

A GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE WORKER DROWNS WHEN HE FALLS FROM A BOAT



A 45-year-old Hispanic lake maintenance worker, José, died when he fell out of a boat and drowned. He was working alone in the boat cleaning weeds and algae from a lake while his co-workers watched from shore. José could not swim and was not wearing a personal flotation device (PFD). Although he had worked for this employer for ten years, he had not been trained in water safety.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

José was not wearing a PFD (life jacket) and had not received water safety training.

José was working alone in the boat. Life rings were not available in the boat or onshore with co-workers.

José was using a long pole with a net (skimmer) as an oar.

The lake was thick with weeds and algae.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Employers should make sure workers are trained in water safety and provide them with PFDs when working over or near water.

Two people in a boat can make it more stable. Life rings should be provided and readily available for emergency rescue operations.

Using proper equipment (strong and adequately-sized paddles or oars) will help control and navigate small watercraft safely.

Employers should consider implementing an integrated pest management (IPM) program to control weed growth.

Resource:

Biology and Control of Aquatic Plants: <http://www.aquatics.org/bmp.html>

The California Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program has been investigating work-related deaths since 1992. The goal of the FACE program is to prevent these deaths by informing workers and managers of worksite hazards and how to avoid them.

For a complete report of this (15CA001) or other cases, and information on the California FACE Program, contact:

California Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Branch (OHB), FACE Program
850 Marina Bay Parkway, P-3, Richmond, CA 94804
OHB phone: (510) 620-5757

To obtain a copy of this document in an alternate format, please contact us at (510) 620-5757. CA Relay Service: 711. Allow at least 10 days to coordinate alternate format services.

[California FACE Program's website \(www.cdph.ca.gov/face\)](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/face)

PLEASE POST

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FACE stands for "Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation." The purpose of the FACE program is to find problems that may cause work-related deaths so that employers and employees can help prevent them. FACE is a public health program run by the California Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Branch, and funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

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