



Fresno County Sheriff's Office

John Zanoni, Sheriff

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News Release

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Kayaker Drowns in Courtright Reservoir

The man who drowned in Courtright Reservoir has been identified as 35 year old Matthias Aguilar of Merced.

Shortly before 8:00 am on Friday, Fresno County Sheriff's dispatchers received a report of a man who was unresponsive after being pulled out of the water of Courtright Reservoir. Deputies later learned Aguilar was fishing in a kayak near Marmot Rock Campground when he lost his balance and fell into the water. He was wearing heaving clothing and boots, but no life jacket. He attempted to swim to shore, then went underwater. It took him about two minutes to resurface. Friends swam out to him and were able to take him to the shore. They attempted CPR efforts while deputies and medics responded. By the time deputies and a SkyLife helicopter arrived, Aguilar had passed away.

The Sheriff's Office offers the following safety tips:

- 1) Stay out of the water if you do not know how to swim.
- 2) If you are going to get into the water, always wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket.
- 3) Make sure the jacket fits you properly and it is fully fastened with the zipper and/or buckles.
- 4) Wear appropriate swim attire.
- 5) Parents should watch their children at all times.
- 6) Understand that when it's hot outside you will get tired faster than usual. Also avoid consuming alcohol.
- 7) Respect the water. The temperature of the water remains cold, and the current is often stronger than it appears. There can be debris in the water, which is difficult to see and may cause hazardous situations for swimmers.
- 8) Be careful of mud and plants on the bottom of lakes and rivers, it's easy to sink in some spots and get your feet stuck or tangled. Also, use your feet to feel for drop off spots. River and lake bottoms can dramatically change from shallow to deep in a short distance.