

Oregon State Marine Board Reminds Water Users To Be Careful

The Observer & Baker City Herald

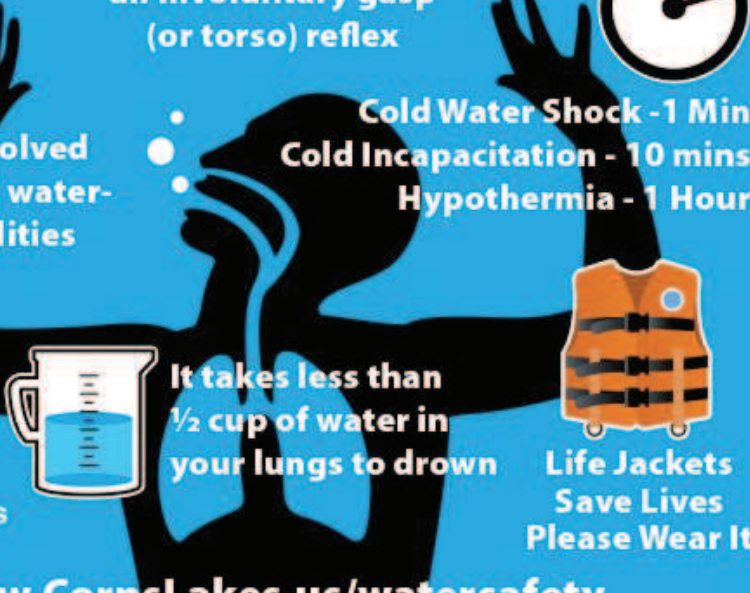


COLD WATER KILLS

ARE YOU NEXT?



Falls are involved in 19% of all water-related fatalities



Cold water causes an involuntary gasp (or torso) reflex

Cold Water Shock - 1 Min
Cold Incapacitation - 10 mins
Hypothermia - 1 Hour

It takes less than 1/2 cup of water in your lungs to drown

Life Jackets Save Lives Please Wear It



US Army Corps of Engineers

www.CorpsLakes.us/watersafety



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald file photo-2017

The Powder River in Baker City is a popular place to cool off on hot days.

With heat coming, officials warn about chilly water

There have been five boating fatalities on Oregon’s waterways during the COVID-19 this spring, and at least four have two things in common, according to the Oregon State Marine Board — the victim was not wearing a life jacket, and the water was cold.

The Oregon State Marine Board is urging boaters headed to the water during the first warm weekend of the year — especially people in canoes, kayaks, and on stand-up paddleboards — to dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature.

“We are concerned,” said Randy Henry, Boating Safety Program manager for the Marine Board. “People are anxious to get out and have fun, but water is serious business. If you go boating, wear

your life jacket, buckle it up, and make sure it’s a snug fit. Always dress appropriately, and if you’re paddling, dress for the water. A dunking this time of year can be deadly.”

The breakdown of the five boating fatalities this spring shows that four of the five victims were not wearing a life jacket. The other is unknown.

Four of the victims were male and one female. Three were recreating in paddlecraft (kayaks and a canoe) and two were in motorboats. All of the victims fell overboard unexpectedly into cold water.

This season, many people new to paddling or people who haven’t paddled in a while are strongly encouraged to take a free, online Paddling Course to learn about self-rescue, how to re-board your paddlecraft, im-

portant equipment/requirements and other safety skills to develop.

Newcomers are urged to start on calm, flat water, and slowly progress to other waterbodies as their skills develop. There are also paddling clubs in many communities as well as online forums with local safety information.

Additionally, the agency has received many reports of debris and obstructions this spring, so all paddlers and motorboaters should be especially cautious, keeping a sharp lookout on all waterways and starting out slow.

Visit the agency’s waterway obstruction page — <https://www.oregon.gov/osmb/Pages/Reported-Obstructions-Alerts.aspx> — to learn where obstructions have been reported and recommenda-

tions on how to avoid them. Many obstructions cannot be immediately cleared.

The open/closed status of boating access changes frequently. The agency’s interactive Boat Oregon Map is a resource for finding facility contact information to help boaters with their planning and preparation. Remember to respect any closures, stay local, be self-contained, boat with members of your immediate household, and maintain physical distance for your own safety and for those around you.

For more Paddle Smart boating safety tips from the Marine Board and the U.S. Coast Guard, visit <https://www.oregon.gov/osmb/info/Documents/News-Releases/Media%20Kit/PaddleSmart.pdf>.

Warmest Weekend Of 2020

Mother’s Day weekend is likely to be the warmest of the year in Northeast Oregon. The National Weather Service is predicting sunshine and highs in the 70s across most of the region for today and Sunday.

Baker City

TODAY’S HIGH
76°

SUNDAY’S HIGH
80°

La Grande

TODAY’S HIGH
75°

SUNDAY’S HIGH
76°

Enterprise

TODAY’S HIGH
72°

SUNDAY’S HIGH
73°

Walla Walla County officials say ‘coronavirus’ parties didn’t take place

WALLA WALLA, Wash. (AP) — Officials in a county in southeastern Washington state are retracting their claim that some people in held parties in which they intentionally exposed themselves to the coronavirus.

Walla Walla County Department of Community Health Director Meghan DeBolt issued a statement late Wednesday saying her earlier remarks were incorrect.

“I formally call back my interview today,” DeBolt said in the new statement. “After receiving further information, we have discovered that there were not intentional covid parties. Just innocent endeavors.”

DeBolt had told the Union-Bulletin newspaper this week that contact tracing has revealed some people were attending parties with the idea that it is better to get sick with COVID-19 and recover. She called the parties irresponsible.

Her earlier comments prompted Washington State Department of Health officials on Wednesday to release a statement saying gathering in groups in the midst of this pandemic can be incredibly dangerous and puts people at increased risk for hospitalization and even death.

States donating malaria drug tablets

By Emily Kopp
CO-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The Strategic National Stockpile has shipped 28 million tablets of a malaria drug that President Donald Trump touted as a potential treatment for COVID-19 to states since April 1. States received millions more from donations or taxpayer-funded purchases.

But after doubts arose about whether the drug, hydroxychloroquine sulfate, is safe and effective for the coronavirus-based disease, states are donating supplies to patients who need them for other reasons, seeking refunds or weighing what to do with them.

As Trump encourages some states to lift shelter-at-home orders, states report that hydroxychloroquine, a linchpin of Trump’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, won’t be used to prevent any resulting surge of illnesses and deaths because the drug may not work and has dangerous side effects.

Meanwhile, a whistleblower complaint that was filed Tuesday by former Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority Director Rick Bright raises other safety concerns about the stockpile’s hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine tablets.

Bright and other officials were “concerned about the quality and potential toxicity of chloroquine supplies produced and shipped in from facilities in India and Pakistan that were not approved by the FDA, and were therefore not approved to be used in the U.S. marketplace,” the complaint to the Office of Special Counsel alleges.

States like Texas report that the drug no longer plays a role in their emergency response plans. In one week stretching from late March into early April, dozens of Texas hospitals across the state requested 467 bottles of hydroxychloroquine from the state’s emergency supply.

By the week of April 20, as new evidence emerged about the drug’s sometimes deadly side effects, requests fell to a trickle. Ten bottles were requested between April 20 and April 24, data supplied by the Texas Department of State Health Services show. Over the last two weeks, following a Food and Drug Administration warning, no bottles were requested.

About 9,200 bottles of hydroxychloroquine, or 920,000 pills, remain sitting in the Texas stockpile.

North Carolina, which acquired 1.5 million tablets from donations and the national stockpile, also saw a drop-off in requests, according to the state’s Department of Health and Human Services.

Questions remain about how many states and hospitals obtained hydroxychloroquine and how they plan to use it. A spokesperson for the national stockpile would not specify which states and hospitals requested supplies, and said stockpile officials are not aware of which hospitals and long-term care facilities received it.

Amneal Pharmaceuticals, which donated supplies directly to several states in early April, did not respond to a request for comment.

The hydroxychloroquine boom may have burned up valuable time and resources.

Michael Carome, director of the

health research group at Public Citizen, said the use of hydroxychloroquine before FDA approval for COVID-19 may have diverted people from participating in clinical trials to study it and other nascent therapies. It may have also led to deaths.

“Some patients who were given the drug were probably harmed and some may have died,” he said.

Trump began championing the drug as a “game changer” with “very, very encouraging early results” on March 19. The FDA issued an emergency use authorization for hydroxychloroquine sulfate and a related drug, chloroquine phosphate, on March 28, based on anecdotal evidence rather than clinical data.

A small pilot study supporting its efficacy in mild cases, which was touted on Fox News, was determined to not meet the “expected standard” of the International Society of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, whose medical journal published it.

More evidence emerged throughout April that hydroxychloroquine may not be the effective treatment the president claimed.

A study of COVID-19 patients at Veterans Affairs facilities treated with hydroxychloroquine alone or in combination with another drug, azithromycin, found no evidence that the drug prevented COVID-19 respiratory problems. The study found patients taking hydroxychloroquine alone actually had a higher mortality rate than patients who did not.

The study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, has

not yet been vetted by experts through peer review or published in a journal.

By April 24, the FDA issued its warning that hydroxychloroquine should not be prescribed off-label, and should only be used in a hospital or a clinical trial because of heart rhythm risks.

The Infectious Diseases Society of America recommends the drug only be used for COVID-19 in a clinical trial.

Some of the 28 million tablets shipped by the national stockpile will be used to fuel these clinical trials.

In hard-hit New York, the Mount Sinai Health System recommends that its physicians not use the drug to treat patients with COVID-19 because of the potential for harm, including the arrhythmias and the blood disorder methemoglobinemia.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, worked with the Trump administration in March to get hydroxychloroquine. The New York Department of Health did not respond to a request for comment.

The Philadelphia Department of Health specified that though some hospitals independently acquired hydroxychloroquine, the city had not acquired the drug and would not direct its use for COVID-19.

Georgia GOP Rep. Doug Collins said on April 7 a donation of hydroxychloroquine from drug-maker Amneal “could potentially save thousands of lives across our state.” Collins thanked the Georgia Department of Public Health for helping secure the donation.