GET THE FACTS:

- Most drowning victims had a life jacket available but chose not to wear it.
- 70% of all boating fatalities result from drowning. 85% of those who drown are not wearing a life jacket.
- It only takes 60 seconds for an adult to drown, and only 20 seconds for a child to drown.
- Air-filled swimming aids such as “water wings” are not U.S. Coast Guard approved and are not substitutes for a life jacket.

Want to learn more? Visit FWP on-line at: fwp.mt.gov

What you need to know... ...before you go!

Life Vest
Personal Floatation Device
PFD
Life Jacket

Whatever you call it, it can save your life, if you wear it!
Boaters— What You Need On Board

All boats must have one U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket (also known as a personal flotation device or PFD) for each person on board. They must be in good condition and the appropriate size for the intended wearer. Boats 16 feet or longer (excluding canoes and kayaks) must also have at least one throwable flotation device (Type IV) such as a ring buoy or boat cushion.

Wearable life jackets must be **readily accessible**—located out in the open where they can be easily reached. A throwable flotation device (Type IV) must be **immediately available**—within an arm’s reach of the operator or passengers while the boat is operated. A life jacket that is sealed in a bag or stored in a compartment is not readily accessible or immediately available.

**In Montana a life jacket must be worn by:**
- Children under 12 years of age
- Water skiers, tubers or anyone being towed by a boat
- Anyone operating or riding a personal watercraft (jet ski, wave runner, etc)

If you are floating through whitewater, get caught in a storm, or you are not a good swimmer, wearing a life jacket could save your life.

Hunters & Anglers

Sportsmen and women drown on Montana’s water every year. People who use a boat while hunting or fishing often do not consider themselves “boaters” and may not think to take the same precautions as a recreational boater. Waterfowl hunters can purchase life jackets and float coats that come in camouflage colors. Anglers can use an inflatable life jacket that provides more comfort and is less bulky. Some inflatable life jackets look and function like a fishing vest.

Cold Can Kill

Cold water (less than 70 degrees F) can lower body temperature, causing hypothermia. If body temperature drops too low, a person may pass out and then drown. The human body cools 25 times faster in cold water than in air. Life jackets can help increase the odds of surviving in cold water by conserving the energy it would otherwise take to float and insulating the body from cold water.

5 Types of Personal Floatation Devices

Choose the style of PFD best suited to your activity:

**Type I:** Off-shore life jacket
Best for open, rough or remote waters where rescue may not be immediate. Designed to turn an unconscious person face-up.

**Type II:** Near shore life vest
Good for calm water where fast rescue is likely. A good choice for children when equipped with a strap to buckle between their legs.

**Type III:** A Flotation aid
Generally the most comfortable to wear for water sports. Available in many colors and styles including vests and float coats. Will not turn an unconscious person face-up.

**Type IV:** A Throwable Device
Includes boat cushions, ring buoys and horseshoe buoys. Designed to be thrown to a person in the water and grasped to the chest, not worn.

**Type V:** A Special Use Device
Intended for specific activities. May be used instead of another PFD only if used according to conditions printed on the label. Includes deck suits, pullover vests, work vests and some hybrid life jackets. Not