



Drowning - Shocking!

by VINCENT T. PICA, II
 COMMODORE, FIRST DISTRICT, SOUTHERN REGION (D1SR)
 UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY



The main thrust of this column is all about safety of life at sea. And drowning is clearly one of the major risks out there. But there is a little known fact that you can drown right at the marina - in the most shocking way! It is called "ESD" - Electric Shock Drowning.

Most mariners are not aware that such a danger even exists other than in the most blatant way. If there were an electrical cable thrashing about from a downed power wire, well, it is pretty obvious that whether that happens at the dock or in front of your house, that is a major danger. If it happens to knock you off the dock as it paralyzes you, you're going to drown. But how about a charge as low ten milliamps (.010 A)?

Sources of Stray Currents at the Dock

There are two sources of stray current at the marina - faulty marina wiring and faulty wiring on your boat. At the marina, if there is a non-functioning grounding system, or an improper grounding of the neutral-white power conductor or just unapproved wiring near the water, there can easily be a charge snaking through the waters of the marina. Although these are all violations of the National Fire Protection Association's PFFA 303 Fire Protection Standard for Marinas and Boatyards, it will be cold comfort for you if you reach into the water to retrieve your cap and your muscular system is shocked into paralysis. The amount of electricity entering the body can be so small that often the post-mortem doesn't catch that stray current was the cause of death. "Poor Charlie reached in for his skipper's cap and just kept going! He must have



been dead when he hit the water because he never even tried to get back on the dock!"

And it doesn't have to be a marina owner who missed his annual inspection. It could be you or your slip mates. As the boats get bigger and the electrical systems get more complicated - with generators, inverters, chargers and other such devices - chances of error compound. Add in the Do-It-Yourself'er adding a device as an after-market "enhancement" to the boat and you can see the implications. And it is all the usual errors - poor groundings, reversed polarities, mixing AC and DC wiring, etc. While such practices are violations of the American Boat and Yacht Council's (ABYC)

Standards and Recommended Practices, the boater is not protected from himself or others by required inspections. You just have to be committed to doing it with licensed and experienced help.

The most unnerving aspect is that if muscles are exposed to charged water, they can become paralyzed, making it impossible to swim or even breathe. Drowning happens just that much faster since obviously you can't do anything to aid yourself.

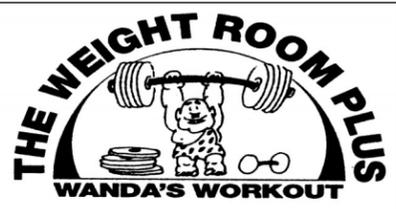
What Can I Do About It?

First, stay out of the water in a marina, especially if someone is running their generator. If your cap blows off your head into the drink, get a boat hook with at least a rubber grip and snag it.

Secondly, check with your dock master to be sure that the boats and the marina itself are wired to ABYC and NFPA standards. It is better than even odds that the dock master has a charge-indicator in the shop for simple boat work. Have him check the waters periodically, perhaps even by staging an "Electrical Safety Day" at the marina. Have everyone that has a generator turn theirs on. Then test the waters. If it shows a charge, turn the generators off one by one until the charge drops out. That's your guy.

He'll thank you for it - as will everyone at the marina.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at DSO-HR and we will help you "get in this thing..."



WHAT IS YOUR REAL AGE?

by WANDA NEPELL

Science suggests that your body might be younger (or older!) than you think. Here is your chance to find out how old you really are! Answer the following questions. Go to this website: [OK Cupid](http://OKCupid.com)/Take The Want is your REAL Age Test. It's kind of fun and truly enlightening.

1 What is your dating status?

- Single-Seeing Someone Engaged - Married Separated - Divorced Widowed

2 Do you have children?

- Nope! Yes, 1-2 Yes, 3-4 Yes, 5 or more

3 Do you take any long term, prescription medication?

- No Yes

4 Do you exercise?

- AHHHH HA HA HA
- Yeah, the first month of every year, until my resolution is forgotten
- Yes, but I wish I was more on top of it.
- OMG yes, I HAVE to get that 15 minutes a day in!

5 What kind of car do you drive?

- It's lowered and has chrome spinners, duh! Compact, or midsize.
- SUV Station wagon

6 What is your REAL age?

- Under 21 21-29 30-39 Over 40

7 How old do you FEEL?

- Under 21 22-29 30-39 40 or older

8 How do you feel about South Park?

- I LOVE IT! I don't watch it
- It's offensive! They shouldn't portray children like that!
- What's a South Park?

9 Pick the group of words from the list below that appeals to you the most.

- Candy, Christmas, Puppy Sex, Cars, Alcohol
- Job, Money, Friends Home, Family, Love

10 Ok, about your job... you work...

- Work? Um, no Part time, I am going to School too
- Part time Full time

11 Do you like your job?

- Nope, who can enjoy minimum wage working in fast food?
- It's ok, I wouldn't turn down something better
- No, but I stick with it because it pays well Yes, it is my dream job

12 Pick a drink.

- Soda Juice Whatever has alcohol Water

13 How many sexual partners have you had?

- I'm a Virgin Less than I can count on one hand
- Less than I can count on my all my fingers and toes More than 20

14 What would you choose to decorate the walls of your home with?

- Posters! Prints of famous paintings Real paintings
- Artificial plants in wall vases or plant hooks

15 Pick the most appealing vacation.

- Spring break at the BEACH, Baby!
- A romantic cruise, who cares to where.
- Vacation? I will be home working on my house! I can never find the time!
- Disneyland with the kids.

16 How many nights a week do you eat out?

- I NEVER COOK! 5-6 2-4 Less than one

17 Approximately how much a MONTH would you say you spend on groceries?

- Less than \$50 About \$100 In the neighborhood of \$200 \$300 or more

18 If you came across a large sum of money and could NOT invest it or bank it, how would you spend it?

- I would go shopping, Paris Hilton Style!
- I would go on a lavish vacation, and it would be no fun without my friends/family, so I take them too!
- Buy a house or car Start my own business... I've waited so long!

19 Judging by your lifestyle, driving, sexual activity, hereditary disease, clumsiness, etc... when do you think you will die?

- I won't make it till I'm 30!
- I can't believe I made it to 30! It won't be long now!
- I will be middle aged, probably 40-60
- I will live to be ripe and old! Maybe 100!

If you want to feel better and start living your best life, Oprah says to start by answering one question: "Why you are worthy of getting healthy this year?"

If there is anything we at The Weight Room Plus Wanda's Workout, 225 Montauk Hwy, Moriches, 878-0005, www.WandasWeightRoomPlus.com, can do to help you reach your fitness goals, please feel free to call or visit our website to print out your free 7 day pass to our club!