



## Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

[www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm](http://www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm)

### Water Safety



Whether you are working or enjoying recreational activities near water, the best water hazard insurance you can have is learning to swim and teaching your family to swim. You do not have to be a champion swimmer in order to save yourself in a water emergency. A simple stroke such as a dog paddle can enable you to reach safety. American Red Cross statistics reveal that one half of the annual drowning incidents happen within 30 feet of safety.

Water safety begins with good judgment. Never or swim alone. Know the area where you are swimming and do not exceed your ability. Know where the swift currents are. Find out about drop-offs, deep holes, and rocky areas. A few common sense items that could save your life are:

- Wear flotation devices while boating. Always keep them buckled, snapped or zipped, so if you fall in, they will stay on.
- Do not mix drinking and swimming at picnics or outings. Over ten percent of all drowning victims had consumed alcoholic beverages.
- Swimming requires a lot of energy and makes muscles susceptible to cramps. If you lose energy, rest on your back in a floating position, and use a minimum amount of motion.
- Undertow or strong currents: There are several types of dangerous marine currents that should be avoided, if possible. If you are caught in a current, do not fight it. Swim parallel to the shore or diagonally toward it, heading shoreward only after you are out of the current.
- Water Temperature: Cold water can cause shock to the body. Blood vessels constrict, your body loses heat, and you can develop an oxygen deficiency that causes unconsciousness and ultimately drowning. Hypothermia caused by cold water can cause death in minutes.
- The old saying you heard as a child is true - Don't go swimming immediately after eating or any vigorous exercise. This may cause severe cramps.
- Stay with a swamped boat or canoe. Many boats will not sink even if the hull has been ruptured, and they may offer some buoyancy. Sometimes you can climb or swim into the swamped boat and paddle to shore. It is also easier for emergency rescuers to find you if you are close to the boat.
- Consult with your local municipality, Coast Guard office, American Red Cross office, and other authorities for additional water safety tips, rules and regulations.

Finally, abide by the safety rules at all times-on and off the job-when around water. Share these rules and enforce them with your children. Do not let a drowning tragedy strike your workplace, or any members of your family.