

## **WATER SAFETY**

(Reviewed 10/18/2007)

### A. Water Operations

1. Personal Flotation Devices and Personal Protective Equipment
  - a. U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD's shall be worn at all times aboard canoes or motorboats 16 ft or under by the operator and all passengers.
  - b. PFDs must be international orange in color and bear 200 sq cm of Type 1 retroreflective tape on the front and back.
    - 1) Coast Guard approved suspender-type PFD's which *inflate automatically upon entry into water* are approved for use. Only those with a yellow or international orange bladder are acceptable. Suspender type inflatables with manually operated inflation cartridges shall not be used aboard watercraft.
  - c. PFDs will be inspected by the wearer prior to and after each use. PFDs will be inspected as part of the annual watercraft inspection. PFDs that do not meet code or are damaged will be replaced, and PFDs that are damaged will be destroyed.
  - d. Cold water PFDs such as exposure suits, coveralls, jackets, or immersion suits must be provided where operations pose risk of hypothermia (water temperature <21°C), and all personnel aboard will be trained in their proper use.
2. Training
  - a. Operators of motorized craft (including airboats) shall have a valid DOI Motorboat Operator Certificate. The certificate is valid for 5 years. An 8-hr update is required every 5 years for recertification
  - b. Supervisors shall ensure that operators/users of canoes and other nonmotorized boats are familiar with handling characteristics and limitations of the assigned craft.
  - c. All employees who operate or work in watercraft shall be required to maintain certification in Standard First Aid and CPR
  - d. All passengers will be trained in use and care of PFDs.

B. Other Aquatic Work

1. Employees involved in aquatic studies will be familiarized with hazards of the work environment, including hypothermia, loose bottom substrates, danger of sudden drop-offs, and weather related threats.
2. At least two members of any crew assigned to a wetland study site will be certified in Advanced First Aid or Wilderness First Aid and CPR.
3. Whenever possible, employees will work in teams of two or more.
4. Employees will wear foot protection at all times. Hip boots or waders are recommended to protect against schistosomiasis, biting aquatic invertebrates, toxic blue-green algae, leptospirosis, and physical hazards such as barbed wire.
5. Supervisors should ascertain the swimming ability of each employee and assign tasks accordingly. Non-swimmers, and swimmers wearing chest waders, should wear life vests if working in currents.
6. Neoprene waders are preferable to canvas waders when working in currents or near deep water. A tight fitting wader belt should be worn by employees using canvas waders.
7. No one shall work in any body of water during an electrical storm.
8. Employees wading in wetlands with deep, unconsolidated bottom sediments must not be allowed to exceed their physical limitations. A walking staff or a float of some sort that the employee can brace against provides a measure of safety to employees who may become mired in mud.
9. Any activity involving snorkeling or SCUBA diving shall operate in strict compliance with the BRD Scientific Diving Manual.