

## Cold Water Kills

Compiled from various web sources  
by Brian Curtiss



Cold water does not have to be icy... it just has to be colder than you are to set hypothermia in motion. The rate of body heat loss depends on water temperature, the protective clothing worn, percent body fat and other physical factors, and most importantly the way you conduct yourself in the water. Cold water and its effects are involved in virtually all kayaking and recreational boating deaths. For example, between 1985 and 1995, of the 182 deaths in the waters of the Pacific Northwest, only 2 occurred at water temperatures above 70°F, with 133 involving water between 40° - 60°F.

Safety experts estimate that half of all drowning victims actually die from the fatal effects of cold water, or hypothermia, and not from water filled lungs. Loss of body heat is one of the greatest hazards to survival when you capsize in cold water. Cold water robs the body of heat 25-30 times faster than air. When you lose enough body heat to make your temperature subnormal, you become hypothermic. Movement in the water, such as swimming, increases the rate of heat loss. Severe hypothermia is a medical crisis.

Sudden immersion in cold water cools your skin and outer tissues very quickly. Within 10 or 15 minutes, your core body temperature (brain, spinal cord, heart, and lungs) begins to drop. Your arms and legs become numb and completely useless. You may lose consciousness and drown before your core temperature drops low enough to cause death.

Choosing and wearing the proper clothing and protective gear is essential. Without thermal protection, chances of survival after a long exposure to cold water are slim. An easy rule to remember is the rule of 50: "you have a 50/50 chance of surviving for 50 minutes in 50°F water" or "you have a 50/50 chance of surviving a 50-yard swim in 50°F water."

Go to the RMSKC web site for links to more information on cold water paddling:

<<http://www.rmskc.org/info/cold.html>>

## Day Paddle Locations

### **Chatfield Reservoir**

South end of lake.  
East end of Marina Parking Lot and  
South Ramp near rental beach  
**Fee.**

### **Chatfield Pond**

Enter at Wadsworth S of C470. Follow road S. around lake past stables.  
Right at road just before bridge.  
**Fee.**

### **Boulder Reservoir**

Sailboard Beach.  
**Fee.**

### **Union Reservoir (Calkins Lake)**

I-25 to Hwy 119 West 4 miles to  
Countyline Rd (Weld Cnty Rd 1) Right  
North 1 mile (sign)  
Right (East) to entrance.  
Cross Bridge - Turn Right  
to Canoe and Kayak Beach.  
**Fee.**

### **Aurora Reservoir**

I-25 to I-225 on the south side of  
Denver. East 3+ miles on I-225 to  
Parker Road exit. So. on Parker Rd,  
2 miles to Quincy Ave. East about 8  
miles to Reservoir Sign. Turn south,  
about a mile to reservoir.  
**Fee.**

### **Barr Lake**

I-25 to I-76 north.  
Exit on Bromley Lane. Go east to  
Picadilly Lane. Turn Right.  
Head south. Right into entrance.  
**Fee**

### **Lone Tree Reservoir**

Hwy I-25 N to state Hwy 60 Exit  
#252. Exit before Loveland. Go W,  
follow Hwy 60 thru jog one mile N.  
Stay on Hwy 60, cross Hwy 287.  
About 3 miles look for sign. Turn Left,  
south on CR 21.

### **Bear Creek Reservoir And Soda Lakes**

Entrance to both at Morrison Rd east  
and Hwy C470.  
Look for Bear Creek Park signs.  
Soda Lake is first.  
**Fee**