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OPP promoting Safe Boating Awareness Week (May 22 - 28)

Ahead of the boating season, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is urging Ontarians to avoid taking the same risks that cost 32 boaters and paddlers their lives on OPP-patrolled waterways last year.

During a tragic year that marked a 12-year high in marine deaths in OPP jurisdictions, the majority of the people who died in 2020 faced similar double setbacks to their safety on the water. The first setback occurred when they ended up in the water because their vessel capsized or they fell overboard. The second setback was the absence of a properly fitted lifejacket, which is not only designed to keep boaters and paddlers afloat, but also helps turn them onto their backs, enabling them to breathe if they are rendered unconscious.

As falling overboard and capsized vessels are the lead primary causes in boating fatalities every after year, it is in these situations in particular that wearing a lifejacket becomes a critical piece of life-saving equipment.

With many more people planning to take up boating this summer, the OPP is urging all new, inexperienced boaters to develop safe marine habits at the very outset. This includes paddlers who accounted for half of those who died last year after heading out in canoes, kayaks and other human-powered vessels such as stand-up paddle boards.

For a safe summer on the water, ALWAYS:

? Wear a Canadian-approved lifejacket or personal floatation device (PFD)

? Check the weather conditions/forecast (paddlers should always stick close to shore)

? Boat/paddle sober a! nd drug-free

? Tell people where you are going

? Be cold water aware

? Be mindful of your vessel's capabilities when deciding where to go boating

? Take a boating course

The OPP remains committed to saving lives on Ontario roads, waterways and trails.