Kids Don't Float
Ambassador Guide
Cold Water Survival

Alaska Boating Safety Program

AlaskaBoatingSafety.org

The *Kids Don't Float* (KDF) program is a statewide injury prevention effort that was developed to address Alaska's drowning rate for children and youth. This intervention is a collaborative effort between several state and federal agencies, organizations, and local grass-roots sponsors. KDF includes both a life jacket loaner board component and an education component.

The KDF Ambassador program is one aspect of the *Kids Don't Float* education program. The KDF Ambassador program is designed for high school and middle school students. Along with introducing teens to the first three stages of cold water immersion and the importance of wearing a life jacket, the program goes a step further in guiding teens to become leaders. KDF Ambassadors learn science-based cold water survival information and the latest safe boating information based on a national standard. The program's vision is to empower boating safety ambassadors in their hometown.

This book is intended to be used as a tool for training teens and new instructors, introducing KDF material, and helping develop KDF lesson plans to be taught to kindergarten through middle school age children. Links to program forms are included and educators are asked to submit them to the Office of Boating Safety upon completion of delivering the program.

Thank you for your support in encouraging people to wear life jackets and promoting safe boating in Alaska.

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Kids Don't Float Program

Education Program

- *Kids Don't Float* classes taught throughout Alaska
- Presentations, pool session, and KDF Ambassador program
- Contact Annie Grenier, State of Alaska, Office of Boating Safety, 907-269-6041 annie.grenier@alaska.gov

Life Jacket Loaner Boards

- Supported by local sponsors at boat launches, harbors, and swimming areas
- Life jackets available for the public to borrow
- Contact Margy Hughes, State of Alaska, Health and Social Services, 907-334-5967 margy.hughes@alaska.gov

KDF Ambassador Mission

The *Kids Don't Float* Ambassador program provides life-saving information to teens, which empowers them to be a positive influence in their community. This fun, interactive approach focuses on prevention, survival in cold water, the life saving edge provided by life jackets, and other safe boating practices.

Golovin, Alaska

Program Objectives

At the conclusion of this program, KDF Ambassadors will be able to:

• Work efficiently in a team oriented environment

• Prepare a lesson plan ensuring *Kids Don't Float* (KDF) course objectives are met

• Develop public speaking skills and effective teaching techniques

• Evaluate self and peers; make recommendations to improve delivery and content of presentation

• Network with other KDF Ambassadors statewide

Holy Cross, Alaska

Alaska Education Standards

Alaska State Standards 9-12:

A.5. Demonstrate competent skills while participating in adventure/ outdoor activities (e.g., Alaskan cultural physical activities, hunting, fishing, skiing, biking, hiking, wilderness survival, camping).

B.7. Explain to others the importance of strategies and safety procedures for success while participating in physical activity (e.g., weight lifting, wearing a helmet while snowboarding).

E.1. Demonstrate leadership by holding self and others responsible for following safe practices, rules, procedures, and etiquette in all physical activity settings.

E.2. Demonstrate an understanding of responsible personal and social behaviors in physical activity settings.

Implementing the Program

Meet with teens for two 1.5 hour sessions
(this is flexible):

Session One: Teach *Kid's Don't Float* (KDF) content, assemble KDF Ambassador teams.

Session Two: Ambassador teams create lesson plans, practice presentations, and review evaluation process.

Conclusion: Debrief experience as a group and share with other KDF Ambassadors statewide through social media.

Northway, Alaska

Non-Commercial Boating Fatalities in Alaska

- Nine of ten were not wearing a life jacket or disappeared
- Five of six boating fatalities are a result of capsizing, swamping, ejection, or fall overboard
- Nine of ten fatalities are adult males
- Approximately half of the fatalities occur in freshwater, half in saltwater
- As of July 31, 2019, 36 people survived an immersion event thanks in part to a *Kids Don't Float* life jacket

KDF Ambassador Message

Three Primary Messages:

1. Cold water survival: what to expect during the first three stages of cold water immersion

2. Alaska law: any person under age 13 must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket on the deck of a boat or in an open boat

3. Choosing and using life jackets: various styles of life jackets, the importance of reading the label, serviceability, and proper fitting

Overall Message:

What is the best life jacket? The one you wear!

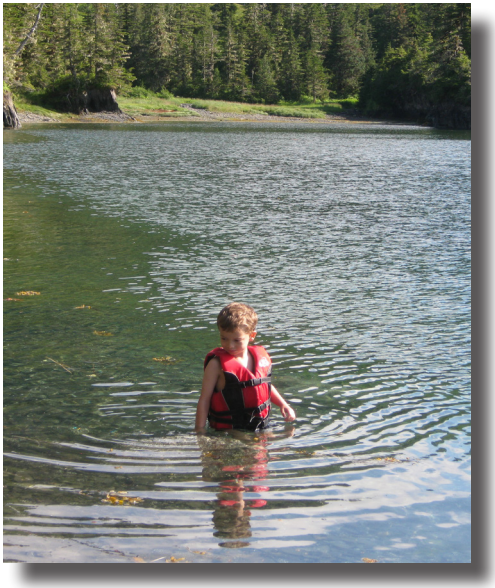
Message #1
Cold Water Immersion

- Cold water immersion response factors
- Stages of cold water immersion
- 1-10-1 principle

Cold Water Immersion Response Factors

An individual's response to cold water immersion can be affected by several factors, including:

- Speed of immersion
- Habituation
- Aerobic fitness
- Pre-existing medical conditions
- Body type
- Protective clothing
- Water conditions



1-10-1 Principle

1–10–1

1 Within one to three minutes wait for the effects of the cold shock response to subside.

10 Within the first 10 minutes prioritize and perform the most important activities first.

1 One hour or more of useful consciousness.

Cold Shock Response

What happens? Within the first three minutes effects may include gasping, hyperventilation, vertigo, and changes in blood pressure, heart rate, and rhythm.

What to do?

1 Within the first one to three minutes, float first on back and wait to regain breath control

***If not wearing a life jacket, there is a higher risk of drowning.**

Cold Incapacitation

What happens? Within first 30 minutes, arms and legs may become numb and muscles become weaker.

What to do?

10 TEN minutes (at least) for meaningful activity

- Assess the situation
- Plan, prioritize, and perform the most important functions first

Use emergency communication and distress signaling devices as soon as appropriate while there is sensation and function in fingers.

***If not wearing a life jacket, there is a higher risk of drowning.**

Immersion Hypothermia

What happens? After 30 minutes or more, core body temperature begins to drop.

What to do?

1 ONE hour (or more) before loss of useful consciousness

• Slow heat loss by getting out of the water as much as possible or keeping movements to a minimum

• Be prepared to activate distress signals when potential rescuers are in range

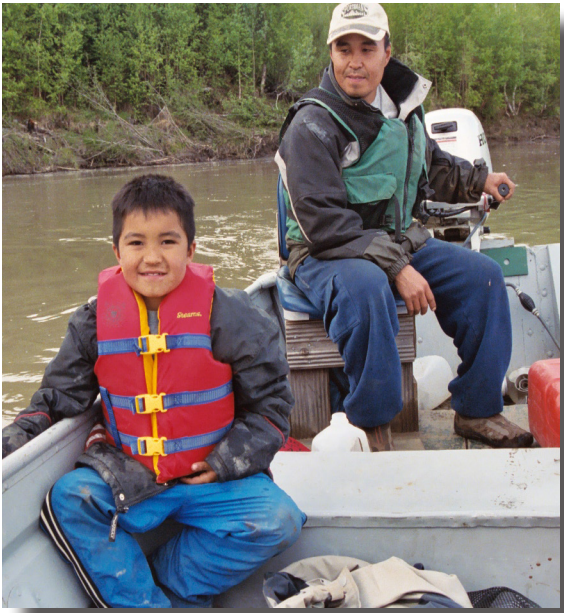
• If rescue is NOT likely, continue self rescue and survival activity as in the stage before. Stay positive!

The rate at which core body temperature drops depends on many factors (see page 11).

***Wearing a life jacket may increase survival time.**

Message #2
Alaska Law

Persons under 13 years old must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket when in an open boat, on an open deck, or when being towed on water skis or other devices (AS 05.25.010).



Who Should Wear a Life Jacket?

Everyone, when aboard an open boat or on an open deck, even excellent swimmers and experienced boaters, *should* wear a life jacket.

Even on docks or near open water, everyone *should* wear a life jacket.

Message #3
Choosing and Using Life Jackets

What is the best life jacket?
The best life jacket is the one you wear.

- How to choose a life jacket
- How to inspect and fit a life jacket
- Understanding Alaska laws pertaining to life jackets

Not all life jackets are created equal.

Offshore Life Jacket

- U.S. Coast Guard approved for offshore use
- Tends to turn unconscious wearers face-up in water
- Bright orange color: highly visible
- Offers more buoyancy
- Read the label for intended use

Offshore Life Jacket

Nearshore Life Jacket

- U.S. Coast Guard approved for nearshore use
- Turns *some* unconscious wearers face-up in water
- Intended for calm, inland waters and areas where there is a good chance of quick rescue
- Available in bright orange or other colors
- Read the label for intended use

Nearshore Life Jacket

Nearshore Flotation Aids

- U.S. Coast Guard approved for use in calm, inland waters or areas of quick rescue
- Not designed to turn a wearer face-up in water
- Some styles not designed for impact activities
- Wide range of sizes and colors available
- Read the label for intended use

Float Coat

Paddling
Life Jacket

General Purpose
Life Jacket

Inflatables

- Follow manufacturer's instructions for arming devices and routine maintenance
- Understand how the device operates and, if possible, get in the water and deploy for skill-building and familiarization
- Wear inflatable life jackets on the outside of clothing layers
- Read the label for intended use

Special Use Life Jackets

- **READ THE LABEL.** Some are U.S. Coast Guard approved, specific to age, activity, or approved only when worn
- Comfortable to wear
- Many styles and colors are available

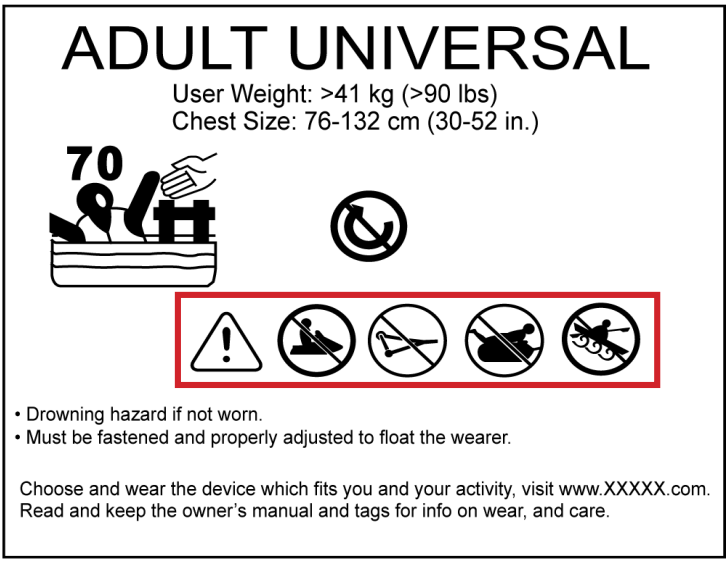
Not all life jackets are created equal.
READ THE LABEL.

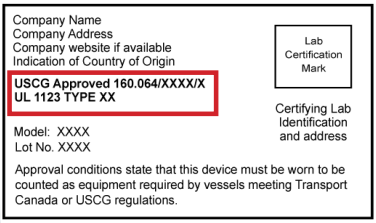
Float Suit

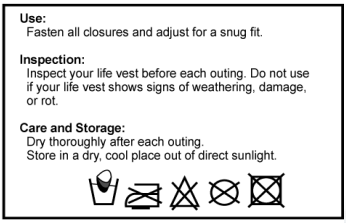
Swiftwater Rescue Life Jacket

Read The Label

Read the label on the life jacket and make sure it is U.S. Coast Guard approved, the proper size for the user, and appropriate for the activity.







Wearing

- Wear the life jacket for its intended use
- Check the label to be sure the life jacket is approved for the chosen activity

This life jacket is too big!

Fitting

- Fasten all straps, buckles, and zippers
- Lift on shoulder straps to test fit
- Adjust for a snug, comfortable fit

Serviceability

Life jackets must be in *serviceable condition*:

- Fabric has no rips or holes
- Flotation material is not damaged, exposed, or hardened
- Straps, buckles, and zippers all work

This life jacket is not serviceable.

Immersion (Survival) Suits

Survival suits are effective aids if you have time to put one on.

- Not a substitute for a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket for recreational boats
- Designed to prolong the length of time a person can survive in cold water
- Impractical to wear when operating a boat; restricts maneuverability
- Currently unavailable in sizes to fit children under 44 lbs.

Class Activity #1
I Spy

Purpose: This activity is a fun, interactive way for students to understand the difference between a *serviceable* life jacket and a *nonservicable* life jacket.

Materials Needed: Two of the same type of life jacket: one that is in serviceable condition and one that is not (discolored, ripped, broken buckles, missing straps, tears in fabric, etc.).

Procedure: Choose two students to be volunteers. Have them put on the life jackets. Ask the class to find all of the differences and share what differences they see. Once students have pointed out all of the differences, use them as discussion points and thank your two volunteers.

Discussion Points: It is better to plan ahead and make sure to have a properly fitted life jacket in serviceable condition which is intended to be used for the planned activity. Plan ahead and ensure that the equipment is safe and appropriate. If borrowing a life jacket, know how to make a well informed decision regarding proper fit and serviceability.

Class Activity #2
Life Jacket Fashion Show

Purpose: To showcase different types of life jackets, how they are worn, special features of each life jacket, and different scenarios/use. This activity prompts the discussion that not all life jackets are created equal and knowing their differences enables us to make informed decisions about which life jacket to choose.

Materials Needed: Several styles of life jackets, such as: Off-shore, near-shore horse collar style, near-shore vest, ski vest, paddling vest, float coat, or fishing vest.

Procedure: Choose five or more "life jacket models" to wear life jackets. As one type at a time is called down "the runway," discuss the types, special uses, and features of each jacket and ask the students which one they prefer.

Discussion Points:
Read the label to determine the intended use of your life jacket. Having a life jacket that fits is better than having one with fancy features. There are lots of life jackets out there so you should find one that is comfortable for you.

Class Activity #3
Chill Out!

Purpose: To demonstrate the physical effects of cold water on the body, loss of fine motor skills, and numbness in fingers.

Objectives: Experience what cold water feels like in a safe, controlled environment. Experience how cold water affects dexterity.

WARNING: Some people may have certain health risks related to this activity; ask participants if anyone has a health condition related to cold prior to beginning this activity. Please do not make this a mandatory activity. Monitor length of time in the water and excuse participants from the cold water who demonstrate any hesitation or apprehension. Do not require a specific amount of time in water.

Procedure:

1. Put ice in the bucket or container and fill ¾ full with cold water.
2. Form two or three lines around the bucket.
3. Take turns putting hands in the ice water.
4. Put on a life jacket and fasten the buckles as quickly as possible.
5. This activity could also be done as a relay race.

Discussion points:

1. **What is the first reaction when a person's arm enters the water?** Cold shock. The gasp may not be as pronounced because it is just part of the body instead of complete immersion.

2. **How does the person's arm feel after a few seconds of being in the water?**
   Loss of feeling in fingers makes it hard to put on a life jacket in the water. This is one important reason why everyone should wear a life jacket in an open boat or on deck.

3. **Would it be difficult to buckle buckles, zip zippers, or pull straps on the life jacket when in cold water?**
   YES! During the second stage of cold water immersion, blood flow is restricted as blood vessels constrict causing loss of feeling and dexterity.

4. **Was anyone wearing a sweatshirt or jacket when putting on the life jacket? Did that make it harder to get the life jacket snug?**
   It is common to wear warm clothes when boating in Alaska, so it is important to make sure that the life jacket fits with all of the layers Alaskans often wear.

The best life jacket is the one you wear!

Class Activity #4
Life Jacket Relay Race

Purpose: For students to experience the difficulty of putting on a life jacket in a hurry. Wearing a life jacket before an emergency arises ensures a greater chance of survival.

Materials: Two life jackets and space for the race.

Procedure: Divide the students into two equal teams. Have them form two lines. Place a life jacket at the feet of the first person in each line. At the signal to go, the first person in each line will pick up the life jacket, put it on properly, run to the designated place, return to the starting point, remove the life jacket and give it to the next person in line. The race is over when the first team to have each person complete the exercise is finished.

Discussion Points: How difficult is it to put on a life jacket when you are in a hurry? It is always easier to have your life jacket on to start with in an emergency, rather than needing to put it on, especially if the life jacket is stored.

Class Activity #5
Minute to Win It

Purpose: To demonstrate why it is important to properly wear a life jacket at all times in an open boat or on deck.

Materials: Three chairs, three life jackets, and a watch or clock with a second hand.

Procedure: Set up three chairs similar to how they would appear on a boat. Place the life jackets under each chair. Place a volunteer in each chair. When told that the "boat is sinking," each person will have one minute to correctly put on their life jacket. At the end of one minute determine how many of the three "victims" are wearing their life jackets correctly or at all. Be sure **not** to point fingers at those students who did not meet the challenge.

Discussion Points: Your body reacts to cold water in three stages: cold shock response, cold incapacitation, and immersion hypothermia. It is very important to have your life jacket on **before** an emergency arises, since it may be very difficult (or impossible) to locate and put one on in an emergency situation. Make sure your life jacket fits before an emergency arises. Put your life jacket on before getting into any boat. Be familiar with your life jacket.

Class Activity #6
Sell Your Life Jacket

Purpose: To identify types of life jackets and their best uses.

Materials: Various types of life jackets (e.g. offshore, nearshore).

Procedure: Break students into groups and give each group a different type of life jacket. Allow 5 minutes for each group to prepare a short presentation for the rest of the class where they will "sell" their life jacket by describing its features and why they think it is the best kind of life jacket. One student from each group can be the "model" while the group is presenting their life jacket to the entire class. This is great practice for presentations, public speaking, working in groups, and increased information retention. At the end, ask students which life jacket is the best (the one you wear!).

Discussion Points: Different types of life jackets are designed to be beneficial for different activities. Not all life jackets are created equal, but every life jacket is designed to keep you safe. The BEST life jacket is the one you are wearing.

Life Jacket Game Cards

Cut out the cards on this page and have students take turns drawing a card at random and following the directions on the card. Follow with discussion.

Find and put on a life jacket that will float you face up in the water. Explain.	Find and put on a life jacket that you think is best to wear on a lake. Explain.
Find and put on a life jacket that will keep you the warmest. Explain.	Find and put on a life jacket you would wear waterskiing. Explain.
Find and put on a life jacket you think is very comfortable. Explain.	Find and put on a life jacket you could wear in a skiff. Explain.
Find and put on a life jacket you would put on quickly in an emergency. Was it easy or difficult? Explain.	Find and put on a life jacket you would wear when on a personal watercraft. Explain.
Find and put on a life jacket you would wear paddling a canoe or kayak. Explain.	Find and put on a life jacket you would wear while fishing, or hunting on a river. Explain.

Building a Lesson Plan

Introduction: Introduce yourself, the program, and the topics that will be covered.

Class Discussion: Ask students about their favorite boating activities and whether they have ever fallen or jumped into cold water. **NOTE:** Be aware that there may be children present who have had friends or relatives die drowning or in other boating-related accidents.

Information Sharing:
Statistics: Discuss fatality and boating safety statistics (page 8).

Cold Water Immersion: Explain three stages of cold water immersion and 1-10-1 (page 10).

Life Jacket Laws: Children under the age of 13 **must wear** a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket while on the deck of a boat or in an open boat (page 17).

Life Jackets: Choosing and using life jackets. Explain importance of reading the label, inspecting, and using for proper activity (page 25). Demonstrate (using a student as a model) how to properly fit a life jacket and where best to use it (page 27).

Activity: Pick one or two depending on time.

Wrap-up: This is the time to review objectives and check for understanding.

Gathering Materials

Materials KDF Ambassadors will find in this guidebook:

- Boat accident/drowning statistics
- Lesson plan objectives (cold water immersion, life jackets, Alaska law)
- Activities
- 'Building a Lesson Plan' form

** (Note: You can also access the *Kids Don't Float* Prezi and the Cold Water Survivors video on our website.)

Materials KDF Ambassadors check out through sponsor teacher (designated teacher at your high school):

- Teaching kit of life jackets
- Five gallon bucket filled with water and ice

IMPORTANT: If you teach this class, please send an electronic evaluation form to the teacher. A link to the evaluation can be found on our website (AlaskaBoatingSafety.org) or on page 39.

Join The Boating Community

To stay informed about what's going on with other KDF Amabssadors and to hear about opportunities to volunteer, follow us on social media. Tag us in your photos or send them to us so we can share them.

Alaska Boating Safety Program

Request to join our group "Kids Don't Float Ambassadors"

AlaskaBoatingSafety

Request to follow our page "KDFAmbassadors"

Alaska Boating Safety Program

@AKBoat

Your hard work and effort makes a difference in your community.

Kids Don't Float Ambassador Award

The criteria for earning a *Kids Don't Float* (KDF) Ambassador award for community service and leadership are:

Platinum:

• Attend a KDF Ambassador class
• Plan and teach a *Kids Don't Float* class
• Perform a community boating safety activity
• Establish or maintain a life jacket loaner board
• Create a video encouraging Alaskans to boat safely

Gold:

• Attend a KDF Ambassador class
• Plan and teach a *Kids Don't Float* class
• Perform a community boating safety activity
• Establish or maintain a life jacket loaner board

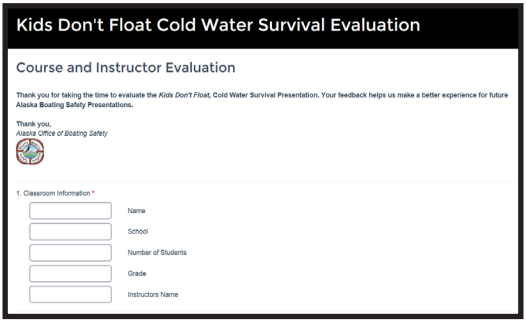
Silver:

• Attend a KDF Ambassador class
• Plan and teach a *Kids Don't Float* class
• Perform one community activity

Bronze:

• Attend a KDF Ambassador class
• Plan and teach a *Kids Don't Float* class

Kids Don't Float
Evaluation and Quiz



Kids Don't Float Cold Water Survival Evaluation

Course and Instructor Evaluation

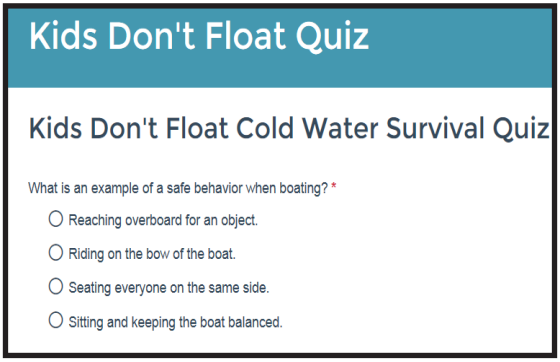
Thank you for taking the time to evaluate the *Kids Don't Float*, Cold Water Survival Presentation. Your feedback helps us make a better experience for future Alaska Boating Safety Presentations.

Thank you,
Alaska Office of Boating Safety

1. Classroom Information *

Name
School
Number of Students
Grade
Instructors Name

You can access the *Kids Don't Float* instructor evaluation and Cold Water Survival quiz by going to AlaskaBoatingSafety.org. Click on "Kids Don't Float Education," "Classroom," and "Tools."



Kids Don't Float Quiz

Kids Don't Float Cold Water Survival Quiz

What is an example of a safe behavior when boating? *

- Reaching overboard for an object.
- Riding on the bow of the boat.
- Seating everyone on the same side.
- Sitting and keeping the boat balanced.

http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3006106/Instructor-Evaluation

http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2940009/Kids-Don-t-Float-Quiz

Resources

Alaska Office of Boating Safety Website:
AlaskaBoatingSafety.org
- Educational resources
-*Kids Don't Float*: Cold Water Survival Prezi
- Boating safety publications
- Instructional videos
    * *Cold Water Boating*
    * *Boating Alaska*
    * *Cold Water Survivors*

Alaska Office of Boating Safety YouTube Channel:
- *Cold Water Survivors*
- *Boating Safely, A Tradition Worth Passing On*
-*Rescue Ready* video series
-Previous video contest winners

Alaska Office of Boating Safety

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AlaskaBoatingSafety.org

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