
Cold Water Messaging and Background

Facts

- Boating popularity is high in Minnesota with over 806,000 registered boats in Minnesota.
- Over 30 percent of boating fatalities in Minnesota happen in cold water with the victim not wearing a life jacket.
- In 2013, 13 people died in boating accidents in Minnesota.
- Past years boating fatalities: 2012- 15, 2011- 16, 2010 – 12, 2009 – 15.
- The most common reasons for cold water season boating fatalities: Lack of life jacket use, falling overboard or boats became swamped or capsized.
- Anything below 70 degrees is considered cold water.
- Cold water immersion can kill in several ways, and most die long before they become hypothermic.

1. COLD SHOCK RESPONSE

- a. Within the first 2-3 minutes:
- b. Gasping, hyperventilation and panic.
- c. Drowning if not wearing a life jacket.

2. SWIM FAILURE

- a. Within the first 30 minutes:
- b. Rapid cooling of arms and legs impairs the ability to keep the head above water.
- c. Effects occur regardless of swimming ability.
- d. Drowning if not wearing a life jacket.

3. IMMERSION HYPOTHERMIA

- a. After at least 30 minutes of immersion:
- b. Gradual cooling of the body's core temperature eventually results in loss of useful consciousness.
- c. Drowning if not wearing a life jacket.

Talking Points

Minnesotans want to get out and enjoy the water, but we want to urge everyone not to let their guard down.

The water is cold.

Cold water can prove dangerous, or even deadly, especially if people don't consider the consequences of falling into cold water.

Falling into cold water can cause an immediate gasp for air and the shock of the icy water can also cause cardiac arrest, even for people in good health.

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

Wearing a life jacket increases not only a person's survival time in cold water, but also help keep you warm because your body is losing less energy to stay afloat.

Wear a life jacket, don't overload your boat and keep an eye on the weather.