wear it for those who love you.

When Driving a Boat, Wear the Kill Switch Lanyard

In case of being thrown overboard, this simple device will instantly turn off the boat motor to keep it from possibly turning back and running over you or other boaters.

Yes, the lanyard can be annoying when unintentionally pulled cutting the motor off. So, place it where will still work, but not be a problem:

- Changing out the tiny lanyard clip for a bigger one (like a carabineer) then you can clip to a regular belt or a strap on your life jacket.
- Add an extension and strap the lanyard to your ankle instead of wrist, to keep free hand and arm motion.

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A few tips from the
National Safe Boating Council:

- ✓ **Check your equipment** – Make sure all essentials are present, in good condition, and working. Don't forget about routine maintenance to your boat's motor and pumps as well.
- ✓ **Make a float plan & stay in touch** – This plan can be a written requirement or simply telling another trusted and responsible person, the extent of the plan depends on if you are in the Gulf of Mexico or just a small lake. Regardless, let someone know where you will be, boat type and registration number, and when to expect your return. Have a communication plan for when on the water and then call to say you are back.
- ✓ **Watch the weather** - Always check the forecast before departing on the water and frequently during the excursion.
- ✓ **Know where you're going and travel at safe speeds** - Be familiar with the area, local boating speed zones & signs, and always travel at a safe speed. Be aware that water current may create debris hazards and there could be unexpected objects hiding under the water (logs, rocks, sandbars, and low-head dams).
- ✓ **Know what's going on around you at all times** - Nearly a quarter of all reported boating accidents in 2020 were caused by operator inattention or improper lookout.

Sources:

[http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/National-
https://theboatgalley.com/that-pesky-dinghy-kill-switch](http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/National-https://theboatgalley.com/that-pesky-dinghy-kill-switch)
www.safeboatingcouncil.org