



## **MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **On the Water Safety Comes First St. John Ambulance Wants People to Take Boat Safety Seriously**

**July 16, 2010 (Toronto, ON)** – Nothing is better in the summer than to take to the water with friends and family. However, it is important to remember during all the summer fun that water can be dangerous. July 17 – 24, 2010 is National Drowning Prevention Week, and St. John Ambulance would like to remind people to take water safety seriously when out on a boat.

- **Stow the Alcohol:** Aside from the severe legal consequences, on the water your senses tend to be dulled by the sun, wind and motion of the boat. Alcohol greatly intensifies these effects impairing motor skills.
- **Know the Rules:** Just like driving a car, operating a boat requires a license and an understanding of the rules set in place for safety. Before you get out on the water make sure you have a grasp of things like who has the right of way, the safe distance between vessels, speed, and who you are sharing the water with. The more you know the safer your day will be.
- **Wear a Lifejacket or Personal Floatation Device (PFD):** Factors like your ability to swim, or distance from the shore, are inconsequential when it comes to the sudden shock of going over board. The shock is enough to cause serious disruption of breathing, nerve function and muscle strength. A life jacket or PFD will keep you afloat until help arrives.
- **Stay Away from Dams/Water Control Structures:** Canal dams and waste weirs pose a unique threat to people because of their strong currents and powerful undertows. Remember, it is illegal to jump in to the water, swim, fish, scuba dive or bathe within 40m of a dam.
- **Prepare for Hypothermia:** Just because the weather is hot doesn't mean the water is warm. People lose body heat 32 times faster in water than in air of the same temperature.
- **Be First Aid Ready:** Boats are a lot of fun, but they present a lot of unique hazards. From fishhooks, severe sunburns to drowning, being trained in first aid and carrying a waterproof marine first aid kit can help you cope with whatever comes your way.
- **Check the Weather:** Before going on the water make sure to check the marine forecast. This will ensure you know what to expect that day in terms of wind and rain. Once you're on the water, make sure to keep checking the sky for of any sudden changes.

For more information on boating safety, visit Transport Canada at [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca). To learn about marine first aid or purchase a kit, contact your local St. John Ambulance [www.sja.ca/on](http://www.sja.ca/on).

For over 125 years, St. John Ambulance has been training over 140,000 Ontarians annually in first aid and other health care related courses and remains dedicated to saving lives at work, home and play. With over 4,000 volunteers contributing over half a million hours of community service a year, St. John Ambulance is an integral part of the community offering such unique and innovative programs as; medical first response, disaster response, car seat clinics, health and safety related youth programs and therapy dog services. As a charitable, non-denominational, humanitarian organization, proceeds from St. John Ambulance's first aid training and first aid product sales directly support these vital community services programs. For more information on St. John Ambulance training courses and volunteer opportunities see our website at [www.sja-mississauga.ca](http://www.sja-mississauga.ca).

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