

## MEDIA RELEASE

May 18<sup>th</sup> 2022 - For Immediate Release

### Use a lifejacket - it could save your life

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

May 19<sup>th</sup> is National Lifejacket Day, an annual campaign to encourage and promote the use of lifejackets and PFDs among boaters and water recreationists. 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 an accident won't happen to us," says Erin Vieira, program manager for the Shuswap Watershed Council. "But accidents do happen. And when they do, your lifejacket buys you time to be rescued."

There are 18 lifejacket loaner kiosks around the Shuswap, equipped with various sizes of children's lifejackets that can be borrowed for free on a first-come, first-served honour system. A 19<sup>th</sup> kiosk is scheduled to be built later this spring. The lifejackets are provided by the Royal Canadian Marine Search & Rescue (RCMSAR) Station 106 Shuswap, based in Sicamous, and sponsored by a variety of community organizations. A map of the lifejacket loaner kiosks is available on the Shuswap Watershed Council website, [www.shuswapwater.ca](http://www.shuswapwater.ca).

"Children should wear a lifejacket whenever they are around water, and they need to get used to wearing it," advises Rob Sutherland, the Station Leader for RCMSAR 106 Shuswap. "We are happy to supply lifejackets in three sizes for children at our kiosks, which will be stocked and ready for borrowing by the 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.*  
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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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