

## THINK ABOUT IT...

We like to think of our lakes and rivers as a place for recreation and pleasure.

When someone is drowning, and needs to be rescued, these beautiful areas become a place of panic and worry. Recovery operations bring sorrow to everyone involved.

Environmental Emergency Services of Chemung, Steuben and Schuyler Counties wants everyone who uses and enjoys these natural resources for recreation to remember... **SAFE USE MAKES RECREATION FUN FOR EVERYONE!**



**-Monitor NOAA Weather Radio-** NOAA Weather Radio is a great way to stay current with National Weather Service Watches and Warnings. Portable units are nice for outdoorsman and can save you from a dangerous weather event because warning is received before the weather reaches you.

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## WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY SERVICES?

EES is a not-for-profit agency that concentrates on Environmental and Weather related issues in Chemung, Steuben, and Schuyler Counties.

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### Influence of the Weather

Rivers and lakes change with time and weather. Anticipating these changes may influence your decision about when to venture out on the water. EES suggests the following precautions:

- Review the weather forecast prior to boating.
- Check radar to see if rain is falling anywhere in the forecast area that might affect water conditions.
- Check available web sites listing lake conditions and river levels. Know that a release from one of the basin's dam projects can affect river flow.
- Heavy rain in steep sided valleys can lead to dramatic rises in river levels as water runs off quickly.
- Strong winds can also make controlling your boat extremely difficult.
- Depending on rainfall amounts, boating conditions can be affected for a few hours or for several days.



# River and Boating Safety Guide for the Southern Tier Things You Need To Know To Stay Safe

*Using our many lakes and rivers for recreation can be fun. But, you need to take an active role in knowing the dangers of using these water resources before you enter the water. Only participate in activities at a level appropriate for your skills and abilities. Stay safe to have fun!*

## Tips For Boating Safety

- Always make sure someone is aware of where you are boating and when you expect to return.
- **Know the laws.** The use of personal watercraft from sunset to sunrise is prohibited. You must wear the proper U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket, carry a U.S. Coast Guard approved visual distress signal and a sound signaling device, use a lanyard type cut-off switch, if supplied. Age and training restrictions apply.
- **Know your own limits.** Be sure your boating skills and experience are equal to the river or lake conditions.
- **NEVER BOAT ALONE.**
- Know how to recognize hypothermia in the cold, and heat exhaustion and dehydration in hot weather.
- **Dress appropriately for conditions.** Reduce the threat of injury by wearing protective head and footwear.
- **Carry a first aid kit and know how to use it.** Learn or review first aid and CPR techniques.
- Never run through rapid water unless you can see and access a clear path through it, and other boats are cleared from the area.
- **NEVER SWIM IN THE RIVER.** If you fall in, keep your toes above the water, feet (and boat) in front of you and heading downstream. In a lake, always stay with your craft.

## More Tips for Safe Boating

- **Never boat under the influence of drugs or alcohol.**
- Stay away from dams and other under water structures such as water intake and sewage pipes. Find portage around these obstacles.
- **You must wear and fasten your life jacket, not just have it in the boat.**
- Keep equipment in a waterproof bag tied to your craft so you don't lose it if your craft tips over.
- **There are hidden dangers under the waters, such as fallen trees, seaweed, etc.** These can cause watercraft to tip, or a person to be trapped and drown.
- **When in doubt, stop, scout the water for hazards before you continue.**
- It's easy to get confused about your location when on the water. Keep track of common landmarks such as launch sites or parks, and how far away you are from them. It may take emergency crews a lengthy time to find you from land. Know and use survival skills until they arrive.

## Where Do I Get Information

There are plenty of great web sites to get information about current river, lake, and weather conditions, but you must know how to use this information safely. Remember that conditions on our local lakes and rivers can change at any given moment and many people have found themselves in trouble because of their failure to know the facts. The following are links to web resources that local boaters can use. And remember...

**When in doubt, stop and scout.**

[Environmental Emergency Services](#)

[USGS Data](#)

[NYS Boating Laws](#)

[Nat'l Weather Binghamton](#)

[River Friends boating tips](#)