

COLD WATER SAFETY



BE PREPARED FOR SUMMER BY KNOWING THESE FACTS AND TIPS

Facts:

- Cold water is a danger in the late spring across the United States when air temperatures are warm, but before lakes and rivers have reached an acceptable temperature to which people can be exposed.
- Any water at or below 77°F is considered to be cold water, and the lower the temperature, the quicker it will begin to affect the body.
- 77°F is the temperature at which the body can no longer generate enough heat to stay warm. As a result, the human body will naturally react to preserve the vital organs in the body's core by decreasing blood flow to the arms and legs.
- Short-term immersion causes significant loss of mobility, making it difficult or impossible to swim to safety.
- Entering cold water can immediately shock the body and trigger an involuntary reflex to gasp for air, which may be fatal.
- Cold water shock can also lead to hyperventilation and the feeling of suffocation, which may make it difficult to swim to safety or even stay afloat until the initial shock of being submerged in water subsides.

Tips:

- Always wear a life jacket.
- Never go out in the water alone.
- Have a way to contact help if a water rescue needs to be performed.
- Practice how to get to safety when entering the water. If you are going out on the water in a kayak or canoe, know how to get back in the vessel if it overturns.
- Do not assume that the water is warm just because the air temperature is high.
- Ease into cold water gradually so that the body can acclimate to the conditions.