



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

State Marine Board

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More people are paddling and motor boating than ever before in Oregon, so when COVID-19 social distancing realities came into play in 2020, that number jumped even higher. Unfortunately, the combination of growth in boating recreation and COVID-19 meant that more people died in boating-related incidents in Oregon in 2020 than in any year since 1987. Twenty of the 27 fatalities in 2020 likely could have been prevented had victims taken a simple precaution – wearing a suitable life jacket that was fitted correctly and buckled. Nationally, it is estimated that 84 percent of boating fatalities could be prevented annually if boaters wear a life jacket, and this is especially true in Oregon where water remains cold and swift well into June and July. Lives literally depend on it. Demonstrating safe and legal use of life jackets must be extended to all forms of water-based recreation and include not just children but adults.

We, the Oregon State Marine Board, the state's recreational boating agency, join the coalition in partnership with the Willamette Valley Visitor's Association and other destination marketing organizations, outdoor recreation agencies, and others, to model proper life jacket use and compliance. We will seek to continue the conversation in our water-related partnerships to build alignment around this issue.

We commit to the following:

- All water recreation imagery created and produced by our agency will show proper life jacket use.
- Collaborators and hired content creators (such as social media influencers, bloggers, and media) will uphold this commitment in their contracted content.
- User-generated content is a great way to show real people experiencing Oregon, but only content illustrating appropriate life jacket use will be shared.
- This commitment will be shared with other agencies and industries, including land/facility managers, environmental stewards, outdoor retailers, guides and outfitters, and others who promote all forms of water recreation.

Signed,

Larry Warren
Director, Oregon State Marine Board