

Most boating fatalities in Alaska result from drowning in cold water.

Cold water immersion can kill in several ways. Without a life jacket, most die **LONG BEFORE** they become hypothermic.

1. COLD SHOCK RESPONSE

Within three minutes of immersion:

- Gasping, hyperventilation and panic
- If not wearing a life jacket, a higher risk of drowning

2. COLD INCAPACITATION

Within 30 minutes of immersion:

- Cooling of arms and legs impairs sensation and function regardless of swimming ability
- If not wearing a life jacket, a higher risk of drowning

3. IMMERSION HYPOTHERMIA

After at least 30 minutes of immersion:

- Gradual cooling of the body's core temperature eventually results in loss of useful consciousness
- If wearing a life jacket, survival time may be extended

Wearing your life jacket could be the single most important factor in surviving cold water immersion.

In Alaska, capsizing, swamping, and falling overboard are the leading causes of cold water immersion.

Capsizing and swamping are often caused by:

- Overloading or poorly secured or shifting loads
- Improper boat handling
- Loss of power or ability to steer
- Anchoring from the stern
- Wrapping a line around a drive unit
- Taking a wave over the transom after a sudden stop

Falling overboard is often due to slipping, loss of balance when standing, moving around the boat, or reaching for objects in the water.

Another cause of cold water drowning in Alaska is leaving a place of safety to swim for a drifting boat.



Be prepared!

- Always wear a life jacket when in an open boat or on an open deck. Trying to put your life jacket on in the water is extremely difficult (if not impossible) and costs precious time and energy.
- Every Alaskan boater should carry (ON THEIR PERSON):
 - a communication device (i.e. hand-held water proof marine VHF radio, cell phone in a waterproof case)
 - emergency signaling devices (i.e. emergency locator beacon, whistle, mirror, small flares)



Waterproof VHF Marine Radio with GPS

Personal Locator Beacon



A cold water immersion event is a fight for survival.

If wearing a life jacket, the 1-10-1 principle may save your life:

1 Minute - Get breathing under control

10 Minutes (or more) - For meaningful activity

- Assess the situation and make a plan.
- Prioritize, and perform the most important functions first such as:
 - Locate other party members
 - Self-rescue
 - Emergency communication and signaling

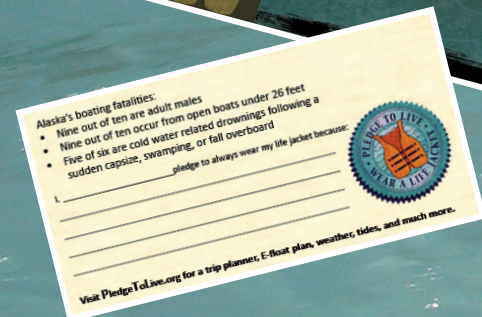
1 Hour (or more) - Of useful consciousness
Focus on slowing heat loss.

For more information:

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Anchorage, AK 99501
907-269-8706



www.alaskaboatingsafety.org



Take the pledge at www.PledgeToLive.org.



This brochure has been reviewed by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Education & Outreach Committee to ensure that the content herein adheres to the highest standards in quality boating safety information.



LIFE JACKET SELECTION

All life jackets provide life-saving supplemental flotation in the water, but no *one* style is perfectly suited for all persons in all situations.

Read the life jacket label. Make sure it is U.S. Coast Guard approved, the proper size for the intended user, and appropriate for the activity.

See the life jacket selector at PledgeToLive.org for more information.



Practice Safe Boating

- **Prevent capsizing** - Reduce speed in rough water, load carefully, secure loads from shifting, and adjust for changing conditions. Wait for poor weather to improve.
- **Prevent falls overboard** - Remain seated while underway, wear non-skid foot wear, and avoid reaching overboard for objects.
- **Equip the boat** - Boats should be equipped or designed with a reboarding device.
- **File a float plan** - Leave it with a friend or relative. Include a description of your boat and equipment, names of passengers, planned destination and route, expected return and when and who to call if overdue.
- **Brief passengers** - Everyone should know where all safety equipment is (and how to use it), and how to start, stop, and steer the boat.

ALASKA's COLD WATER Kills!

