



# PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

MAY/JUNE 2019

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## MARINE UNIT- ENSURING YOUR BOATING IS SAFE

With the warmer weather coming this spring and summer, people flock to the outdoors to enjoy the sun, the mountains, and the water. In Snohomish County we have many lakes, rivers, and Puget Sound to go boating in our power boats, row boats, or in personal craft.

While boaters can enjoy the water, there are dangers that they need to be aware of. For example, last year there were 8 deaths due to drowning on Snohomish County waters.

The Sheriff's Office Marine Unit investigates boat collisions and accidents. It also promotes boater safety and education. The unit is manned by 2 sergeants and 12 deputies, some of whom also work in patrol.

The unit is responsible for over 75,000 acres of Snohomish County waterways. In the late spring, summer, and early fall months it randomly patrols county lakes and rivers. During its patrols the unit conducts boat inspections, enforces boating law, and conducts boater and river education.

To help achieve its objectives, the unit coordinates with the U.S. Coast Guard, Washington State Parks, the city of Everett, and the city of Lake Stevens. It also coordinates with the Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue organization.

The unit patrols both fresh water and salt water areas.

In fresh water lakes and rivers the typical violation includes reckless boating and personal craft such as kayaks and paddle boards not having life

preservers. One half of deaths on the water involve personal vessels.

On salt water, the unit encounters fishing violations and derelict boats.



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**BUI-  
STAY SOBER**

*Like drinking and driving, drinking and boating (called BUI for Boating Under the Influence) is illegal. And like with a DUI, having a drug in your system that impairs your use of a boat is illegal.*

*Alcohol and drugs (such as marijuana) can impair your judgement, balance, vision and reaction time.*

*Also, sun, wind, noise, vibration, and motion commonly experienced while boating, can intensify the effects of alcohol, drugs and some medications.*

*The Marine Unit encourages boaters to leave the alcohol and marijuana at home. Anyone arrested for BUI can face a fine of \$2,000 and jail time.*

Operation Dry Water-  
<http://www.operationdrywater.org/>

**BOATER SAFETY- TAKE YOUR OWN PRECAUTIONS**

Boating in Snohomish county should be fun. There are dangers to boating, but educating yourself about how to boat safely and legally, having life jackets for everyone on board, and being courteous when you are out boating will help you to have a fun time on the water.

**Education/Know the laws.** Boating is regulated by federal and state laws as well as local ordinances. Knowing the law will help you operate you boat safely. Washington State issues Boater Education Cards to people who have completed boater education. You are required to have a

Boater Education Card with you if any of the following apply;

- You operate a vessel with a 15-horsepower (or greater) motor.
- You were born after January 1, 1955.
- You are 12 years of age or older.

You can take a boating safety course by attending a classroom course, taking an equivalency exam, a hands-on training course, a home study course, or an online course.

**Wear a life jacket.** According to the U.S. Coast Guard 84% of boaters who drown were not wearing a life jacket. Each boat must have a USGC, properly fitting life jacket for each person on board. Youth 12 years and younger must wear a life jacket when in a boat less than 19 feet in length.

**Be courteous on the water.** Be courteous to your fellow boaters in how you handle you boat. Follow the marine law and the rules for the body of water that you are on.



**File a float plan with a friend.** Let a friend know where you will be going and when you plan to be back. If you do not return, they can tell 911 where you planned to go narrowing the search area helping to find you faster.

**Take a seat.** It is illegal to ride on the bow, decks, gunwales, or transoms of a motorboat when the boat is underway. Having everyone seated in the boat while underway will prevent falls overboard and injuries.

## BOATING SAFETY- PADDLE SPORTS

Snohomish County is a great place to enjoy lakes, rivers, and bays not only in a motorboat but also with a personal craft such as canoes, kayaks, stand up paddle boards, rowboats, and rafts. Paddle sports are subject to the same marine laws as motorboats.

According to the Washington State Parks Department, most paddle sport injuries and deaths occur due to

- Failure to wear a life jacket.
- Operator inexperience and inattention.
- Use of alcohol or drugs.
- Hazardous weather and water conditions.

Clearly, wearing a life jacket, receiving an education on how to operate your paddle craft, and refraining from alcohol and drugs is just as important as for motor craft. 85% of fatal canoeing accidents and 48% of kayaking fatalities were due to people not wearing a life jacket.

**Check the weather.** Before you go, check the weather conditions including wind and wave forecasts, tides and current conditions, and river flow forecasts.

**Carry essential gear.** State law requires that boaters, including those in paddle sports, carry a sound producing device. For paddle sports that can include a whistle. Also, carry a cell phone (in a waterproof bag) and on coastal waters, a VHF marine radio. Paddle sport professionals recommend that you wear sun protection. Bring a

headlamp, with extra batteries, a dry bag and hydrating fluids.

**Cold water.** Water in our lakes, streams and Puget Sound can have a temperature under 60 degrees all year long, even during a hot summer. Cold water shock can cause an involuntary gasp reflex causing you to swallow water then drown. To avoid drowning due to cold water shock, wear your life jacket and avoid wearing cotton clothing like t-shirts and jeans.

**Paddle to be seen.** Paddle craft tend to sit low on the water. This makes them difficult to see by other boats, especially motorboats. To be seen, wear bright neon and contrasting colors, put highly reflective tape on your paddles, use a flag pole with a brightly colored flag on it and carry a bright light.

**File a float plan with a friend.** A float plan is especially important if you engage in paddle sports.

### More tips:

- Paddle with a group.
- Stay near the shore when there is a lot of boat traffic.
- Scan ahead, look for hazards like overhanging branches/trees, rocks, low bridges, or rapids.
- Know how to rescue yourself and others in case of a capsized.

## RIVER SAFETY-

*If you are going to navigate one of our rivers keep the following in mind:*

- *Know the waterway. Get advice from a knowledgeable river guide.*
- *Wear a river helmet.*
- *Be careful, beach logs, river banks, and rocks near shore are usually slippery.*
- *River channels can change from season to season, moving dangerous snags and strainers.*
- *Never float a river alone, if possible have at least one oared craft in your group in case a rescue is necessary.*
- *Watch children closely. Keep them within arms reach.*

**BOATING SAFETY- RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP**

Here are some resources about boating in Washington State:

**U.S. Coast Guard-** The U.S. Coast Guard web site has a wealth of information about boating including regulations and boating safety,  
<http://www.uscgboating.org/>

Included is a float plan form. Float plans can be as simple as where you are going, who is going with you, how you can be contacted and when you expect to return home. If you would like to fill out a more detailed float plan the Coast Guard has one available-  
<http://floatplancentral.cgaux.org/download/USCGFloatPlan.pdf>

Also, the Coast Guard has an app. You can find the latest safety regulations, request a vessel safety check, file a float plan, look up navigation rules, and more right on your smart phone. For more information go to  
<http://uscgboating.org/mobile/>

**Washington State Parks-** The Washington State Parks web site has complete information about boating in Washington State including how to get a boating education card, state boating laws, life jackets, boating pump outs, and paddle sports. Go to  
<https://parks.state.wa.us/435/Boating>

**Boat.wa-** The boat.wa web site has similar information on boating in Washington at  
<https://boat.wa.gov/default.asp>

**Snohomish County-** Snohomish County has its own boating regulations found in Title 12 of the county code. Title 12 includes where you can conduct certain activities such as water skiing and operate a motorboat. It also has requirements for vessel operators, vessel operation, and special regulations for certain county lakes. You can see Title 12 here,  
<https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7763/Title-12-Park-Regulations?bidId=>

**Cold Water Shock-** Cold Water Shock is an important danger on our waters. Here is a web page from Transport Canada that gives a good explanation of cold water shock and how to prevent becoming a victim to it,  
<https://aceboater.com/en/cold-water-shock-symptoms-treatment>



**OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS**

**MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER**

<https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/311/Office-of-Neighborhoods>

**Homeless Outreach-**  
 Sgt. Ryan Boyer  
 Phone: (425) 308-0037  
 Email: [neighborhood-watch@snoco.org](mailto:neighborhood-watch@snoco.org)

**Community Outreach-**  
 Sgt. Rebecca Lewis  
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**SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:**

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

**NEWSLETTER INFO**

**EDITOR**

Steve Moller

If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at [neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org)



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477