

# Norton's Shipyard & Marina, Inc.

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Telephone: (401) 884-8828 or (401) 884-8770

## CHILDREN & SAFETY ISSUES:

We appreciate your understanding of our policies regarding children & lifejackets.

If you are not aware, we recently had a terrible accident here resulting in a drowning – this was someone who lived aboard their boat and was quite familiar with the docks. A simple misstep resulted in an injury that was exasperated upon falling into the water. No one heard anything, and it happened in a matter of minutes. Obviously those people who were around were devastated, we were all shocked, and perhaps we (Norton's) may be a bit more sensitive these days about this issue. It's even possible we may monitor & enforce it more than other Marinas too.

Unfortunately we have seen too many situations over 65 years where anything can happen on a dock - adults have caught their foot between the boards tripped, & then fell into the water. Dogs have caught their paws between the docks & fallen in. Last summer two children fell in, one walking on the main pier with their mother – they tripped, hit their head on the edge of the dock & also fell into the water. The other child was with their grandmother, again being watched and with an adult present. We are trying to prevent accidents before they can occur, and we certainly hope you will all continue to appreciate that concern.

There are several possible resolutions to this issue:

1. In the past, we have often suggested keeping a life vest in your vehicle's trunk if you frequent the marina – this is a great way to avoid remembering to bring it anywhere, and that way the child is protected going both to & from the boat.
2. If you are expecting guests to visit your boat with children, perhaps you can make prior arrangements for someone to meet them on shore to give them a life vest(s).
3. Our store sells life vests of various sizes, and we would be happy to offer them at a significant discount (please mention this letter) if that would be something anyone is interested in purchasing.
4. Our pilot house has a couple of life vests for children available to sign out with a deposit; perhaps this will serve as an agreeable concession in the *rare* event that one is not available on shore.

You need to understand that our insurance requires this policy as well, specifically due to the higher risk involved with children & docks or moving vessels. We occasionally have inspectors that visit with us to ensure we are safety compliant. We definitely do not want them to be around on the one day someone does not have a jacket on. Either way, their policy with us is not negotiable & neither is ours. We are not allowed to have ANY child under 13 on the dock without a life vest on under any circumstance we are aware of. Again, in our experience any accident can turn tragic in a moment. Better to avoid one altogether.

Last, our dock attendants have a job to do, and are asked to advise people when they see something occur that is not safe. The dock attendants consider themselves responsible for dock safety when they are on their shift, & are not doing anything other than what they have been asked to do with every child they see not wearing a vest.

It does concern us that there are many times children are out on the dock at some point without life jackets on, and while we are glad and would expect that parents are present in most of these situations, the dock attendants are right in approaching the situation if necessary. Please do not take your frustrations about our policies out on them.

**You are welcome to walk your children or carry them out to the boat from shore, but they must be wearing a life jacket. We are happy to assist you in any way we can, and deeply regret if this causes anyone inconvenience or concern about remaining in our Marina.**

We thank everyone in advance for their repeated attention & cooperation.