



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

May 21, 2010 (Mississauga, 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, water can be dangerous. These helpful tips from St. John Ambulance will help you plan for boat safety.

- **Stow the Alcohol:** Besides the severe legal consequences, on the water your senses tend to be dulled by the sun, wind and motion of the boat and alcohol greatly intensifies these effects impairing fine 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):** Despite factors like your ability to swim or distance from the shore, the sudden shock of going overboard is enough to cause serious disruption of breathing, nerve function and muscle strength. A life jacket or PFD will keep you afloat till help arrives.
- **Stay Away from Dams:** 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, 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 25-30 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 unique hazards. From fish hooks, severe sunburns to near 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 any sudden changes.

For more information on boating safety, visit Transport Canada at www.tc.gc.ca. To learn about marine first aid or to purchase a kit, contact your local St. John Ambulance at www.sja-mississauga.ca.

For more than 125 years, St. John Ambulance has been training Ontarians 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 or to contact your local branch, visit www.sja-mississauga.ca.

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