



FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES:
Fishing From a Boat in a Lake
(Commercial Charter, Not Private)

Activities on lakes can be hazardous. Fishing is a popular pastime but many injuries and drowning accidents have occurred during what seems to be a very safe pursuit. Activities like fishing whether on river, lake or sea, is often looked upon as something anyone can do without any experience. The main purpose of these programs should be the "fun" of the activity and the development of fishing skills.

The Key Dangers:

Drowning Hypothermia Sunburn Injury from equipment Exhaustion

Boating Fatality Facts:

On average, approximately 700 recreational boaters will die this year due to a boating mishap. The vast majority of boating mishaps are caused by operator controllable factors and not by the boat, equipment, or environmental factors.

- The majority of fatalities (about 79%) occur on inland waters, such as rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds.
- Drowning continues to be the # 1 cause of deaths in boating accidents. Approximately 80% of drowning victims were not wearing life jackets. Less than 23% of boaters in all boating groups wear life jackets. More than 60% of boating fatalities result from capsizing, falling overboard, or flooding/swamping.
- Fatality rates decrease significantly when a boater has some boater education. 88% of fatalities occurred on boats where the operator had not taken a boater education course.
- Open motorboats have the highest overall number of fatalities (approximately half).
- Roughly one-third of recreational fatalities occur while boaters are engaged in fishing activities. A smaller number die while hunting from a boat.

Safety Guidelines:

1. Please follow these adult to student ratios when arranging groups: 4th grade & up-- 1 adult: 10 children 3rd grade & below-- 1 adult: 5 children.
2. Learn to swim and encourage your students to learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. This includes anyone participating in any boating activity. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a swim course, contact your local Red Cross Chapter.
3. Wear a Life Jacket While Boating. Look for the label: Use Coast Guard-approved life jackets for yourself and passengers when boating and fishing. Don't rely on substitutes. The use of flotation devices and inflatable toys cannot replace parental supervision. Such devices could suddenly shift position, lose air, or slip out from underneath, leaving the child in a dangerous situation. Life jacket use by all boat occupants can reduce drownings. When properly fitted, a life jacket or Personal Flotation Device (PFD) can prevent a tragedy.
4. Watch the weather: Know local weather conditions and prepare for electrical storms. Watch local news programs. Stop boating as soon as you see or hear a storm.

5. Select a supervised area. A trained lifeguard who can help in an emergency is the best safety factor. Even good swimmers can have an unexpected medical emergency in the water.
6. Select an area that is clean and well maintained. A clean bathhouse, clean restrooms, and a litter-free environment show the management's concern for your health and safety.
7. Select an area that has good water quality and safe natural conditions. Murky water, hidden underwater objects, unexpected drop-offs, and aquatic plant life are hazards. Water pollution can cause health problems for swimmers. Strong tides, big waves, and currents can turn an event that began as fun into a tragedy.
8. Maintain constant supervision. Watch children around any water environment (pool, stream, lake, tub, toilet, bucket of water), no matter what skills your child has acquired and no matter how shallow the water.
9. Supervisors/Adults should have a CPR certification. Knowing these skills can be important around the water and you will expand your capabilities in providing care for your students. Personal survival techniques should be taught in the event of the participants falling into the water, getting caught in quicksand, snagged on trees, etc. Leaders of fishing trips should have a current first aid certificate, be competent swimmers with a good knowledge of basic lifesaving.
10. It could be hot and sunny, so instruct students to bring a hat and sunscreen. Even on cloudy days, sunburn is possible. Recommend to students to bring a waterproof formula with an SPF of at least 30. Protect your forehead with a sun hat or visor with a chin strap.
11. Wear appropriate clothing. It could be cold, foggy, windy or drizzly, so warm, layered clothing is recommended. Have everyone wear tennis shoes or boating shoes with good treads that cover the entire foot. Each student should have an extra pair of shoes and socks.
12. Call the contractor or charter in charge of the area for updated information. Call as you are planning and again right before your trip.
13. Be sure to check state and local requirements, before boating as there are different rules and regulations for operator-age, safety equipment, etc. in different parts of the country. Obtain information from local officials on tides, danger areas and fishing regulations.
14. Develop a float plan. Be sure to provide administration and parents detailed plans of the trip. Include arrival and departure times, cast off times, on-water duration, and activities to be performed on the water.
15. Hooks are sharp, be careful when handling, casting, retrieving, and removing them from fish.
16. Always look behind you to make sure people, animals or obstructions such as a tree or power line are not in the way of your back cast. (Remember your line can extend far behind you.)
17. Look up and around to be sure your line will not be caught in trees, power lines or other obstructions.
18. Form a safety circle around you by holding your rod straight out in front of you and then turn in a circle. If your rod touches another person, then move further away.
19. If your bait or casting plug gets stuck, do not pull back hard. If you do, and it comes loose, it can fly back at you like a bullet and hurt you.
20. Teach the appropriate way to handle the types of fish that can be caught to avoid injury to the fish and the angler.
21. Make sure all anglers hear and understand how to handle and operate the rod and reel, including the grip, operating the reel, stance and casting technique.
22. Careless disposal of fishing line poses extreme hazards to birds and small animals. Hooks are especially dangerous to children and wildlife. Please take home even the shortest length of line and dispose of properly.