

MARION COUNTY PARKS



WATER SAFETY TIPS

Stay safe while enjoying our natural waterways!

Playing in our beautiful rivers and streams is fun, but it can come with some extra dangers. Follow these tips to have a great time in the water while remaining safe.





- Unexpected changes in air or water temperature can be dangerous to swimmers. Be mindful of your surrounding and be ready to leave the water if temperatures start to change.



- Fast moving currents, like waves and rapids, can be dangerous even in shallow water.
- Natural waterways can have unexpected drop-offs or hazards—be cautious in the water and aware of your surroundings.
- If the water is too murky to see the bottom, be extra careful while moving through the water. Keep a lookout for hazards like rocks, logs, and other debris.



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- Always enter the water feet first.
- Enter unknown or shallow water cautiously.
- Never dive into the water unless there are signs designating the body of water as safe for diving.
- Do not enter the water from a height—like a bridge, cliff, or large rock.
- Be careful when standing to prevent slipping or being knocked over by currents.
- Swim with a buddy, and have someone on shore ready to contact help in an emergency.
- Closely supervise children at all times.



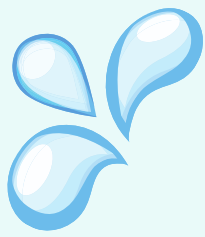


River and Stream Safety Tips

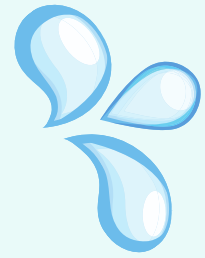
- River and stream conditions can change rapidly. Snowmelt in the summer can make the water colder than expected, or increase the speed of currents.
- Dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature. Cold water can drain a swimmer's energy.
- Avoid rock hopping. Stream polished rocks may be slippery when wet or dry.
- If you're going to cross a stream, avoid deep and/or swift water.
- When crossing natural bridges like rocks or logs, consider where you will land if you fall. Never cross above rapids or falls.
- If you fall in a river, or get swept into fast moving water, DO NOT try to stand up. Lie on your back with your feet pointing downstream and your toes poking up out of the water. Keep watch downstream to push away from rocks with your feet.



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Life Jacket Tips



- Life jackets are always a good idea. Swimming in natural waterways is tiring, especially in cold water or on hot days. Even if you feel like a strong swimmer, life jackets can keep you safe if fatigue hits suddenly or if conditions change.
- It's best to always wear a life jacket when swimming in rivers. Life jackets are required to be worn in Class III or higher whitewater rapids.



THE FIT

Check the manufacturer's ratings for your size and weight to get started.

Make sure the life jacket is properly zipped or buckled.

Raise your arms straight up over your head while wearing your life jacket and grab the shoulder material, gently pulling up. If the jacket goes up over your chin or face, it does not fit. A snug life jacket means it fits.

- Make sure your life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Make sure your life jacket is in good condition. Do not use life jackets that have broken buckles or zippers, or that are ripped or torn.
- Only use child-sized life jackets for children. Adult life jackets will not fit properly.
- Be a good role model for kids. Adults wearing life jackets can encourage children and teens to wear theirs.

