**WATER SAFETY**

### Safety on and around the water
Arkansas has many lakes, rivers and streams perfect for swimming and boating. Whether at a pool, beach or lake, in a fishing boat, powerboat, sailboat or a personal watercraft (like a jet ski), water recreation can be dangerous.

#### Drowning precautions
- Don’t leave your child alone near water, even for a second.
- Stay within arm’s reach of your child when he is in the water. With children under age 5, you should be able to touch them at all times.
- Children and adults should wear life jackets at all times in or around rivers, lakes, streams, and other bodies of water.
- Swimming lessons do not make you “drown-proof.”
- Never swim alone. Never mix swimming and drugs or alcohol.
- Never dive into water that is less than nine feet deep or of unknown depth.
- Adults should learn CPR.
- Remove all toys from the water after use so children are not tempted by them.
- Use four-sided fencing at least four feet high to enclose your pool or spa, with gates that close and latch themselves. Gates should open away from the pool, and the fence should be climb-resistant.

#### Know and understand Arkansas’ personal watercraft and boating laws
- Any person born in or after 1986 must pass a boater education course run by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) to operate a powerboat, sailboat or jet ski.
- The boater education card must be carried at all times on the water.
- Visit the AGFC at www.agfc.com/education/Pages/EducationBoating.aspx to learn more about Arkansas boating laws.
- In Arkansas, children 12 and under must wear a USCG life jacket in boats on the water.

#### Life Jacket Tips
- All children and adults should wear a life jacket when engaged in boating activities.
- Jackets with flotation collars are a good idea for small children to keep their faces out of the water.
- To make sure a life jacket fits correctly, fasten all straps or zip the jacket. Pull up on the Jacket from the shoulders. If the jacket can be lifted above the chin, it’s too big.
- Parents should consistently model life jacket use.

#### Personal watercraft safety
- You must be at least 16 years old to drive a PWC.
- Everyone on a PWC must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device.
- Don’t use alcohol or drugs before or while driving or riding a PWC.
- Follow speed limits.
- Don’t operate PWCs at night.
- Avoid wake jumping.
- PWCs should not be driven where people are swimming.
- Have someone at least 12 years of age keep an eye on anyone you’re towing behind the PWC.
- Consider wearing safety gear such as helmets, wet suits, gloves, footwear, and eye wear (recommended by the Personal Watercraft Industry Association).

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Consumer Product Safety Commission, American Red Cross, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission