Water Safety

A Risk Management Approach

1. IDENTIFY THE HAZARD

Hazards are the potential sources of danger

- Unfamiliar water
- Unknown water depth and current
- Fatigue
- Debris
- Changing weather conditions

2. ASSESS THE HAZARDS

- Each hazard is analyzed to determine both the probability of it causing a problem and the severity of the consequences should such a problem occur.

3. MAKE A RISK DECISION

- Weigh the risk against the benefits. (Is the trip worth taking if the boat capsizes and you haven't bought the kids a new flotation device. They outgrew the old ones over the winter.)

4. IMPLEMENT CONTROLS

- Controls function to reduce or eliminate hazards. (Buys the kids new flotation devices and make sure they wear them)

5. SUPERVISE

- Supervision goes beyond ensuring people do what is expected of them. It includes following up during and after activities to see if all went according to plan.

BOATING

- A U.S. Coast Guard review has concluded that nearly 80% of boating accidents involve operator controlled factors.
- Approximately 75% of the victims in fatal boating accidents might have been saved if they had been wearing life jackets.

HYPOTHERMIA

- Hypothermia, the loss of body heat, contributes to as many as half of all water fatalities. It usually kills victims by inhibiting their ability to swim or stay afloat.
- Watch for: Shivering (which signals a drop in body temp), bluing or darkening of the lips, earlobes, fingers or toes, and unusual or uncontrollable breathing.

SWIMMING

- Never swim alone.
- Know your swimming limits.
- Never drink alcohol and swim.
- Watch out for the “dangerous too’s”: too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Never leave a child alone.