

As summer approaches, keep campfires safe

SALEM — Many of us enjoy a campfire because it evokes memories of past camping trips with family and friends. We sit around the fire and talk, laugh and enjoy the company.

The warmth of the moments rivals the heat from the campfire.

Consider ways to build a safe campfire as you start your summer camping preparations. Also, keep in mind that our drier than normal spring weather is a concern for Oregon and the West. Be sure to research conditions for the area near where you're camping before you head out.

Fire restrictions may be in place at the park, county or state level. The Oregon State Parks website will post the latest information about campfires in state parks.

“Regularly reviewing campfire safety practices, even if you're a seasoned camper, is a good habit,” said Chris Havel, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) associate director. “It's especially important if you're camping with children or folks that are learning about responsible outdoor recreation. If you have a question or a concern, talk with a park ranger or camp host.”

OPRD offers the following tips for a safe and enjoyable campfire, and to continue the tradition of great camping memories for everyone.

- Maintain campfire flames at knee height, or roughly two feet high. A smaller flame helps prevent ash and embers from rising into the trees or dry vege-

tation. If you see the wind stirring up embers, play it safe and put the fire out.

- Only build campfires in the existing fire ring in your campsite. Fire rings are placed in areas with buffer zones and away from vegetation.

- Always keep plenty of water nearby so you can use it to safely put out the campfire. Drown the flames with water and carefully stir the embers to make sure everything is wet. The stirring step is important: ash and wood debris often maintain heat and embers unless they are drowned out.

- Beach campfires should be on open sand and away from driftwood or vegetation. Slowly pour water on your beach fire to put it out. Don't pour the water too quickly because hot sand

can fly up and hit anyone nearby. Also, don't use sand to put out a beach fire. Covering the fire with sand will insulate the coals, keeping them hot enough to burn someone hours or even days later.

- For propane fire rings, follow the same safety precautions you would with a log-based campfire. The use of propane fire rings may vary statewide, depending on local conditions.

- Make sure everyone in your campsite is familiar with campfire safety, including children.

Always keep an eye on your campfire; many accidental fires are started because campers left their fire unattended for “just a minute.”

For recreational boating season; plan, pay attention and share

SALEM — There are dozens of boat types on the market and many water recreation opportunities in Oregon, from rivers and streams to the Pacific Ocean. Regardless of the type of boat you're in and the type of activity you're engaged in, be sure to plan, pay attention, and share the water so everyone can have a fun time.

The Oregon State Marine Board (OMB) invites boaters to explore their interactive Boating Oregon Map, where you can find a boat ramp near you, plan for a weekend escape to places less frequented, or find a waterway in the center of all the action.

“When you hit the water, remember: it's water. There will be waves, there will be wind chop, there will be other boaters, and lots of opportunities to build your skills,” says Ashley Massey, Public Information Officer for the Marine Board. “It's important to pick a location based on your skills and consider exploring a new waterbody or have a backup location if the primary option is too crowded.”

“There are dozens of waterways perfectly suited for

padding and just as many nonmotorized and “electric motor only” lakes for folks looking for a serene, relaxing, and peaceful excursion,” Massey says.

Massey also advises to check the weather forecast, water levels or tides, see if there are any reported obstructions, and to have the right gear for the activities you're doing. Boaters can also find out what equipment is required based on their boat length.

“Expect waterways in more populated areas to be congested with many users, so pay attention to your surroundings, continually scanning port to starboard and keeping a close eye on what's ahead,” Massey adds. “Brush up on the navigation rules of the road, start out slow looking for debris in the water, and whatever you do — don't text and drive. Taking video and pictures, along with social media texting can be fun, but the operator needs to maintain focus and awareness to what's going on around them. The captain is responsible for the safety of everyone on board, and the entire crew needs to pitch in and be an alert,

working together.”

The OMB also recommends boaters:

- Wear a life jacket. Learn more about life jacket types, styles, and legal requirements. Life jacket use is required for children under 13 when in a boat underway, and for anyone rafting on sections of rivers with Class III whitewater.

The water temperature for most waterways is below 60 degrees this time of year and wearing a life jacket is the most important piece of equipment for surviving the first few seconds of cold-water immersion.

- Not consuming marijuana, drugs or alcohol. Instead, take along a variety of non-alcoholic beverages and plenty of water. Impairment can lead to a BUII arrest.

Drugs and alcohol impair a boater's judgment and coordination which every boat operator needs. Swift currents, changing weather and debris require boat operators to be focused and skilled to avoid an accident.

- If you are feeling tired, take a break on land and return to the water when

you are re-energized and alert. Wind, glare, dehydration and wave motion are environmental stressors and contribute to fatigue which can slow reaction time.

- Never boat alone — especially when paddling. Always let others know where you are going and when you'll return. Print out a downloadable float plan to leave with friends and family.

- Be courteous to other boaters and share the waterway. Low water levels in many areas of the state will lead to boaters migrating where there's more water to play. Expect congestion at the boat ramp and bring your patience. Once on the water, paddlers are urged to operate near the shore, to help ease conflict with motorized boats and sailboats who need deeper water to operate.

Paddlers are encouraged to use the shoreline adjacent to the ramp to help ease congestion.

Regardless of your boat type, prep your gear in the parking lot or staging area prior to launching your boat. This makes launching faster and everyone around you, happier.

OSAA from 1B

days have passed since the individual's final dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Per the OHA, “proof of vaccination status” means documentation provided by a tribal, federal, state or local government, or a health care provider — that includes an individual's name, date of birth, type of COVID-19 vaccination given, date or dates given, depending on

whether it is a one-dose or two-dose vaccine, and the name/location of the health care provider or site where the vaccine was administered.

Documentation may include, but is not limited to, COVID-19 vaccination record card, or a copy or digital picture of the vaccination record card.

Season 4 Culminating Week Events

The OSAA Executive Board recently met in a work session to finalize

decisions on Season 4 Culminating Week events.

The board spent a significant period of time discussing Season 4 options for schools and culminating events.

As in Seasons 2 and 3, member schools continue to face challenges but many have found success in local/regional competition models that seek to maximize participation opportunities for all students within a program.

The OSAA Board will

continue to leave discretion for Culminating Week events to local school districts to allow individual schools to focus on participation and the best decisions for their school and community.

The OSAA Board took action to return the sixth and final week of Season 4 to member schools.

Participation limitations were increased by the Board to allow for additional contests throughout Season 4.



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