

WADING SAFELY

Fishing is fun, no doubt about it. There are many ways to do it. Many people fish from a boat, others fish from the shoreline, and some wade. Wading can be dangerous, especially if you can't swim. Remember, drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death in the United States. You can protect yourself by wading safely. These tips should help you be safe when you wade.

WHEN WADING:

Never fish alone. In an emergency having someone around who can help is always best.

Wear a life jacket. Life jackets float. You don't. Many styles have pockets where you can put your fishing stuff. A life jacket will also help keep you warm.

Use a wading stick or staff. An old ski pole works well. A heavy stick will work, too. Some tackle stores even sell wading staffs.



felt soles

Wear felt soles. Baseball and football players wear cleats or spikes. Anglers wear felt-soled boots. The fibers in the felt grip slimy rocks. This keeps your feet from slipping off rocks. Don't worry if you can't find boots with felt soles in your size. Most tackle shops carry felt soles. You glue them right on the bottom of your hip boots.

Carry a whistle. You can use the whistle to call for help. You can also use the whistle to tell your fishing buddy where you are.

whistle



If you are wading with a staff, cross the current facing upstream. Lean on the staff as if it were a third leg.

Shuffle your feet. When in water over the top of your feet, don't pick up your feet. Lift them up just a little and shuffle along the bottom.

Take one step at a time. It isn't a race, so go slowly. You will spook fewer fish that way, too.

Waders and hip boots will not "pull you down," as many people think. If you fall in, immediately bend your knees to trap air in your waders.

life jacket



wading stick

Stay on your back with your feet downstream and your knees bent. Work your way slowly to shore. Don't panic. Your life jacket will keep you afloat. If you don't know how to swim, you should learn. It's your best protection when you are on or near the water.

Lastly, have some extra dry clothes. A dry sweatshirt and sweatpants sure feel good after you have taken a swim. Besides, if you have clothes to change in to, you can keep fishing!

Safe fishing!