

## 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.

Visit our website at: [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb-face](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb-face)

# PLEASE POST

California Department of Public Health  
Occupational Health Branch, FACE Program  
850 Marina Bay Parkway, P-3  
Richmond, CA 94804

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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