Media Release
Boating and Cold-Water Safety

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Contact: Deputy Scot Swallow
Phone: (509) 853-9523
Email: scot.swallow@co.yakima.wa.us
Incident: Boating and Cold-Water Safety

With the reopening of the fishing season, the easing of stay-at-home orders across the Pacific Northwest, and the upcoming warm weekend, The Yakima County Sheriff’s Office Marine Unit wants to remind boaters and paddlers about cold-water safety and encouraged to wear a life jacket.

Heading out boating or paddling? Don’t forget that Washington’s waterway are cold and life jackets save lives! Many drowning victims die due to cold-water shock, which causes an involuntarily gasp for air underwater or as water hit a person’s face. #coldwatersafety #WearItWA

An experienced swimmer can’t drown, right? Think again! When exposed to cold water, people in great shape that swim well still experience gasping, shock, the inability to move and have the potential to drown. A life jacket helps keep your head above the water—but it only works if you WEAR IT! #coldwatersafety #WearItWA

You can learn more about life jackets at: www.wearitwashington.org.
Cold water can kill in less than one minute due to cold-water shock. Experts define cold water as anything below 60 degrees. In Washington, most waterways stay under 60 degrees year-round.

As always, have a fun and safe boating experience and stay safe.

Deputy Scot Swallow
Yakima County Sheriff’s Office
Marine Patrol Unit.
COLD WATER SAFETY

Tips for boaters

- Always wear a life jacket, even experienced swimmers.
- Check weather and water conditions. Wind is crucial and impacts safe boating.
- File (and stick to) a float plan.
- Carry two forms of emergency communications, preferably on your body, that work while wet.
- Always designate a lookout and don’t drive at high speeds.
- Be alert. Avoid alcohol and marijuana.
- Get educated and follow all navigation rules.