



# Safety Tips for Having Fun in the Red River:

Boating/Canoeing/Kayaking/Fishing



## Safety Diamond Rules

### **BLOCK** water access:

- Install isolation fencing with self closing and locking gates around pools or spas.

### **WATCH** water users:

- Never let any child near water unsupervised. Always watch children in and around water.
- Before going in the water tell someone where you are going and when you will return.
- Know where and how to get help.

### **USE** proper Personal Flotation Device/Life Jacket

- When boating, fishing or playing around water, children and adults should always wear properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets.
- With few exceptions, children under 12 must wear life jackets when underway on a vessel of 26 feet or less.
- Use the “buddy system” when in or around water.
- Have rescue aids available: throw lines, life rings, cell phones and self-rescue equipment.

### **LEARN** to swim and how to use CPR:

- Enroll children over four in swimming lessons. Know how to use rescue techniques and equipment.
- Understand current water conditions, weather and possible risks of entering the water.

- When rescuing someone put on a life jacket, reach out with anything and keep a firm grip. Throw something to the victim to help them float. Row out to the victim and help them climb aboard.
- Don't go into the water, call 9-1-1 and get help. Only trained lifeguards should enter the water.

## Lowhead Dams

All dams are dangerous. Lowhead dams are especially hazardous because they do not appear dangerous. Water falling over the lowhead dam creates a hydraulic, or recirculating, current. The falling water continuously takes any object to the bottom, brings it to the surface and returns the object to the bottom. Watercraft should stay at least 300 feet away from the dams. Individuals along the banks of the river should stay at least 10 feet away.



## Retrofitted Dams

Seven of the eight dams on the U.S. portion of the Red River have been reconstructed with a five percent slope rock rapid. This eliminated the undertow current while permitting upstream migration for fish. Even though a dam has been retrofitted, they are still dangerous. Still be cautious and use portages when available.

## Drayton Dam

The Drayton Dam has still not been retrofitted, with rock rapids and is very dangerous.

## Look at a map

Check a map before boating/canoeing to learn dam locations. Some maps may not list all dams.

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### Canoe/Kayak Safety

- Don't boat alone.
- Wear your personal flotation device.
- Avoid situations that are beyond your boating and swimming ability.
- Learn the essential canoeing/kayaking strokes.
- Know what hazards you are likely to encounter.
- Be suitably prepared and equipped.
- Check River classifications and be sure to find out what the water conditions are or will be at time of launch.
- Dress appropriately.
- Be sure your craft is in good repair.
- Have a safety plan.
- Keep boats a safe distance apart.

<http://www.marincanooclub.org>

### Limit Water Sports after Significant Rainfall

Rainfall of a half inch or more causes significant flow of stormwater to our streams, rivers and the Bay. The storm flow carries bacteria from numerous sources. During this time, limit exposure risks by refraining from activities that submerge the head and face. Also, the Department of Health discourages water contact within 200 feet of a running storm drain. These waters may contain high levels of harmful bacteria, which may cause illness.



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### Make Good Hygiene Part of Boating and Recreation

Hand sanitizer belongs with your gear. Frequent hand-washing is always good practice.

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### For more information:

River Keepers  
1120 28th Ave. N., Ste. B  
Fargo, ND 58102  
(701) 235-2895  
[info@riverkeepers.org](mailto:info@riverkeepers.org)  
[www.riverkeepers.org](http://www.riverkeepers.org)  
[www.facebook.com/RiverKeepersFM](https://www.facebook.com/RiverKeepersFM)

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### Fish in Minnesota (including the Red River) are among the healthiest in the Great Lakes Region. Most fish caught are safe to eat.

#### Guidelines for Choosing fish

- **Keep smaller fish for eating.** The younger, smaller fish are less contaminated than older, larger fish.
- **Eat fish that are less contaminated.** Substitute a few panfish meals for the single, large meal you normally eat. Contaminants build up in large predator fish more than in panfish.
- **Eat smaller meals when you eat big fish and eat them less often.** Freeze part of your catch to space out the meals over time. This gives your body time to eliminate the toxins.
- **Clean and cook your fish properly.** Remove the skin of fish and trim off the fatty areas. Broiling, baking or grilling fish allows the contaminated fat to drip away. Poaching and deep-fat frying does the same but throw away broth or oil.

#### MINNESOTA

Health risks of contaminants or for a copy of the *Minnesota Fish Consumption Advisory*:  
Minnesota Department of Health  
651-201-5000

Source of contaminants in Minnesota's environment:  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
651-296-6300

Collecting and testing Minnesota sport fish:  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
612-296-2835

Collecting and testing commercial fish:  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
612-296-2627

#### NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Game and Fish Department  
701-328-6300

North Dakota State Health:  
Division of Water Quality  
701-328-5210