

Massachusetts Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife on National Safe Boating Week : “Life jackets save lives!”

Wearing a properly fitted personal flotation device could save your life.

Life jackets save lives! It's National Safe Boating Week and the perfect time to remind boaters and anglers to wear life jackets. Warmer days of spring can often mask water temperatures that are still dangerously cold. Learn how to find the right life jacket for you.

With nearly 1,500 miles of coastline, four major river systems, and hundreds of lakes and ponds, Massachusetts offers great opportunities to get out on the water. As warmer weather arrives, and to recognize National Safe Boating Week (May 21–27), the Massachusetts Environmental Police and MassWildlife remind boaters and anglers to put safety first by wearing life jackets.



Massachusetts Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife photo.

Warmer days of spring can often mask water temperatures that are still dangerously cold. If you capsize or fall overboard, you can develop hypothermia within minutes. Hypothermia, the lowering of your internal body temperature, can make it difficult for you to swim, paddle, or stay afloat. A sudden, unexpected fall into cold water can also cause you to involuntarily gasp and ingest water, which can lead to death by drowning. Your life jacket may not prevent hypothermia, but it will help you stay afloat, and it can save your life. Boating fatality victims were often not wearing life jackets.

Click [here](#) to learn about life jackets, including how to choose the right type, how to get a proper fit, and more.

Safety advocates recommend all boaters and passengers have a life jacket and wear it at all times while boating.

In Massachusetts, life jackets must be worn by:

- Canoeists and kayakers from September 15 to May 15
- Youth under 12 years old
- Personal watercraft users
- Water skiers
- Stand-up paddleboard users