

Boaters Beware

Fall and Winter Bring Additional Water Safety Risks

Boaters who take to the water during the fall and winter months face a different set of risks when it comes to water safety. There are fewer boats and law enforcement officers on the water to provide assistance in the event of an emergency, and heavier clothes and colder temperatures can make it much more difficult to swim to safety if you fall in the water without a life jacket. It can be a deadly combination.

“There are fewer people on the lakes in the fall and winter, but the potential dangers for boaters are even greater,” said Marshall Olson, environmental and natural resources manager for Alcoa Power Generating Inc. (APGI). “It’s important for people to pay just as much attention to water safety issues this time of the year as they do during the summer recreation season.”



APGI reminds boaters to **Play it Safe on the Lakes** by taking the following precautions:

- **Always Wear a Life Jacket:** Wearing a life jacket is the most fundamental way to stay safe — and it’s even more important in colder water temperatures. The risk of cold shock and hypothermia can impede your ability to perform even the most basic of tasks.
- **Be Prepared:** Review the NC Wildlife Resources Commission’s “Boating Checklist” to make sure you have the necessary equipment on board and operating correctly. You can view the checklist online at: www.ncwildlife.org.
- **Use the Buddy System:** Avoid boating alone. If you are alone, make sure someone knows where you are going and when you plan to return.
- **Check Weather Forecasts and Advisories:** Be prepared for adverse weather and sudden weather changes. Never go boating during storms.
- **Be Aware of Lower Lake Levels:** The lakes can experience lower water levels during the winter, exposing tree stumps and other potential hazards. Check the water levels online at www.alcoa.com/yadkin and be on the lookout for hazards.
- **Have An Emergency Plan:** Make sure you have a working marine radio and a charged mobile phone so you can call for help in an emergency.
- **Do Not Overload the Boat:** Boats that are weighted down are more likely to tip over.
- **Be Careful Near Dams:** Stay a safe distance from dams. Do not go past the warning signs and buoys located above and below the dams.

- **Stay Dry, Stay Warm:** Dress in layers and bring extra clothes. If you get wet, change into dry clothes as quickly as possible.