

# Lake Safety Resource Guide



Safety on our lakes is a top priority for Alabama Power. To help you and your loved ones remain safe on the lake, Alabama Power Shoreline Management and trusted experts have collaborated on key safety topics. We want to keep safety a priority every day on every lake.

## Boating



- Check your boat: Many people put their boats in the water without first checking motor belts and fluids and end up having to be towed. Make sure your boat is in good working order before taking it out.
- Make sure all required safety equipment is on the boat and in good working order.
- Practice courtesy on the water: From the time you start to take the boat to the launching ramp until the time you take it out, courtesy plays a big part in the boating adventure. Be careful of your wake, both around homes and other boaters.
- Drive defensively: Be aware of what other boaters are doing around you. Even if you have the right-of-way, if the other boater doesn't give way to your vessel, you should give way. Keep an eye out for boaters on personal watercraft, paddleboards, kayaks, canoes, etc.
- Don't drink and drive a boat: Just like on the highway, drinking alcoholic beverages and operating a boat is against the law.

## Life jackets



- To meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements, a boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket for each person aboard. Boats 16 feet and longer must have at least one type IV throwable device as well.
- Adult-sized life jackets will not work for children. To work correctly, a life jacket must be worn, fit snugly and not allow the child's chin or ears to slip through.
- Life jackets should be tested for wear and buoyancy at least once each year. Waterlogged, faded or leaky jackets should be discarded.

## LIFE JACKETS MUST BE:

- U.S. Coast Guard-approved.
- In good and serviceable condition.
- The appropriate size for the user.
- Worn by children under eight years old while the boat is on the water.
- Worn by anyone on a personal watercraft or being towed on skis/tube.
- Worn by anyone within 800 feet below a hydroelectric dam or navigational lock or dam.

## ACCESSIBILITY:

- Wearable life jackets and throwable devices must be readily accessible.
- They should not be stowed in plastic bags, in locked or closed compartments or have other gear stowed on top of them.

## Electricity



- Electric shock drowning occurs when someone makes contact with electrified water and becomes a conductor of electricity, leading to complete loss of muscle control, rapid or irregular heartbeat and even death.
- Docks and boats can carry sources of electricity. Faulty wiring or the use of damaged electrical cords and other devices can cause the surrounding water source to become energized. Never swim around a boat or dock where breakers or ground fault circuit interrupters are tripping.
- Never allow swimming near a boat, marina or launching ramp. Residual electric current could flow into the water from the boat or the marina's wiring.
- Be sure your boat and dock are properly maintained. Ground fault circuit interrupters and equipment leakage circuit interrupters should be tested monthly to ensure functionality. Conduct leakage testing to determine if electrical current is escaping the vessel or dock.
- Never use household electric cords near water. Use only portable ground fault circuit interrupters or shore power cords (including "Y" adapters) that are "UL- marine listed" when using electricity near water.
- Know where your main breakers are located on both the boat and the shore power source, so you can respond quickly in an emergency. Be aware of any potential electrical hazards by checking for nearby power lines before boating, fishing or swimming.
- Regularly have your boat's and dock's electrical systems inspected by a qualified electrician to be sure they meet local and state National Electric Code, National Fire Protection Association, and American Boat and Yacht Council safety codes and standards.
- There are power lines crossing certain lakes and waterways in Alabama. Contact with these and other power lines can result in property damage, personal injury or death. Be aware of the presence of power lines crossing lakes and waterways. Keep all activities, including aviation, away from power lines. Alabama Power Company follows guidance from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with respect to installing aerial warning markers on power lines for aviation purposes, therefore not all power lines will be marked.

## Heat



- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Warning: If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has prescribed water pills, ask your doctor how much you should drink when the weather is hot.
- Fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s or higher, fans will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath or moving to an air-conditioned place are much better ways to cool off.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.
- Although anyone at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on:
  - Infants and young children.
  - People age 65 or older.
  - People who have a mental illness.
  - Those who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure.
- Limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat (also keeps you cooler) and sunglasses and by putting on sunscreen SPF 15 or higher (the most effective products say "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels.)

## Storms

### LIGHTNING:



- Lightning strikes the United States about 25 million times a year and kills an average of 49 people each year.
- Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks during thunder or lightning.
- Never lie flat on the ground.
- Immediately get out and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (barbed wire fences, power lines, windmills, etc.).
- Stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.

## SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS:

- A thunderstorm is considered severe if it produces hail at least 1 inch in diameter or has wind gusts of at least 58 miles per hour.
- Listen to local news or a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, such as darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
- Avoid electrical equipment and corded telephones. Cordless phones, cellphones and other wireless handheld devices are safe to use.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends.
- If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground; water; tall, isolated trees; and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are also not safe.



## FLOODS:

- Get out of areas subject to flooding and get to higher ground immediately.
- Do not drive into flooded roadways or around a barricade.
- Do not walk through floodwaters. If you are trapped by moving water, move to the highest possible point and call 911 for help.
- Don't go into a basement, or onto a dock, if water covers the electrical outlets, or if cords are submerged. If you see sparks or hear buzzing, crackling, snapping or popping noises, get out/off. Stay out of water that may be electrified.
- If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Be sure to lock your home as you leave. If you have time, disconnect utilities and appliances.

## Lake Resources

Alabama Power Shoreline Management  
[www.apcshorelines.com](http://www.apcshorelines.com)

Alabama Law Enforcement Agency Marine Patrol  
[www.alea.gov](http://www.alea.gov)

In case of emergency, call 911.