

MEDIA RELEASE

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Lifejackets save lives

Improper use of lifejackets is a factor in 87% of boating fatalities

May 20th is National Lifejacket Day, an annual campaign to encourage and promote the use of lifejackets and PFDs among boaters. It comes at an opportune time with May long weekend upon us, and many Shuswap residents thinking about getting out on the water for the first time this season.

Research by the Canadian Red Cross shows that 87% of victims in boating-related fatalities weren't wearing a lifejacket or didn't have it properly secured. The data also indicate that alcohol was a factor in 41% of boating-related fatalities.

These statistics offer compelling evidence for the effectiveness of lifejackets, and the importance of having a sober captain.

"We sometimes think we're immune to accidents, but we're not," says Erin Vieira, program manager for the Shuswap Watershed Council. "When an accident happens, your lifejacket buys you time to be rescued."

See [Kelowna woman rescues capsized kayaker in Okanagan Lake.](#)

There are 15 lifejacket loaner stations around the Shuswap, equipped with a range of child-sized lifejackets that can be borrowed for free on a first-come, first-served honour system. An additional three loaner stations are scheduled to be built in other locations around the Shuswap later this year. The lifejackets are provided by the Royal Canadian Marine Search & Rescue, Station 106 Shuswap (based in Sicamous) and sponsored by a variety of community organizations including the Shuswap Watershed Council. The lifejackets have been in storage for the winter, but RCM-SAR will have the stations stocked and ready for use in time for May long weekend.

Start the boating season with a commitment to wear your lifejacket or PFD every time you go out on the water. If you're the captain, it's your responsibility to make sure everyone on board has a properly fitted flotation device.

Source of data: Water-related fatality trends across Canada, 1991 - 2013. Canadian Red Cross. June 2016.



About: The Shuswap Watershed Council is a watershed-based partnership organization that works on water quality and safe recreation in the Shuswap.

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