

STAGES OF COLD WATER IMMERSION



1. COLD SHOCK

- Gasp Reflex
- Panic
- Hyperventilation
- Increased Heart Rate



2. MUSCLE FAILURE

- Loss of muscle coordination
- Difficulty swimming, if you're able to swim at all



3. HYPOTHERMIA

- Body temperature drops to dangerous levels
- 75% of victims don't survive to this point



4. RESCUE DANGERS

- Being removed from cold water can have short and long term effects on your body



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SafeBoatingCampaign.com

PREPARE FOR COLD WATER BOATING



BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE DOCK

- Dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature
- Bring an extra set of clothes in case you get wet
- File a float plan with the details of your trip with someone you trust
- Make sure everyone is wearing a life jacket



DON'T PANIC IF YOU FALL INTO COLD WATER

- An unexpected fall into cold water causes an involuntary gasp reflex – quickly regain control of your breathing
- Keep afloat with the help of your life jacket, keep your head above water, and stay with the boat if possible
- Get into the HELP position (Heat Escape Lessening Posture) by crossing your arms across your chest and pull your knees up to your chest, as if hugging yourself
- If you are with other people, you can lessen heat escape if you huddle together



FACTS

- It takes less than ½ cup of water in your lungs to drown
- Even experienced swimmers can experience shock within one minute in the frigid water and may lose muscle control within 10 minutes

