

NEWS RELEASE

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE/TIME OF RELEASE: July 1, 2009

NATURE OF STORY: Water Recreation

LOCATION: Lane County Waterways

DETAILS: With the hot weather forecast for the following week, in conjunction with the 4th of July holiday weekend, the Sheriff's Office anticipates that a large number of residents and visitors will be recreating on County waterways.

As always, the Sheriff's Office highly recommends that all water craft operators and occupants not only meet the law requirements of having access to PFD's for each person on board, but go a step further and ensure that everyone is wearing a properly fitting PFD during their water recreation, especially on our area rivers. History has shown us that a situation can turn deadly within seconds. Having access to a PFD but not wearing it on the river with the thought of grabbing it if you need it is analogous to deciding that while riding in a vehicle on the highway you'll put your seatbelt on if you get in a crash; it just isn't reasonable to believe you'll have the time to do that.

In addition to wearing their PFD's, the Lane County Sheriff's Office encourages those recreating on our local waters to be aware of boating under the influence of intoxicants. Boating Under the Influence is dangerous. Nearly 21 percent of boating-related fatalities each year result from alcohol use.¹

BUII is also illegal. Operating a recreational vessel with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08% or higher is against most state and federal laws. In Oregon, operators can also be arrested at blood alcohol levels below a .08%. Officers evaluate boat operators using standardized field sobriety tests. If the operator fails field sobriety tests and their blood

¹ Source: U.S. Coast Guard Boating Statistics 2007 COMDTPUB P16754.21

alcohol is under a .08% they can still be arrested for BUII. If an operator blows .08 or above, under the Implied Consent Law, they automatically lose boating privileges and pay a hefty fine.

Boating Under the Influence also applies to dangerous drugs/inhalants. Even some medications can make operating a recreational vessel unsafe – check with your doctor. Penalties for BUII include up to \$6,250 in fines, 1 year in jail, and loss of boating privileges.

Alcohol can impair a boater's judgment, balance, vision and reaction time. It can increase fatigue and susceptibility to the effects of cold-water immersion. Sun, wind, noise, vibration and motion – "stressors" common to the boating environment – intensify the side effects of alcohol, drugs and some medications.

Alcohol use is dangerous for passengers, too. Intoxicated passengers can more easily slip, fall overboard or suffer other dangerous accidents.

For additional information contact:

Lane County Marine Patrol at 682-8599 or Search and Rescue at 682-8544

Prepared by:

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