

## ?LIFE JACKETS SAVE LIVES. NO EXCUSES, NO EXCEPTIONS.?

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is urging everyone heading out on the water to make one life-saving choice: wear your life jacket, every time, every ride.

Despite calm conditions and proximity to shore, many boating-related drownings occur when people least expect danger. Most of these tragedies happen in small vessels, like canoes and kayaks, and are preventable.

In 2025, nearly 80% of all boating fatalities investigated by the OPP involved individuals who were not wearing a personal flotation device (PFD). Adult males accounted for almost 90% of all boating fatalities on OPP patrolled waters. According to the Drowning Prevention Research Centre of Canada, 35% of water-related fatalities in Ontario are linked to swimming, while another 13% are attributed to walking, running, or playing near water, accounting for nearly half of all drownings when combined.

Young children, weak swimmers, and non-swimmers should always wear a life jacket when near water, even in shallow areas. Supervision and proactive lifesaving decisions, like wearing a life jacket, are key to avoiding tragedy.

### What You Can Do:

Always wear a properly fitted, Transport Canada (TC) approved life jacket. Modern life jackets are lightweight, comfortable, and designed to save lives. Don't just bring it, wear it;

Ensure there is a properly sized life jacket for every person on board;

Keep all required safety equipment easily accessible and ready to use;

Set the example, especially for children and new boaters;

Check weather and water conditions before heading out.

Every year the OPP continues to share this important safety message across the province reminding the public that wearing a TC-approved PFD is one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent water-related tragedies.

Make it a habit. Make it home.

### **OFFROAD SAFELY**

Members of the Dufferin Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are reminding off-road vehicle (ORV) riders to operate responsibly and only in areas where they are legally permitted to ride.

The OPP continues to receive complaints involving dirt bikes and other off-road vehicles being operated on private property without permission. Recent incidents have resulted in damage to golf courses, residential lawns, community parks, agricultural land, and trails throughout the county.

These concerns are not limited to traditional gas-powered dirt bikes. The growing use of electric dirt bikes and other electric off-road vehicles is also contributing to increased complaints. Regardless of how a vehicle is powered, all ORVs are subject to the same laws and must only be operated in permitted areas.

Public roadways are not trails and should not be used for recreational riding or ?exploring? with dirt bikes or ORVs unless specifically authorized by the local municipality. Riders must also ensure they hold the proper driver's licence and, where applicable,

have valid registration and insurance.

Operating an off-road vehicle on private property without the owner's consent is illegal and can result in charges, fines, and liability for damages.

The OPP is also reminding the public that stickers or manufacturer labels indicating a suggested minimum age for operation do not replace legal requirements. Riders and parents are strongly encouraged to do their own research to ensure they understand the laws in their area before operating or allowing the use of these vehicles.

The OPP is reminding parents and guardians of the important role they play in ensuring young riders understand and follow the rules and responsibilities associated with these vehicles. Before purchasing a dirt bike or off-road vehicle, residents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with where and when they can be legally operated. Allowing youth to operate these vehicles without proper supervision or understanding of the law can lead to serious consequences, including property damage, injury, and legal liability.

The OPP will continue to investigate complaints and conduct enforcement initiatives where necessary. Residents are encouraged to report illegal off-road vehicle activity and provide as much information as possible, including descriptions of the riders, vehicles, and locations involved.

Anyone wishing to report illegal off-road vehicle activity is encouraged to contact the Dufferin OPP at 1-888-310-1122. In an emergency, call 9-1-1.

The Dufferin OPP remains committed to keeping our communities safe while promoting responsible off-road vehicle use.