



## **NORTH LAKE TAHOE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **BOAT SMART. SWIM SMART.**

Summer is here and while we are all ready to take the plunge into Lake Tahoe, it is a good time to review a few summer water safety tips first. We all know the temperature of Lake Tahoe is a bit colder than most since it is an Alpine lake. It is also the second deepest lake in the United States and because of this, the temperatures remain lower than most lakes in our region year-round. Whether boating, jet skiing, kayaking, rafting, paddle boarding or swimming, it is beneficial to inform yourself about the colder temperatures of Lake Tahoe and how it can affect you. It is also a good idea to check the [red flag warning](#) status. Currently the water temperature of Lake Tahoe is 55.2 degrees. As the winter run off continues to melt and make its way to the lake, the water temperature will fluctuate. Typically, the water temperature in June ranges from 50 to 64 degrees.

We respond to numerous water emergencies on the lake not just during the summer months but throughout the year. We encourage everyone to please review the following safety precautions before recreating on Lake Tahoe.

#### **BOAT SAFE: PREPARE FOR COLD WATER AT LAKE TAHOE**

- ✓ Wear a life jacket
- ✓ Carry a whistle or horn
- ✓ Dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature
- ✓ Check the weather forecast for wind conditions
- ✓ Never go in the water alone
- ✓ Don't drink alcohol while operating a boat
- ✓ File a float plan – leave it with a friend or family

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## BOAT SMART: KNOW THE DANGERS OF COLD WATER AT LAKE TAHOE

- ✓ Cold Water Shock – Can cause a powerful gasp reflex when entering the water. You have approximately 1 minute to get your breathing under control.
- ✓ Swim Failure – You only have about 10 minutes of strength in your arms and legs for self-rescue.
- ✓ Hypothermia – Even in ice water it could take about 1 hour before losing consciousness. You only have this time if you are wearing a life jacket.
- ✓ Cold Water – Defined as water that is 70 degrees and below. Tahoe water temps range from 40 degrees in winter to 70 degrees in summer. Lake Tahoe water is always cold!
- ✓ Survival – Time in cold water is greatly increased when you wear a life jacket.

## SWIM SAFE: PREPARE FOR COLD WATER AT LAKE TAHOE

- ✓ Wear a life jacket and know your swimming limitations
- ✓ Enter the water slowly
- ✓ Feet first, first time
- ✓ Never swim alone
- ✓ Respect the dangers of cold water
- ✓ Check the [weather](#) for wind conditions
- ✓ File a 'float plan' before boating and leave with a friend or loved ones

## SWIM SMART: KNOW THE DANGERS OF COLD WATER AT LAKE TAHOE

- ✓ Cold Water Shock – Can cause a powerful gasp reflex when entering the water.
- ✓ Swim Failure – You only have a few minutes of strength in your arms and legs for self-rescue.
- ✓ Hypothermia – Cold water accelerates the progression of hypothermia since body heat is lost 25 times faster in cold water than cold air.
- ✓ Drowning – Can happen to anyone, even good swimmers.

Whatever your sport of choice is on the lake, please educate yourself about the colder temperatures of Lake Tahoe and check the weather before you head out. Stay safe and have fun!

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