

NEWS

Oregon State Marine Board Boat Oregon



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Boating on Oregon's Waterways –Plan, Pay Attention, Share

Salem, OR – There are dozens of boat types on the market and so many opportunities to explore Oregon's waterways. Regardless of what's calling you to the water and the type of boat you're in, be sure to plan ahead, know your limits, pay attention to your surroundings and share the water so everyone can have a fun time.

The Oregon State Marine Board invites boaters to explore the [interactive Boating Oregon Map](#), where you can find a boat ramp near you, plan for a weekend escape to places less-frequented or find a waterway in the center of all the action.



"There's plenty of water around the state to play in this year," says Ashley Massey, Public Information Officer for the Marine Board. "Why not consider exploring a new waterbody and new adventures? There are dozens of waterbodies perfectly suited for non-motorized boating and just as many "electric motor only" lakes, for folks looking for a serene, relaxing, and peaceful excursion. Take a few minutes to plan ahead and check out the Marine Board's interactive Boat Oregon Map with all of the public boat ramps and a data layer with local rules." Massey also advises to check the weather forecast, water levels or tides, see if there are any [reported obstructions](#), and have the right gear for the activities you're doing." Boaters can also check the Marine Board's website to find out what [equipment is required](#) based on the size of the boat and rules for operation which vary by waterbody.

Massey also emphasizes paying attention to your surroundings, continually scanning port to starboard and keeping a close eye on what's ahead. "Brush up on the [rules-of-the-road](#), start out slow because of debris in the water from this past winter, and whatever you do –don't text and drive. Taking video and pictures, along with social media and texting can be fun, but the operator needs to maintain focus and awareness to what's going on around them," says Massey. "The captain is responsible for the safety of everyone on board, but everyone needs to pitch in and be an active, alert crew, working together."

High water levels in the spring cover many wing dams (also known as pile dikes) on rivers and bays and are just below the surface. Massey adds, "Boaters need to keep their distance from the shoreline, up to several hundred feet in some locations, so they don't inadvertently hit one of the piles." Boaters are encouraged to learn where the wing dams are located based on the waterbody where they're boating from [NOAA Charts](#). The navigation charts can be downloaded for free.

The Marine Board also recommends boaters **play it safe by:**

- Not using marijuana, drugs or alcohol. Instead, take along a variety of non-alcoholic beverages and plenty of water. Impairment can lead to a BUII arrest. Drugs and alcohol impair a boater's judgment and coordination which every boat operator needs. Swift currents, changing weather and debris require boat operators to be focused and skilled to avoid an accident.
- If you are feeling tired, take a break on land and return to the water when you are re-energized and alert. Wind, glare, dehydration and wave motion contribute to fatigue. Continually monitor the weather because it changes quickly.
- Operators and passengers should wear properly fitting life jackets. [Learn more](#) about life jacket types, styles, and legal requirements. Anyone rafting on Class III Whitewater Rivers is required to wear a life jacket, and all children 12 and under when a boat is underway. The water temperature for most waterways is below 50 degrees this time of year and wearing a life jacket is the most important piece of equipment for surviving the first few seconds of cold water immersion. What's the downside to wearing one?
- Never boat alone –**especially when paddling**. Always let others know where you are going and when you'll return. Print out a downloadable [float plan](#) to leave with friends and family.
- Be courteous to other boaters and share the waterway. Congestion is a given in many popular locations, especially with nice weather. By staying in calmer water near the shore, paddlers can help ease conflict with motorized boats and sailboats that need deeper water to operate. Non-motorized boats are encouraged to use the shoreline adjacent to the ramp to help ease congestion. Regardless of your boat type, stage your gear in the parking lot or staging area prior to launching your boat. This makes launching faster and everyone around you, happier.
- In Oregon, all boaters must take a boating safety course and carry a boater education card when operating a powerboat greater than 10 horsepower. The Marine Board also offers a free, [online Paddling Course](#) for boaters new to the activity.

For more information about safe boating in Oregon, visit www.boatoregon.com.

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