



# Press Release

Re-release form March 2, 2007

March 3, 2007

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## **FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS GO WITHOUT A LIFEJACKET**

### **Coast Guard Auxiliary recommends that the best way to prevent tragedy on the water is to - "Just Wear It"**

SACRAMENTO - In the wake of a recent tragedy in Northern California, where three people died as a result of not wearing lifejackets, and in preparation for the upcoming boating season, the Coast Guard Auxiliary wants to remind the boating public and other who live, work or play around the water - friends don't let friends go without a lifejacket.

Whether you plan to go fishing, hunting, waterskiing, or just want to enjoy a day on or around the water, the single most important thing you can do to prevent a tragedy is to "just wear it."

The statistics are fairly consistent in that each year, in that between 80 and 90 percent of those who die in a boating accident drown. An overwhelming number of these drowning victims were not wearing lifejackets. Most boating safety experts believe that the majority of these deaths could have been prevented, if only the drowning victim had simply been wearing a properly fitted life jacket.

Wearing a lifejacket on a boat is akin to wearing a seat belt in your car. Just as you shouldn't start your journey in your car without bucking up, you need to wear your lifejacket anytime you are on or near the water. While the law requires most children to "just wear it," there are no rules for wearing life jackets for adults. In fact, the life jacket wear rate for adults is believed to be somewhere around five percent, far below the wear rate for seatbelts.

The lifejackets of old were bulky and uncomfortable, but today, there are many styles to choose from, including inflatable lifejackets, that offer a maximum amount of comfort and buoyancy.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary urges *all* boaters, including sailors and paddle craft operators, to wear a Coast Guard approved life jacket at all times when on or near the water. Moreover, so that they can be prepared to deal with emergencies, such as a person falling overboard, it is strongly recommended that they take a boating safety course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

To find a boating safety class in your area, call 1-877-875-6296, or visit [http://nws.cgaux.org/visitors/pe\\_visitor/index.html](http://nws.cgaux.org/visitors/pe_visitor/index.html).

For photos of various lifejacket types, visit [http://www.uscgboating.org/IMAGEMANAGER/search\\_results.aspx](http://www.uscgboating.org/IMAGEMANAGER/search_results.aspx), and select lifejackets in the image category.

*The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is composed of uniformed, non-military volunteer's who assist the Coast Guard in all of its varied missions, except for military and direct law enforcement. These men and women can be found on the nation's waterways, in the air, in classrooms and on the dock, performing Maritime Domain Awareness patrols, safety patrols, vessel safety checks and public education.*

*The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary was founded in 1939 by an Act of Congress as the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve and re-designated as the Auxiliary in 1941. Over 27,000 members donate millions of hours annually in support of Coast Guard missions.*

For more information on the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, visit us at [www.cgaux.org](http://www.cgaux.org) or [www.axupa.org](http://www.axupa.org) .

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