

Commercial Tag

Commercial tags means adding a water safety message or tip at the end of a paid advertisement. Notice a water safety tip, not a Corps of Engineers' water safety tip.

It is highly unlikely you will get a store owner/operator to provide this service unless it is located near the lake.

Here is what you do. Listen to the local radio station that covers your lake. Jot down who advertises on the station. Then go one of two ways to the radio station or the business.

Let's say you start with the radio station. First, contact anyone you know at the station. If you do not know any person there, ask your fellow Corps of Engineers employees if they know anyone at the station. If you do not have a contact by now, start out "cold" by phoning the promotions or advertising director for an appointment. Do not discuss this project over the phone. It is so much harder for the radio person to say "no" in person. Sometimes an on-air personality may be of assistance.

You might ask the station representative if he or she knows of a business who might help save a life or two on the lake. Have your list of businesses you think may be helpful with this endeavor. Remember, you are not requesting the radio station create spot announcements that are in another chapter in this Guide. You want to tag your message onto the end of a regular paid commercial. Radio folks may want to join the water safety project and jointly add the tag with the business. This will help since the commercials are normally taped in the radio station's sound room.

If you have a good contract at a local business, start with him or her. Let's say it's a grocery store manager and she is paying for a 30-second ad. The store provides what is on sale for the first 25 seconds, and the last five seconds the ad sounds like, "And, while you are on the lake this weekend, please wear your life jacket."

That's it. Nothing more. Notice, it did not say anything about the Corps of Engineers. That ad might run six to ten times a day for four or five days. See, you are getting the water safety message to the listeners and it isn't costing you

anything, but your time.

Before calling on the store manager or the radio station rep, make sure to have a number of tags ready. Your message will be better if it's change often. Some suggested short topics are: learn to swim, help a stranded boater, don't swim alone, hook up your kill switch, observe the "no wake" zones, watch for water skiers, boating and booze don't mix, learn boating laws, don't speed on the lake, wear life jackets, constantly watch children, don't dive off cliffs.

See you at the radio station. Good luck.