

US Coast Guard emphasizes the importance of boating safety

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : May 20, 2013 at 6:21 am

Washington State - In recognition of the start of National Safe Boating Week, May 18-24, 2013, the Thirteenth Coast Guard District is emphasizing boating safety for all Pacific Northwest boaters. In conjunction with the North American Safe Boating "Wear it! Always wear your life jacket!" campaign, the Coast Guard reinforces the following boating safety messages: Take a paddler education course. Paddlesports are the fastest growing segment of recreational boating, with more than 300,000 paddlecraft (primarily kayaks) now being sold annually. Paddlecraft are an extremely affordable entry point to recreational boating. Like any other watercraft, paddlers should seek out paddler education before heading out on the water. [CLICK HERE](#) to obtain more information on paddlesport safety. Wear a personal flotation device/life jacket at all times. The law states you must have a PFD for every person on board, but the Coast Guard suggests you go one step further and wear your PFD at all times when boating. It is much more difficult to locate, access, or don a PFD at the moment the accident occurs. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information on personal flotation devices/PFDs. File a float plan and leave it with someone who is not recreating on the water. A float plan is a lifesaving device on paper and can assist emergency responders with locating a distressed mariner. To learn more about a float plan [CLICK HERE](#). For a blank float plan [CLICK HERE](#). Have a marine band radio and visual distress signals. All of these devices will greatly assist you if you are in distress. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information on visual distress signals. Have a registered 406MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon. [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about EPIRBs and registering your EPIRB. DO NOT boat under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol affects judgment, vision, balance and coordination. Factor in boat motion, vibration, engine noise, sun, wind and spray and a drinker's impairment is accelerated. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information on boating under the influence. Start the season off right with a thorough boat inspection, including the hull and propulsion equipment. Pay particular attention to through-hull fittings and hoses that may have cracked or become brittle over the winter. Obtain a free boat inspection from the [Coast Guard Auxiliary](#). Boating safety courses are also available. For additional boating safety tips, go to <http://www.uscgboating.org/default.aspx>. Click on the "REGULATIONS" tab to get additional information on federal laws, federal regulations, state boating laws and navigation rules.