
LANE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
NEWS RELEASE



DATE/TIME OF RELEASE: 06/03/2011 at 11:00 hours
NATURE OF STORY: Water Rescues/Water Safety
LOCATION: Lane County Waterways (Willamette River)

DETAILS: With air temperatures forecast in the 80's over the weekend we are expecting an increase in both water recreation and water related incidents. This is a good time to remind the public to recreate safely on Lane County waterways. Water temperatures are still in the high 40's or lower 50's. These water temperatures will literally take your breath away if you are immersed in it.

Remember that a significant amount of community public safety resources are required to respond to water related emergencies which can largely be prevented with a little planning and proper equipment preparation. Boaters using powered watercraft should ensure their motors are tuned up and have fresh fuel before recreating on our waterways. Also check to ensure you have all the required safety equipment on board and children haven't grown out of their life jackets.

We have had one drift boat accident at Lanes Turn, just west of Coburg on the Willamette River. Historically, and again this year, this is an area that accumulates debris and can be hazardous to boaters. With high water, strong currents and new trees down, boaters need to be alert for hazards and changes in the river from one year to the next.

We recommend you leave a detailed float plan on shore with a responsible party and preview your route before you float it, if possible. If possible, plan on being off the water well before dark.

Construction work on the I-5 Bridge at the Willamette River has generated several rescues. This can be a very hazardous area for both boaters and rescue crews. Persons floating this area should be very familiar with the correct route and are strongly recommended to WEAR their PFD when going through this area.

If you are in any floatation device that is defined as a watercraft by state law you must have a PFD and signal device such as a whistle with you. This includes any light duty, multi-air celled inflatable's, kayaks, etc. The Sheriff's Office strongly recommends that you not only have a proper floatation device (PFD) with you but that you WEAR IT. We also recommend that you wear a PFD when you float the rivers with single air celled floatation devices like inner tubes and "pool toys". If these get punctured or lose air you have no recourse if you don't have a contingency plan. A citation for no PFD will cost you \$287.00!

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New Law requires boaters to wear appropriately sized PFD's while moving through class 3 rapids. Lane County has class 3 rapids on the upper McKenzie and at Hayden Bridge Rapids near Springfield.

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