



Spring Isn't Far Away But Warm Water Is - Cold Water Boating

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We've had a few mild days in here. This reminded many of us that Spring isn't far away - and for my wife to say, "You're not thinking of putting the boat in the water already, are you?" Well, much as I'd like to, I bet that Ol' Man Winter has one or two surprises for us before the Spring finally chases him away. But even then the water will be cold for several weeks and you need to be aware of how dangerous that can be - if you aren't prepared and savvy. This column is about that.

Warm Air, Cold Water = Risks!

I like a warm day, early in the season as much as the next mariner. But the water itself is just about as deadly as it is in the deep of winter. Remember that water takes heat from your body 25x's faster than air of the same temperature. You can impress this on your young boaters - and yourself - quite easily. Lay out a glass of water before you turn in one night. It will be room temperature by the morning. Now take two ice cubes from the freezer. Put one on a dry napkin next to the room-temperature glass on water. Drop the second ice cube into the glass. Now, in theory, they are both exposed to the same temperature - room temperature. But when the ice cube on the napkin starts to show a damp line around itself, the ice cube in the glass will have melted away. This is why hypothermia is so insidious and dangerous (see *SSP, Cold Water Survival, Hypother-*

mia, Rescue & Recovery, 10/19/11)

Precautions? Yes!

OK, it is a beautiful day in March or April and you're just dying to tool out for a while. And why not - how great is it when the waters are too cold for the algae and other microscopic sea life so you can see all the way to the sandy bottom? Great indeed, but don't make way without a few simple but important precautions.

Step #1

Has the engine been prepped from its long winter snooze? Are you fueled up? Is there some fuel enhancer thrown in? Certainly, there is likely to be some condensation in the tank and that water will precipitate down to the bottom of the tank... and some might get sucked up into the engine... So, engine prepped, fuel tank full and fuel enhancer thrown in - or no-go!

Step #2

Did you file a float plan with somebody? Do it - or no-go. (see *SSP, "Seamanship - Float Plans - Nothing but Upside", 2/2/11.*) If you do end up in trouble, getting the "rescue clock" started ASAP is imperative. The environment is inherently more dangerous when the water is cold.

Step #3

If you don't have cold-water life jacket gear, you're playing Russian Roulette with your own life. When we put to sea, if the water temperature is 60-

degrees F or less, USCG regulations require us to be in "mustang" suits - which aren't as encompassing as a dry suit but certainly offers us significant protection in the event of an immersion. Admittedly, when the air is warm, those "mustangs" are like Turkish steam baths but we're safe. At the very least, a float coat provides warmth and at the same time doubles as a life jacket that will float a person. Just acknowledge that it isn't as safe as a "mustang."

Be sure that your flotation gear has a whistle and an emergency strobe light attached. If you've invested in a PPIRB/PLB, great (see *SSP, "EPIRBs, PPIRBs, GPIRBs - What?" 11/29/06 and "Personal Locator Beacons Locate You!" 8/11/10.*) And a reflector mirror would be superb. You can signal over 20 miles with one smaller than the size of your fist. Airline pilots are trained to call in sightings of targeted reflections.

Step #4

Review cold water survival techniques and risks with your crew.

1. If you fall in, get out. Even if you have to climb onto the hull of the overturned boat (yes, Bunky, that happens!), get out. Remember the ice cube experiment.

2. Limit your movements! Strenuous activity increases your heart rate, which increases the rate that blood, cooled at the surface of your body, is circulated to the central core - where it will kill you.

Assume a heat-emitting lessening position - in the water or out (HELP.) Cross your legs to protect your groin area from giving up heat. Put your arms across your chest and your hands under your arm pits to do the same thing.

3. If you're a 200-lb man, here is a rough guideline of your survival time:

temperature of water: expected survival time

70-80° F (21-27° C): 3 hours - indefinitely

60-70° F (16-21° C): 2-40 hours

50-60° F (10-16° C): 1-6 hours

40-50° F (4-10° C): 1-3 hours

32.5-40° F (0-4° C): 30-90 minutes

<32° F (<0° C): Under 15-45 minutes

If you're smaller, less time. If you're larger, more time. And have a good meal before you make way. It will warm your body from the inside as the fires of digestion do their work. BTW, these times only are applicable if you are wearing a life-jacket. If not, you will start to falter as muscle control fades with body temperature - and you will drown. You won't be around long enough to get hypothermic.

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..."



County Clerk Update

by SUFFOLK COUNTY CLERK

JUDY PASCALE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR RECENTLY DISCHARGED VETERANS

As we recognize those who have proudly served our Country in the United States Armed Forces, Suffolk County Clerk Judith A. Pascale would like to remind all veterans, especially those returning from abroad, to file a copy of their DD-214 (military discharge papers) with the Suffolk County Clerk.

"Very often veterans are required to submit DD-214 papers when they apply for certain benefits. By filing their papers with the County Clerk, veterans are assured that a permanent record exists in the event their original DD-214 is misplaced, destroyed or needed by their family," commented Suffolk County Clerk Pascale.

At the time of filing, a copy of the original must be presented along with a current mailing address. The County Clerk's office will return the original; issue a convenient identification card and two certified copies free of charge to the veteran. Additionally, all filed discharge papers are sealed from public view, but available to the veteran and his/her next of kin. A DD-214 can be filed at any time after separation from the armed forces.

In Suffolk County, veterans may be eligible for numerous service related programs. Most notably is a reduction in their county, and sometimes town property taxes based on the type of service they rendered to their country in wartime.

Additionally, a DD-214 is required and must be submitted for other programs including Social Security benefits, Veterans Administration services, Civil Service testing, and replacement medals. For a better understanding of all the services available to veterans within Suffolk County, individuals should contact the Suffolk County Veterans Services Agency at (631) 853-VETS (8387).



Legislator Muratore Announces Veterans Resource Day

Legislator Tom Muratore (R-Ronkonkoma) would like to inform all Veterans and their families of The Veterans Resource Day being held on Friday, March 30th. The free event has been specifically developed for all Veterans; service disabled Veterans, discharging active duty personnel, reservists and the National Guard to provide the resources available to help our Veterans get back to work. The event is being held from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Roosevelt Hall at Farmingdale State College and is designed for "Helping All Veterans Get Back to Work."

The program will include resources and information on employment, technical assistance for starting or growing an existing business, certification programs, training opportunities, small business management training, funding resources, and individual employment issues or concerns. The goal of the event is to get all Long Island Veterans working in their own business, employed, or better prepared for employment.

"It is important to take this opportunity to make a difference and help our Veterans get back to work. All Long Island Veterans and their families deserve to either be employed at a job they enjoy or run their own business successfully and that's what this resource day is about," stated Legislator Tom Muratore. Pre-registration for this program is required. To register, please call (631) 420-2765 or go to www.farmingdale.edu/sbdc and click on "workshops" on the top menu.