



# PORT ORCHARD POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## PRESS RELEASE

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June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### PORT ORCHARD PD REMINDS BOATERS TO STAY SAFE AS SUMMER HEATS UP

(Port Orchard, WA) Hot, sunny weather is in the forecast for next week. The Port Orchard Police Department is urging boaters to remain cautious on the water and always wear a lifejacket.

Washington may have its warmest temperatures of the year thus far next week. According to the National Weather Service, temperatures statewide are rising into the 90s over the weekend with some locations going over 100 degrees. Even though the air is warm, water in rivers and lakes remain cold from snowmelt runoff. Most river and creek water temperatures range from the upper 30s to the mid-40s - temperatures that can easily cause cold water shock.

Last year, Washington state ranked in the top five out of all 50 states in boating fatalities. According to the Washington State Parks Boating Program accident data, four people died in boating-related accidents and two people are missing — five of which occurred in the last week. Two of the fatal accidents were on stand-up paddleboards (SUP).

Small craft like kayaks, canoes and SUPs are the most vulnerable to capsizing. Sudden immersion in cold water makes it difficult, if not impossible, for people to keep their heads above water and stay afloat. Boating fatality statistics show that wearing a life jacket gives boaters and paddlers the best chance of survival in the event of an accident, especially in cold water.

Participation in all water sports includes some risk. The hot weather and cold-water conditions underscore the need to always be prepared to deal with all circumstances.

Following are safety tips for boater and paddlers to consider as they head out on the water this weekend:

- **Hydrate.** Drink water — a lot of it.
- **Eat something.** Keep snacks on hand to replace electrolytes and calories.
- **Apply sunscreen.** Wear water-resistant sunscreen. Reapply it often. Consider wearing a hat and the color white to reflect sunlight.
- **Take a break** — in the shade. Dehydration can sneak up on people. Get out of the sun and rest.
- **Eyes on the water.** Don't be blinded by the sunlight — lookout for swimmers, other boaters and paddlers, water skiers, etc.



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- **Always wear a life jacket.** Accidents happen fast and without warning, even on a clear, sunny day. State law requires all vessels, including canoes, kayaks and stand-up paddleboards, to have at least one properly fitted Coast Guard-approved life jacket for each person onboard. All children, age 12 and younger are always required to wear a life jacket.
- **Always wear a leash.** For stand-up paddleboards, a leash is a necessity. Staying tethered to a paddleboard provides extra flotation and a chance to stay alive in an accident. A variety of leashes are available (coiled, hybrid, straight, quick release) and which one to use depends on the waterway. Paddlers need to research which leash is right for them.
- **Stay sober.** Never use alcohol or drugs when boating or floating in a river. They impair important survival reflexes and decision-making skills. Also, be aware of any prescription medications that can affect balance.
- **Keep eyes on children.** Children should never boat or float a river without the close supervision of an adult.
- **File a float plan.** Boaters and paddlers are encouraged to study their route in advance. Before going out on the water, even for a brief time, people should always tell someone their plan (who, where, how long, etc.).
- **Avoid going out alone** — friends and family are life savers.

Boaters and those enjoying water sports are often the first to respond to someone else in distress. Please be vigilant of those around you and help keep each other safe by having all your safety equipment.

If you see a Port Orchard Police Officer at the public boat ramp conducting complimentary vessel safety inspections, make sure to ask for yours as well. If you don't have what you need, you will receive a helpful list of what you are missing. If you have all required safety equipment, then you will earn your inspection sticker for 2021.



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