

# If boating is part of your Labor Day plans, these tips can keep you safe

Labor Day Weekend is one of the top three boating weekends of the year at many Oregon water bodies, and the Oregon State Marine Board wants to remind boaters to be cautious and courteous where it's congested.

"On the coast, thousands of boaters are looking for salmon at Buoy 10 near Astoria, while others are taking advantage of the holiday weekend to float down the Deschutes, Clackamas and other rivers," said Ashley Massey, Public Affairs Specialist for the Marine Board. "Most lake and reservoir water levels are beginning to drop, so factor in extra time to launch and bring along a little patience."

Conflict between boaters and other water users can increase this time of year, so boaters need to pay very close attention to the people enjoying the water around them. "This is

not the time of year to go full-throttle," Massey said. "With water levels dropping, stumps, deadheads and sand and gravel bars can appear out of nowhere. It's important to go slow and always keep a sharp lookout."

Marine officers will be on the water to assist boaters and help keep the waterways safe. Top violations this summer have been not having life jackets, a boater education card or current boat registration. Other violations involve reckless operation and alcohol. The following checklist will help you stay safe this Labor Day weekend:

- Wear your life jacket. Each boat (including kayaks and canoes) must have a properly fitting life jacket for each person on board. Life jackets need to be in good shape and readily accessible, not under a hatch or in a package. All those 12 and younger must wear a life

jacket when in a boat that's underway. Many people who have drowned would have survived if they were wearing a life jacket.

- Sit on the seat. The growth of wakesurfing is luring many people to ride on the swim platform, stern or sides of the boat. This is a carbon monoxide hazard, a safety hazard, and is illegal.

- Slow down and keep a proper lookout. Always obey the "5-mph, slow-no-wake" buoys or signs. Wakes can contribute to bank erosion and damage docks and other property. Remember to slow down within 200 feet of a dock, launch ramp, marina, moorage, floating home or boathouse, pier or swim float.

- Carry your boater education card. This year all boaters operating boats over 10 hp need a boater education card. Youth 12-15 who operate a powerboat 0-10 hp, alone,

must carry a boater education card. When operating a powerboat greater than 10 hp, youth must be supervised by a cardholder age 16 or older. When operating a personal watercraft, the supervising adult must be 18 or older. Educated boaters are much less likely to be involved in boating accidents.

- Don't drink and boat. If arrested for Boating Under the In-

fluence of Intoxicants, a violator can be fined \$6,250, lose boating privileges for a period of time, and may even serve jail time. The Marine Board encourages boaters (that goes for floaters too) to leave the alcohol on shore. It's safer for everybody.

For more information on boating safety, visit <http://www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/safety/safety.shtml>.

## Pictures of kids in life jackets wanted

Boaters heading out on the water this Labor Day weekend may need a properly-fitted kid's life jacket for a young boating guest – and they are in luck. The non-profit BoatU.S. Foundation offers a no-cost Kid's Life Jacket Loaner Program which gives boaters and parents the opportunity to borrow a children's life jacket for the day or weekend. And when you stop by one of the 500 locations across the country to pick

up a loaner jacket, have your camera ready. The Foundation is looking for photos of kids wearing Loaner Program life jackets. The best photos will be featured in a 2010 calendar. Photos can be emailed to Life Jacket Program Manager Alana Keating at [AKeating@BoatUS.com](mailto:AKeating@BoatUS.com).

In November, judges will select the best photos to be featured in the calendar that will be offered for sale on

[www.BoatUS.com/Foundation](http://www.BoatUS.com/Foundation). Proceeds from the calendar will help keep this life-saving program afloat.

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