

Labor Day boating fun and friendly reminders

August 31, 2022



Labor Day Weekend traditions are rooted in the outdoors, and to keep things fun and safe, the Oregon State Marine Board suggests taking the time to plan your on-water getaway with the following tips:

Wear your life jacket. Each boat (including canoes and kayaks, inflatable boats, and stand up paddleboards) must have a properly fitted life jacket for each person on board and at least one sound-producing device. Life jackets need to be in good shape and readily accessible – not under a hatch or in their packaging.

All youth younger than 13 must wear a life jacket when in a boat that's underway. Since storage space is limited on paddlecraft, it makes the best sense to just wear a life jacket. So far this season, most of the victims of recreational boating fatalities were paddlers not wearing life jackets.

Know your waterway. "Take the time to get familiar with the waterway and know the dangers," says Brian Paulsen, Boating Safety Program Manager for the Marine Board. "Look out for wood, other debris, and shallow gravel bars with low water levels." Find out more about low water impacts on boat ramps by subscribing to the Marine Board's Opportunities and Access Report.

Know what rules apply. There are all types of watercrafts on the market; some are considered boats and others are pool toys. Boats are designed differently, and by state law, have specific equipment requirements. “If you plan to float in a river, keep in mind that pool toys are designed for use in a swimming pool, have no directional control, and can puncture easily. Float in a watercraft designed for a river; one which won’t easily puncture and comes equipped with a paddle so you can maneuver away from obstructions.” Paulsen adds. It’s state law that any boat with a motor, even temporarily mounted, must be titled and registered. Paddlecraft (including stand up paddleboards) 10 feet and longer are required to carry a Waterway Access Permit.

Boat Sober. Boating is a great social activity, and the Marine Board encourages boaters and persons floating on the waterways, to leave the alcohol on shore. It’s safer for everyone. If arrested for Boating Under the Influence of Intoxicants (BUII), violators can be fined up to \$6,250; can lose boating privileges for up to three years and even serve jail time. Intoxicants include marijuana, illicit drugs, and even some prescriptions.

Sit on the seat inside the boat. Many boaters are tempted to ride on the swim platform, stern, sides, and the bow of open motorboats. The stern can be a dangerous place for exposure to carbon monoxide and a prop-strike safety hazard. It is illegal to ride on the bow, decks, gunwales or transoms of a motorboat when the boat is underway. Sitting on designated seats is the safest option – especially when the boat is towing someone. Just because new boats have seats on the transom or swim step doesn’t make them legal for use when the boat is underway.

Slow down, keep scanning, and be courteous. Know the boating regulations for your area of operation. Boaters, including personal watercraft, are responsible for damage caused by their wake. Remember to slow down within 200 feet of a dock, launch ramp, marina, moorage, floating home or boathouse, pier or swim float, even if they don’t have a “Slow No-Wake” buoy or sign. Paddlers should stay closer to shore, crossing busy channels at right angles only when it is safe and allow motorboats to pass in deeper water. Be courteous, share the waterway, and recreate responsibly.

The top boating violations this summer include expired motorboat registration, no life jackets, and not carrying a waterway access permit. So far this year, there have been 12 recreational boating fatalities involving four motorized boats (PWC and open motorboats) and eight nonmotorized boats (kayaks, SUP, canoe, and raft).

For more information about equipment requirements, boating regulations, and ideas on where to go boating, visit the **[Marine Board’s website](#)**.