



O.C.O.A.

ONTARIO CONSERVATION OFFICERS
ASSOCIATION

May 12, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**READY, SET, WEAR IT! – YOUR LIFEJACKET WILL SAVE YOUR LIFE
THIS SPRING!**

The Ontario Conservation Officers Association (O.C.O.A.) wants to take this opportunity to join with the Canadian Safe Boating Council (CSBC) to encourage everyone to think boating safety this spring. As tens of thousands of Ontarians take to the water on the May long weekend, O.C.O.A. members working as Ontario Conservation Officers will also be on the water –often working alongside OPP officers – to ensure the safety of recreational boaters and anglers.

Tragically, drowning claims the lives of boaters in Ontario every spring – and almost all of those deaths are preventable by simply wearing a lifejacket or personal flotation device.

“Our members always wear their PFDs when on patrol.” says O.C.O.A. President Mike Duncan. “I encourage EVERYONE who is out in a boat or canoe this May long weekend to wear their lifejacket.”

Even in cold water, a person can easily survive for an hour IF they are wearing a floatation device – plenty of time for help to arrive. Conversely, if you fall into the water and are not wearing a PFD, your chances of survival decrease dramatically. Over 90% of drowning victims are not wearing a PFD – and almost all would have lived if they had been. The law in Ontario simply requires that you have one approved PFD or lifejacket readily available for each person on your boat. But realistically, having a PFD but not wearing it is like not wearing your seatbelt in a car – by the time you realize you need it, it’s too late to put it on.

“North American Safe Boating Awareness Week runs May 19 – 25 this year, and is a perfect time to start a new habit of always wearing your PFD”, says Duncan. “I always look forward to early season fishing, but more important than catching that big one is returning home safely. Simply wearing your PFD will virtually guarantee that you will survive a boating accident where you end up in the water.”

For more information on boating safety, visit the CSBC website at www.csbc.ca, the O.C.O.A. website at www.oco.ca, or contact your local Conservation Officer.

Anyone with information about a natural resources or public safety related offence is encouraged to call the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources violation reporting line at **1-877-TIPS-MNR (847-7667)**, contact their local Conservation Officer directly, or call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

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