

May 17-23

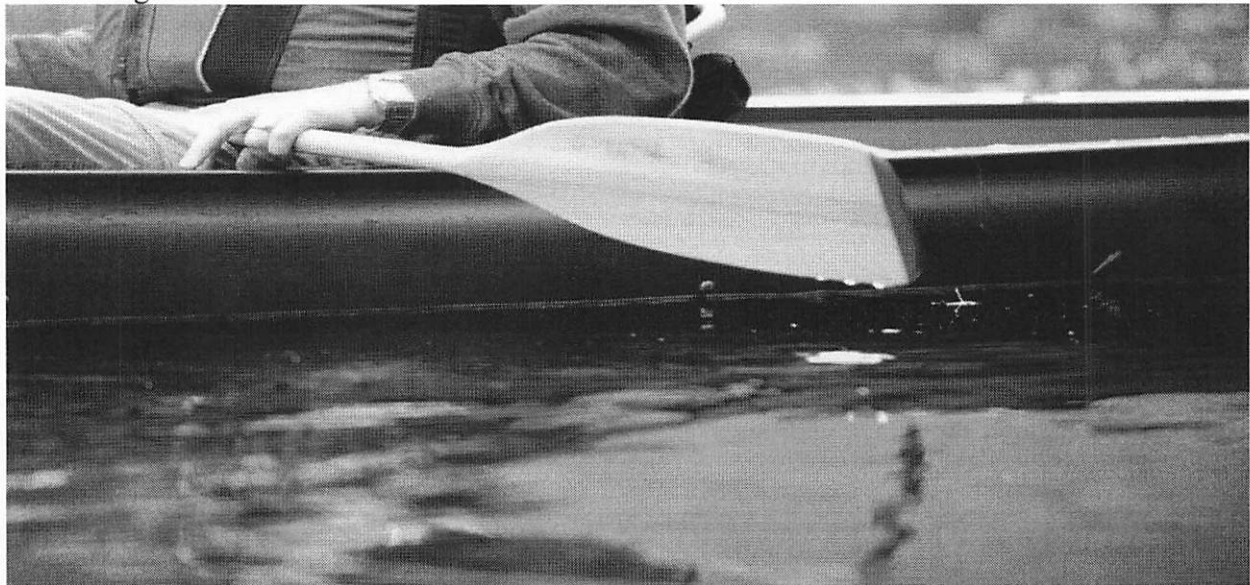
National Safe Boating Week in 2025 will be held from May 17-23. This annual event serves as a reminder for all boaters to enhance their boating safety skills and prepare for the upcoming boating season. It typically occurs the week leading up to Memorial Day, a time when waterways see increased activity.

OPP urges people to use life-jackets after rise in paddling deaths

'It is virtually impossible to drown if you are floating in the water with a properly fitted life-jacket,' provincial police say

BarrieToday Staff about 23 hours ago

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NEWS RELEASE

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

Fifty-six paddlers were among the 131 people who lost their lives in boating incidents on Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)-patrolled waterways in the last five years.

Between 2020 and 2024, 34 of those who died in marine incidents were canoeists, 17 were kayakers and five were using stand-up paddleboards.

Whether you and your family are in motorized or human-propelled vessels, be mindful that falling overboard as well as capsized vessels remain the leading causes of OPP-investigated boating and paddling deaths year after year.

The data makes a compelling case for the value in wearing a life-jacket. It is virtually impossible to drown if you are floating in the water with a properly fitted life-jacket. Even if you are rendered unconscious in a paddling/boating incident, a life-jacket will keep your head above water and keep you breathing.

This is a particularly important message for paddlers/boaters who cannot swim, as a life-jacket is the one piece of equipment that you can count on to save your life.

Boaters and paddlers are reminded that alcohol/drug impairment, hazardous waterways and operator inexperience are among other contributing factors in marine deaths, all of which can bring an enjoyable day on the water to an abrupt and tragic end.

With Safe Boating Awareness Week getting underway, OPP marine officers will be out on the water promoting marine safety and enforcing boating laws.

For a safe and enjoyable boating season, always be well-prepared. Familiarize yourself with Canada's Safe Boating Guide. Ensure your vessel is properly functioning and equipped. Check the weather forecast to determine if it is safe to go out and always boat sober and drug-free.

Finally, remember...the only life-jacket that can save your life is the one you are wearing.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The OPP Marine Program has a fleet of 134 vessels and close to 400 highly-trained marine officers committed to enforcing federal boating laws and the safety of Ontario boaters on more than 110,000 square kilometres (95 per cent) of Ontario's lakes and rivers.
- Safe Boating Awareness Week runs from May 17-23, 2025, and is led by the Canadian Safe Boating Council.