

# MSU - Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION

Water Safety

Skydivers wear their parachutes...  
Football players wear their helmets...  
Drivers wear their seat belts...

## **Responsible boaters wear their life jackets!**

- CHECK FOR PROPER FIT - Lift the shoulders of the life jacket to make sure it does not slip above the chin or ears. It should feel snug, yet comfortable. A properly fitted life jacket keeps your head and shoulders above water. You will be able to swim with it, too.
- FASTEN UP - Fasten up all buckles, zippers and straps. Adjust straps so that the jacket fits snugly.
- WEAR IT! A life jacket only works if it's worn. If you will not wear it for yourself, then wear it for those who love you.

One-half of all recreational boating fatalities happen in calm water. These fatalities occur close to shore and are caused by drowning. Also, in most cases, life jackets are stowed on board, but not worn.

## **Boat Drivers Wear the Kill Switch**

In case of being thrown overboard, this will instantly turn off the boat motor to keep it from possibly turning back and running over you or other boaters. Yes, the lanyard can be annoying when unintentionally pulled cutting the motor off. So place it where will still work, but not be a problem:

- Changing out the tiny lanyard clip for a bigger one (like a carabineer) then you can clip to a regular belt or a strap on your life jacket.
- Add an extension and strap the lanyard to your ankle instead of wrist, to keep free hand/arm motion.

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## **Watch Your Children**

It takes an average of 20 seconds for a child to drown so always make them wear a life jacket. Supervising adults should be focused on the kids without distractions, such as reading, texting or visiting with other adults.

## **Drowning is a Silent Killer**

An estimated 60% of all drownings are witnessed, because people are unable to identify the four signs of a drowning victim:

- Head back (bobs up and down above/below the surface)
- Mouth open
- No sound
- Arms outstretched moving simultaneously in an above-the-water, up and down stroke that appears as if they are slapping or playing in the water.

## **Don't Dive, Go In Feet First**

According to Shepherd Center, diving makes the list of the top five causes of spinal cord injuries with paralysis.

- There are multiple ways for a dive to end in injury or paralysis based on the location and structure of the spinal cord. The severity of disability depends on the level of the spinal cord where the damage occurs.
- Water can be deceptive, even if you are a good judge of depth. Many individuals who sustained a spinal cord injury from diving echo the same lament: "I thought I had good perception skills. I thought I could trust myself to stay safe." The truth is that water often appears to be deeper than it is, which can lead to devastating errors of judgment even for experienced swimmers and divers.
- A single dive can alter your life FOREVER. Don't ever act on a dare or try risky stunts. The consequences just aren't worth it.

Sources:

[http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/National-https://theboatgalley.com/that-pesky-dinghy-kill-switch/Water-Safety\\_Program/](http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/National-https://theboatgalley.com/that-pesky-dinghy-kill-switch/Water-Safety_Program/)  
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