



BOATING EDUCATION & SAFETY

by Capt. John L. Annino

“Chilling” Fatality Statistics for Cold Water Months

The typical boating season in Connecticut runs from mid-April to November with the greatest boating activity during June, July and August, and in the last 15 years, 78% of all boating accidents occurred during these months. A recent analysis of Connecticut's boating fatality data over the period 1993-2007 found “chilling” statistics regarding the remaining 22% of boating accidents that occurred during the cold-water months of October through May.

- These 22% of accidents accounted for **57%** of all fatalities. Of the fatality victims, 75% were not wearing life jackets.
- The leading cause of death was drowning without a lifejacket (68%). 46% of fatality victims were in manually propelled vessels where almost all drowned (95%) and were not wearing a life jacket (74%).
- October had the highest number of fatalities of any month of the year.
- One out of six boating accidents occurring in cold water months resulted in a fatality. (Compared to one out of 26 accidents occurring June through September)

The months of October through April have the coldest water temperatures of the year. Boaters who were fatally injured in accidents during these months often went out on days when the weather was considered beautiful for the season; however, unseasonably warm weather does not reduce the dangers of cold-water immersion.

Last year Connecticut had two (2) fatalities by January

8th. This was unheard of in this State. But on a beautiful 70+ degree day, two people ventured out on the water that was still in the 30's; one on East Twin Lake in the west and the other on Amos Lake in the east. One was in a small open boat the other in a canoe with a small motor. Neither was wearing a life jacket and both accident victims quickly drowned in the frigid waters.

No matter where you boat, please remember to prepare accordingly for the cold water, even if the air temperature is warm. The single most important thing you can do when on or around the water is to **WEAR A LIFE JACKET**.

The CT Department of Environmental Protection is working to reduce boating fatalities during these months. The DEP recently expanded its regulation for mandatory life jacket wear between October 1 and May 31 to include all manually propelled vessels. Previously, only canoes were subject to the regulation. Additionally, the DEP is distributing a new pamphlet to inform boaters of the dangers of cold-water immersion. The pamphlet covers such topics as preparing for a boat trip, preventing and treating hypothermia, surviving in cold water, and other important information on how cold water affects the body. To view the pamphlet electronically, visit the Connecticut DEP website at <http://www.ct.gov/dep/boating>.

Capt. Gregory Ulkus contributed to this article.

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275 hp Verado	3 years	\$2100
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350 hp Verado	3 years	\$2100
175 hp Verado	3 years	\$1100
150 hp Verado	3 years	\$1100
125 hp Verado	3 years	\$1100

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Engine Model	Mercury Extended Warranty Duration	MSRP Value
115 hp FourStroke	3 years	\$800
90 hp FourStroke	3 years	\$600
75 hp FourStroke	3 years	\$500
60 hp FourStroke	3 years	\$500
50 hp FourStroke	3 years	\$500
40 hp FourStroke	3 years	\$500

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225 hp OptiMax®	3 years	\$1700
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175 hp OptiMax	3 years	\$1500
150 hp OptiMax	3 years	\$1200
125 hp OptiMax	3 years	\$1200
90 hp OptiMax	3 years	\$800
75 hp OptiMax	3 years	\$800
50 hp Jet Drive	3 years	\$500
300 hp Jet Drive	3 years	\$2200

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