



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
St. Louis District®

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# News Release

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## **Unofficial Start of Summer Calls for Water Safety**

St. Louis, Mo. – Two hundred years ago May 14, the Lewis and Clark Expedition started their journey up the Missouri River in search of a direct water route linking the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Corps of Engineers is anticipating increased pleasure boat traffic, not only on the Missouri River, but also on other inland waterways during the bicentennial commemoration.

Although summer officially starts June 21, many Americans will be kicking the recreation season into high gear this Memorial Day weekend. Saturday marks the start of National Safe Boating Week, May 22-28, an inter-agency campaign dedicated to making America's waterways safer and enjoyable. The campaign's theme, "Boat Smart. Boat Safe. Wear it!" is designed to emphasize the importance of each boater wearing a life jacket. Boating fatalities rose from 681 in 2001 to 750 in 2002, reversing a downward trend, according to the U.S. Coast Guard. Nearly 70 percent of the boating accident victims drowned; 85 percent of those drowning victims were not wearing a life jacket.

Water safety must be a top priority for everyone using the nation's waterways and lakes this summer. It is not only for their safety but the safety of others.

An estimated 360 million Americans visit U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recreation areas each year. A majority of these visitors come during the summer months.

The Corps is the Nation's largest provider of outdoor recreation, operating more than 2,500 recreation areas at 463 projects (mostly lakes). The St. Louis District manages five of these lakes: Carlyle (Carlyle, Ill.), Mark Twain (Monroe City, Mo), Rend (Benton, Ill.), Shelbyville (Shelbyville, Ill.) and Wappapello (Wappapello, Mo.), as well as the Rivers Project Office (West Alton, Mo.). Combined St. Louis District's Rivers Project and lakes average 15 million visitors a year.

Boaters should take appropriate safety classes, be familiar with governing state laws and have proper safety equipment onboard before venturing out this summer.

The type and size of boat dictates types of equipment, but life jackets are a necessity. A properly fitted life jacket for everyone onboard is not just a consideration; it is the law. Life jackets save lives only when they are used properly.

Other appropriate equipment may include an operational fire extinguisher, visual distress signals, anchor and anchor line, paddles and oars, tool kit, horn or whistle, spare fuel, flashlight, First Aid Kit, sunglasses, sun screen, mooring line, pump bailer, food and water and a mariner's radio.

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## WATERSAFETY/2-2-2

Within the St. Louis District it is important for boaters to know the state laws for Missouri or Illinois. Many states require boater education or boat operator licenses. As an added incentive, some insurance companies offer discounts to boaters who have successfully completed a boating safety course.

Safety courses are taught by many governmental and private boating organizations. Courses are offered in various formats including classroom, home study and on-line so prospective boaters can find courses that work best with their schedule.

The U.S. Coast Guard's safety web page at [http://www.uscgboating.org/safety/safety\\_courses.htm](http://www.uscgboating.org/safety/safety_courses.htm) provides links to several on-line courses. BoatU.S. Foundation at <http://www.boatus.org/onlinecourse/> offers on-line courses and also provides information by calling 1-800-336-2628. Information on the new Missouri Boating course requirements is available on-line at <http://www.mswp.dps.mo.gov> or at <http://www.boat-ed.com/mo> or by calling 573-751-3333.

The St. Louis District lakes offer on-site water safety programs on weekends during the recreation season. The public is encouraged to call for additional information.

Carlyle Lake Project Office	618-594-2484
Lake Shelbyville Project Office	217-774-3951
Mark Twain Lake Project Office	573-735-4097
Rend Lake Project Office	618-724-2493
Wappapello Lake Project Office	573-222-8562

The St. Louis District takes pride in its role of providing visitors with safe recreational opportunities. It is important that boaters play their part in the safety equation by being knowledgeable, responsible and considerate of others.