Hidden danger in the water



Electric Shock Drowning (ESD) can be deadly.

ESD is the result of a person coming into contact with an electrical current in the water.

Electrical currents can cause complete loss of muscle control, the inability to move and lead to drowning.

Electrical current leaks can be from either boats or docks. Faulty wiring, frayed cords and devices not approved as shore or marine rated are often the source of stray voltage.

ESD can occur in any location where electricity is near fresh water.

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Boat inspections can help

- Have a qualified marine electrician:

  1) Install an Equipment Leakage Circuit Interrupter (ELCI) on your boat or use a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) in the shore power cord.

  2) Perform an annual inspection of your boat's electrical system.
- Test GFCI and ELCI protection as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Use power cords that are in good condition and properly rated. Do not use common household extension cords.

Ways to prevent ESD?

- Do not enter water within 100 yards of a marina or dock.
- Turn off the shore power connection and/or disconnect power cord from pedestal.
- If you feel a tingling sensation, get out of the water and report it to staff.
- Notify the harbormaster of any electrical safety hazards so they can be fixed.
- Pets are also impacted by ESD. Do not allow your pet to enter the water.

If you think someone has been shocked:

- Throw in a life ring or other floatation device.
- Never enter the water. You could become a victim too!
- Turn off the shore power connection and disconnect power cord from pedestal.
- Call for help. Use 911 or VHF Channel 16 (as appropriate).