

Safety

This is a partial list

Get some safety thoughts into your head and your son/daughter's head now. When you're on the river, you'll be way too relaxed.

You'll be in the wilderness, many hours from emergency services.

You are responsible for your own safety and your child's safety.

Eight easy ways to turn your trip into a personal disaster:

1. **Hang out near the sides or downstream edge of a sandbar.** You briefly lose your footing. The river carries you away faster than you can swim.
2. **Try to rescue a panicked swimmer without bringing floatation.**
3. **Swimmers near motor.** People get lazy about this. Not everyone was shown the emergency shutoff cord, or it's not hooked up. The motor is unattended for a minute. Maybe somebody "thought it was in neutral." Someone's body parts get pureed before anyone can stop it. Keep area ahead of motor clear of swimmers also.
4. **Kid slips off tube. No spotter.** Kids lose their grip. It's hard to hear them over the sound of the motor. Also, never tow another canoe with people floating behind it. Spotting and turn-around are way too hard.
5. **Don't single out your kid just because she's a weak swimmer.** The other kids are strong swimmers, and their dads let them float without a life jacket. How are you going to make your kid wear a life vest when all the other kids don't? Better figure it out. Might help to bring a "nice" or comfortable vest. Might help to tell her now that she has a choice between wearing a vest or skipping the canoe trip.
6. **Assume those speedboat & jet-ski drivers are paying attention.** As you get closer to Martinez Lake, the river gets narrow and busy. The guy with the beer in his hand and the flame decals on the side of his boat gets distracted. He doesn't realize you're towing inner tubes 60 feet behind you or that your son/daughter has decided to take a little swim off to the side. Or, he suddenly has to choose between running into a sandbar and running into your canoe.
7. **Body parts mashed between bungeed canoes**
8. **Dive into shallow water.** There's lots of shallow water.

Safety Laws

Know the safety laws. As you get closer to Martinez Lake you will see the sheriff's boat on patrol.

Life Jackets

Must be on board and accessible - one per passenger - at all times

Must be worn by adults and children when being towed behind a boat

Must be worn at all times by any small boat passenger under the age of 12

Warning Flag

A red or orange "skier down" flag (at least 12"x12") must be displayed when people, tow rope or low-profile floatables are in the water near your boat. The sheriff has enforced this.