

# 10



## Tips for Open Water Safety

Stay Safe at the River!



### 1 Learn to Swim

- Make sure kids learn water survival skills, including how to:
  - Step or jump into water over their head and return to the surface.
  - Turn around in water and orient to safety.
  - Float or tread water.
  - Combine breathing with forward movement in the water.
  - Exit the water.
- Swim where there is a lifeguard, in areas reserved for swimmers.
- Always swim with a buddy.
- Watch kids in or around water.
  - Face the water and avoid distractions.
  - Keep young children and weak swimmers within arm's reach.
  - Choose a Water Watcher. Adults can take turns being responsible for watching children in or near the water for a certain period of time.

### 2 Wear a Life Jacket

- Our rivers are fast and cold. Even the strongest swimmer can be pulled under.
- In Sacramento County, children under the age of 13 are required to wear a life jacket before accessing any public waters. Loaner life jackets are available.
- Choose a life jacket that is right for your weight and activity.

### 3 Learn to Float

- Treading water allows you to catch your breath, assess the situation, and look around for the nearest safe place.
- Float down river - float on your back, feet first, with toes up out of the water. Never try to stand up in swiftly moving water, your feet can be entrapped.



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### 4 Look Before You Leap

- Obey the signs – look for “No Swimming” or “No Diving”.
- Riverbeds can drop off sharply. Stay close to shore.
- Ask yourself: Is the water deep enough? How cold is the water? Are there obstacles under the water that are not visible from the surface?

### 5 Learn to Rescue Safely

- Know the signs of drowning. Drowning doesn't look like it does in movies.
- To safely save someone, know how to reach, throw, or find an adult to row.
- If you can't rescue safely, go call 9-1-1 to get help.

**6 Don't Overload Your Boat.** An overloaded or unbalanced boat can turn over or capsize, even when there is no wind or rough water.

**7 Stay With Your Boat.** If your boat capsizes, stay with the boat, it is easier for rescuers to see. If help is nearby, yell, gesture, or use a whistle to attract attention.

**8 Learn the Rules of the Road for Boats & Jetskis.** Boaters need to be courteous, safe and follow the rules of the road. Maintain safe speed and know the right-of-way.

**9 Alcohol, Drugs, and Boating Don't Mix.** Using alcohol or drugs can make your judgement poor and slow your response time.

**10 Keep our Waterways Clean.** Don't trash the river! Wash hands/shower after swimming and DO NOT drink river water.

