



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

**Matthew G. Bevin, Governor**

**David A. Dickerson, Secretary**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Elizabeth Kuhn  
(502) 564-0218  
Elizabethg.kuhn@ky.gov**

### **Boaters Should Be Aware of Electric Shock Drowning Danger**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (May 16, 2017) – The arrival of Memorial Day weekend signals the start of boating season at lakes and marinas across Kentucky.

The Kentucky State Parks and the Kentucky Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction want your boating experience with your family to be a safe one. This May – National Electrical Safety Month -- the two agencies want to alert boaters to the dangers of “electric shock drowning.”

Electric shock drowning occurs when faulty wiring, equipment or damaged cords on a boat or dock cause surrounding water to be energized with an electric current. There is no visible warning and the electricity is enough to paralyze the muscles of a nearby swimmer, causing them to drown. In some cases, there may be enough current to electrocute the swimmer.

Here are some tips to prevent electric shock drowning

Never swim in the water at marinas. Boats often plug into electric pedestals at the marina for power.

Make sure all electrical devices on your boat are working properly. If you suspect a problem, contact a certified electrical inspector immediately. To locate a certified electrical inspector near you, visit <https://ky.joportal.com/License/Search>

If you suspect an electric shock drowning is taking place, turn off the power, throw a life ring to the victim and call 911. Do not jump in the water – you could become a victim.

Kevin Ritz, whose son Lucas was electrocuted while swimming near a dock in 1999, has worked to raise awareness of electric shock drowning. He said the first step for parents is to avoid the danger.

“Let’s not swim in and around marinas,” Ritz said. Boat owners and marina operators also need to be aware of the issue and take the proper precautions. Ritz founded the Electric Shock Drowning Prevention Association and has worked with the American Boat & Yacht Council.

For information about boat and electric safety, visit these sites: [www.electricshockdrowning.org](http://www.electricshockdrowning.org) and [www.abycinc.org](http://www.abycinc.org).

To learn more about the Department of Housing, Buildings & Construction, visit <http://dhbc.ky.gov/>. For more information about Kentucky State Parks and marinas, visit [www.parks.ky.gov](http://www.parks.ky.gov).

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