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*Counts toward Safety and Health Specialist Certification

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By Mary Czaja, Safety & Health Programs Coordinator, Evergreen Safety Council

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*According to the National Safety Council
Water Safety

By Stephanie Dyck, Office Supervisor/First Aid/CPR Coordinator

Every year at this time we start hearing of more and more drownings across our state, most of which can be prevented. In 2010, there were 108 unintentional drowning deaths to Washington residents of all ages; 14 of these deaths were of children younger than 18 years old. Knowing your surroundings, knowing how to swim and wearing the proper gear will help tremendously.

As Memorial Day comes and goes we all like to think it’s summer time. What we forget is that the local rivers, lakes and streams are still freezing. The water temperature can remain near freezing for many months after winter. As the snow melts off the Cascades, etc. it travels down through rivers and streams keeping them ice cold. Before jumping in to any body of water, know the temperature to prevent hypothermia. Know how to prevent and treat hypothermia since it can begin in water as warm as 70 degrees.

Most hotels/motels do not provide lifeguards, so never leave children unattended. If you have a home pool or travel you should always have a US Coast Guard approved lifejacket, no matter how confident you feel. It only takes 1" of water to drown.

General Water Safety Guidelines:

• Learn to swim
• Take a water safety class, learn first aid and CPR
• If boating in the State of WA – you must have a Boater Education Card
• ALWAYS supervise children on, in or around water
• Do not drink alcohol while swimming or boating
• Do not attempt a rescue unless you have specialized training and/or equipment
• Be aware of your surroundings and potential water hazards
• Pay attention to the weather

Most boating accidents are caused by the operator, not by the boat or the water environment. Approximately 80% of boating fatalities in the US are due to drowning and most would have been prevented if the boater had been wearing a US Coast Guard approved lifejacket. Because of this, Washington State implemented a new law in 2008 that anyone ‘operating a powered watercraft of 15hp or greater to take a safety education course and obtain a Boater Education Card to operate a boat in Washington.’ For more information on this program you can go to www.boat-ed.com.

Before going on vacation or going to a local lake for a picnic, make sure everyone knows how to be safe in and near the water and pass the information on to other family and friends. Let’s prevent drowning everywhere.

Did you know?

Surfaces such as sand or water reflect up to 85 percent of the sun’s damaging rays. It’s especially important to protect your skin and eyes around these surfaces.

Safety + Health Specialist Update

Interested in becoming a Safety and Health Specialist? For your convenience, ESC is currently updating its Safety and Health Specialist series to be shorter and offered more frequently. Starting in July, ESC will offer the series over three different sessions throughout the year. The series will also be shortened from fifteen required days, to only ten. Each participant learns the state and federal health and safety regulations and award of the certificate prepares the participant to perform basic safety and health functions. A solid foundation of knowledge in safety-related skills and activities. Students will have a set of nine required courses, and be able to choose other classes to complete the series to be shorter and offered more frequently. Starting in July, ESC will offer the series over three different sessions throughout the year. The series will also be shortened from fifteen required days, to only ten. Students will have a set of nine required courses, and be able to choose the tenth class as an elective.

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SAFETY STATISTICS

‘Every day in America, 13 people go to work and never come home. Every year in America, nearly 4 million people suffer a workplace injury from which some may never recover. These are preventable tragedies that disable our workers, devastate our families, and damage our economy. American workers are not looking for a handout or a free lunch. They are looking for a good day’s pay for a hard day’s work. They just want to go to work, provide for their families, and get home in one piece’ – Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis, Workers Memorial Day speech April 26, 2012

Vacation Driving

By Tom Uphaugard, Executive Director, Everett Safety Council

Summer is here! Warm weather, kids out of school and vacation plans abound. Just remember, according to the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, over a five-year period (2006-2010) 40% of motor vehicle fatalities and serious injuries occurred during the months of June-Sept….prime vacation time in the PNW.

And for those who like to get away for a long weekend during the year, 54% of fatalities occurred on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. You may be taking a break from work, but that does not reduce your risk of being involved in a serious crash. However there are some things that you can do to mitigate your risk and have a fun, safe vacation with your family and friends.

• Make sure your vehicle is in good safe operating condition. Checking such things as: lights, windows, mirrors, tires and fluids doesn’t take long. Making sure you have an emergency kit that includes a first aid kit just makes sense.
• Plan your trip – be aware of any weather issues, road construction or other potential hazards that you may encounter.
• Be aware of the risks of travelling between 9 PM and 6 AM, a time when nearly 40% of fatal crashes occur…due to increased visibility, DUI drivers and your own drowsiness.
• Drive Defensively:
  • Scan the road – take in the whole scene in front of you, and in your rear, including other vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, signage, and potential road hazards.
  • Eliminate distractions – keep your eye on the road, your hands on the steering wheel and your mind on driving.
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Most hotels/motels do not provide lifeguards, so never leave children unattended. If you have a home pool or travel you should remember that water is dangerous. The water temperature can remain near freezing for many months after winter. As the snow melts off the Cascades, etc. it travels down through rivers and streams keeping them ice cold. The closest place to learn swimming is to put your children in a pool, even if you do not plan on using it. You can not guess how fast the water temperature will change. Most drowning accidents are caused by the operator, not by the boat or the water environment. Approximately 80% of drowning fatalities in the US are due to drowning and most would have been prevented if the boater had been wearing a US Coast Guard approved lifejacket. Because of this, Washington State implemented a new law in 2008 that anyone operating a powered watercraft of 15hp or greater to take a safety education course and obtain a Boater Education Card to operate a boat in Washington. For more information on this program you can go to www.boat-ed.com.

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• Control your speed (40% of fatal crashes involved speed as a cause). Think about this – if driving from Seattle to Spokane (284 miles) you would save approximately 42 minutes in travel time when your speed is 85mph vs 70mph on the highway and your risk of death increases by approximately eight times. Is saving a few minutes on the drive worth the risk?

• Don’t Tailgate! In good conditions, with good brakes and tires, a car travelling 65 mph takes approximately 366 feet to stop – that’s longer than a football field….wet pavement increases that to 550ft (nearly 2 football fields). Keep at least 3 seconds distance between you and the car ahead of you.

• Don’t be an aggressive driver. Here are some tips:
  • Don’t cut off other drivers
  • Don’t tailgate
  • Don’t drive slow in the left lane – use it only for passing others.
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