

Drowning Prevention

Best Practice Series BP-18



Many drowning and drowning-related accidents have happened to persons who were not wearing a life jacket or belt and had no safe means of access. MSHA's regulations state that a life jacket or belt must be worn where there is a danger of falling into water.

Miners must remember to:

- ✓ **Wear a life jacket or marine work vest.**
- **ALWAYS** wear a U.S. Coast Guard-certified life jacket or marine work vest that's rated for your size and weight. Type V marine work vests are comfortably designed to allow freedom of movement and flotation. Studies show that commercial fishermen who fell into the water while wearing a life jacket survived, while only a small number of those not wearing a life jacket survived. *Life jackets save lives!*
- **BE SURE** your life jacket fits properly and is fastened correctly.

Arrive Home Alive

U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration
Visit our Web site at www.msha.gov

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✓ **Watch your footing.**

- **ALWAYS** keep decks, platforms, and boats as clean, clear, and dry as possible to prevent potential slips, trips, and falls.
- **ALWAYS** wear boots with nonslip soles.
- **USE** safety lines, when possible, to keep from falling into the water.
- **Know** and practice boating safety.
- **DON'T** use a boat that doesn't have the safe weight and person capacity posted.
- **DON'T** exceed a boat's posted weight or person capacity.
- **DON'T** operate or ride in a boat unless you or the operator know how to use it.
- **DON'T** climb into or out of a boat while carrying heavy items – hand them to a helper.
- **ALWAYS** make sure a boat is secure, and you wear a life jacket when getting in or out.
- **NEVER** use a boat when the water gets rough and makes work or travel hazardous.

Mine operators should:

- **PROVIDE** only U.S. Coast Guard-certified life jackets or marine work vests that fit comfortably, won't slip off, allow freedom of movement, and are rated for the weight range of the persons who will be wearing them.
- **PROVIDE** a convenient, clean place to store life jackets.

- **REQUIRE** supervisors and miners to be accountable for wearing life jackets.
- **PROVIDE** handrails where there's a danger of falling into the water.
- **PROVIDE** safety lines and harnesses, and require their use where appropriate.
- **PROVIDE** nonskid materials on docks, platforms, and work surfaces of small boats.
- **PROVIDE** adequate illumination for work or travel around water.
- **PROVIDE** suitable footwear with nonslip soles.
- **PROVIDE** suitable watercraft that has adequate safe loading and person capacity for work and travel intended. Be sure the watercraft is appropriately labeled to notify users of its capacity.
- **TRAIN** miners who use boats to operate them safely.
- **TRAIN** miners who work around water about potential dangers.