**From Bill Staiger (ODNR):**

We are looking forward to a great boating season now that the days are warming. Unfortunately, we have had 10 boaters die already this year. While coroner reports are not finished, I can’t help but feel that cold waters played a part in the tragic results of a day boating / fishing.

Wear your lifejackets!

File a float plan!

Always have a contingency safety plan that includes going overboard & getting wet.

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| **For Immediate Release**April 18, 2014  |  |  |
| **ODNR Warns of Dangers of Cold Water** |  |  |
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| **COLUMBUS, OH –** As cabin fever gives way to long-awaited sunshine and warm temperatures, water temperatures are still very cold. Lake Erie’s water temperature is around 40 degrees, and water temperatures in Ohio’s inland lakes and rivers are also cold. In 40-degree water, even the best swimmers will experience complete exhaustion in 15 minutes. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) reminds everyone to wear a life jacket when boating. Wearing a life jacket can buy precious time and save lives.“People can have as little as 15 minutes before they lose control of the muscles in their arms and legs in response to cold water,” said Gary Obermiller, chief of the ODNR Division of Watercraft. “It can be very difficult to locate, put on and buckle a life jacket in the water. If your life jacket is already on, it can help conserve your energy.”If the water temperature is less than 50 degrees, the window of opportunity for rescue is only a few minutes if the person is not dressed for the water conditions. Information on how to dress for the water temperature is available at [bit.ly/DressforCold](http://watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/education-safety/safety-tips-for-every-boater/know-before-you-go/dress-for-cold-weather-boating).Filing a float plan and making sure friends and family know where you are boating and when you are expected back is also very important. A sample float plan boaters can use is available at [bit.ly/FileFloatPlan](http://watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/education-safety/safety-tips-for-every-boater/know-before-you-go/file-a-float-plan).Nearly 90 percent of boating fatalities are due to drowning and nearly half of those are attributed to the effects of immersion in cold water. Water cooler than the normal body temperature of 98.6 degrees causes heat loss. Cold water will cool a body 25 times faster than cold air of the same temperature. Total immersion in cold water is very painful, and the disoriented victim can quickly panic. With these combined reactions, the victim may drown quickly. The best prevention for this danger is to wear a life jacket.Falling into cold water triggers the body's cold water immersion responses, beginning with an uncontrollable gasping reflex. A well-fitted life jacket will keep a person’s airway out of the water--which is most important when the gasping reflex begins. Heart rate and blood pressure increase dramatically, increasing the risk for cardiac arrest. The victim may hyperventilate and find it difficult to get air into the lungs.Given the person’s ability to keep his or her head above water and stay afloat, the following chart provides a general idea of survival times in water of varying temperatures. Factors that may alter these estimates include clothing or protective gear, the individual's health condition and water conditions.

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| **Survival Time** |
| **Water Temperature** | **Exhaustion** | **Death** |
| 32.5 | Under 15 minutes | 15 minutes or less |
| 32.5-40 | 15-30 minutes | 30-90 minutes |
| 40-50 | 30-60 minutes | 1-3 hours |
| 50-60 | 1-2 hours | 1-6 hours |
| 60-70 | 2-7 hours | 2-40 hours |
| 70-80 | 3-12 hours | 3 hours-indefinite |

The ODNR Division of Watercraft ensures boating safety and improved access on Lake Erie, the Ohio River, Ohio’s 600 inland lakes and 60,000 miles of rivers, streams and waterways. The division also conducts water safety education, registers and titles watercraft, and protects Ohio’s scenic rivers.*ODNR ensures a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all. Visit the ODNR website at* [*ohiodnr.gov*](http://ohiodnr.gov/)*.* |  |

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