

Underwriters Laboratories And National Safety Council Team Up To Spread Water Safety Messages

(NAPSA)—Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) and the National Safety Council have teamed up again this boating season to help spread the word about boating safety and the importance of wearing life jackets.

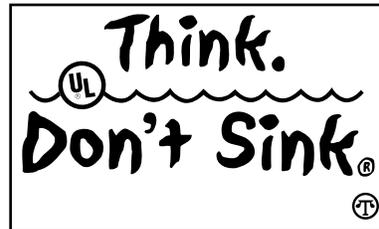
Drowning is the leading cause of recreational boating deaths, with 517 drownings in 1999. Life jackets (also known as personal flotation devices or PFDs) could have saved the lives of approximately 450 victims. The most recent U.S. Coast Guard statistics indicate that eight of ten boating-related drownings in 1999 involved a person who was not wearing this simple life-saving device.

"We're teaming up with UL to get the word out that life jackets save lives, plain and simple," says Alan McMillan, President of the Council. "But just having them on board boats isn't enough; they don't work unless people wear them."

Dan Ryan, associate managing engineer at UL agrees that a little knowledge can go a long way when it comes to life jackets. "There are many new and inexperienced boaters hitting the waterways every year," Ryan says. "Both our organizations want to make sure these people understand that a PFD is the most important piece of boating equipment one can bring on any boating trip."

The most recent data available indicates a long-term decrease in boating fatalities, however, more than 700 boaters died last year (a combination of capsizings, falls overboard, collisions, and other accidents) and there were 4,315 reported injuries.

"Most boaters don't plan on falling overboard, and if they do, they are not prepared to deal with the situation," adds Ryan. "Even experienced swimmers may panic and get into trouble."



Facts To Consider

- "Capsizings" and "falls overboard" accounted for more than half of all boating fatalities in 1999.

- Federal law requires boat operators to have a properly fitting life jacket for everyone on board and a throwable device for craft that are 16 feet in length or longer. Some states require that children wear a life jacket. Obey state laws.

- Simply put, life jackets are very difficult—almost impossible—to find and put on once you are in the water; they are easier to put on before an emergency situation occurs.

- Hypothermia, the loss of body heat, contributes to as many as half of all water fatalities. Someone in 50-degree water for 50 minutes has a 50 percent chance of survival if wearing a life jacket.

Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) is an independent, not-for-profit product safety certification organization that has been working for a safer world by evaluating products, materials and systems for more than a century. More than 17 billion UL Marks appear on products each year. For more information on UL and its services, visit its Web site at www.ul.com.

The National Safety Council is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting life and promoting health. For more information about the Council and its programs, visit the Council's Web site at www.nsc.org.