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Kayakers, Paddlers, Boaters Beware: The Sun Shines Warm, but the Water is Still Cold and Dangerous

Oak Harbor, WA – There are still warm, sunny days left to enjoy, but [The Deception Pass Sail and Power Squadron \(DPSPS\)](#) reminds boaters, kayakers and paddlers that Whidbey and Fidalgo waters are still cold. A fall into the water could be dangerous and deadly. Wearing a life jacket is essential to survival.

With local water temperatures averaging in the mid-fifties, a fall into the water could bring on *cold water immersion*, which is the cause of many boating-related fatalities. According to the U.S. Coast Guard, cold water immersion and hypothermia can occur in water as cool as 70 degrees at any time of the year.

According to DPSPS Commander Pat Waters, cold water immersion refers to the affect that that sudden shock of cold water has on your breathing. “You fall in, and you have an automatic gasp reflex action as soon as you immerse in that cold water. If your head is under water, you can ingest water, drown, or have a constricted windpipe and suffocate.”

Even experienced swimmers can experience shock within one minute in the frigid water and lose muscle control within 10 minutes.

According to the National Safe Boating Council, accidents on the water will happen much too fast to reach and put on a stowed life jacket. Drowning is the reported cause of death in 77 percent of all boating fatalities – and 84 percent of drowning victims in recreational boating accidents were not wearing a life jacket in 2018

According to DPSPS Commander Pat Waters, warming temperatures and sunny skies will bring locals and visitors to our beaches and waters. “It’s not just those on the bigger boats heading out, but anyone on smaller boats, kayaks, jet-skiers, and paddleboards that need to heed the life jacket requirement.

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Waters also stressed the importance of dressing properly for the weather. “Always wear layers, and bring an extra set of clothes in case you get wet.”

The Deception Pass Sail and Power Squadron (DPSPS) is a 44-year-old nonprofit organization. It is a member of the United States Power Squadrons, the world’s largest boating education organization. DPSPS has over 75 members from Whidbey and Fidalgo islands.

We are part of America's Boating Club, a squadron of the United States Power Squadrons, a non-profit boating organization dedicated to education & training of safe boating activities.

<https://safeboatingcampaign.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2020-nsbc-fact-sheet-cold-water-boating.pdf>

<https://safeboatingcampaign.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2020-nsbc-fact-sheet-boating-safety-tips.pdf>

<https://safeboatingcampaign.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2020-nsbc-fact-sheet-have-the-right-life-jacket.pdf>

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