

RIVER SAFETY

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With warmer weather and melting snowpack, high river flows are common and very dangerous in early summer. Every year the Fire Department responds to water rescues in our local rivers, some which result in loss of life by drowning.

1. Never Swim Alone

Stop and think every time you go! Rivers are always changing. Do not assume that because it was safe last summer or last week, that it is safe now!

2. Avoid Alcohol Around Water

Alcohol use is involved in up to 50% of adolescent and adult deaths associated with water recreation. Alcohol impairs judgement, encourages greater risk taking behavior, reduces coordination, impairs reaction time and also reduces the effectiveness of CPR, should someone require it.

3. Wear a Life Jacket – Nobody Plans to Drown

Children or inexperienced swimmers should always wear a Coast Guard approved lifejacket when around water. It may not seem cool but it can save your life.

4. Set Limits for Your Children

Where they can go, who needs to be there and what they should have with them. Just because they're with a group of friends does not mean they can rescue each other if someone gets into trouble. Young children need to be watched at all times. It can take only 20-60 seconds for a child to submerge without warning.

5. Know Your Limits

If you're not a good swimmer or just learning to swim stay out of currents and do not go in water that's over your head. Knowing how to swim is important for anyone who spends time near or on the water. Make sure your children learn to swim, and upgrade their swimming skills each year.

6. Be Aware of Hazards

Debris and underwater features such as trees, branches and logs, and even narrow gaps between rocks can trap you under water. Water that may look calm on the surface and slow moving can have enough force to knock you off your feet and sweep you downstream.

7. Water Temperature

As the mountain snowpack melts the rivers can remain high, swift, and very cold. The risk of hypothermia is very real. In the first minute of exposure to cold water, breathing and heart rate accelerate, stressing the body and leaving a person gasping for breath. That first minute may do you in. Even the strongest of swimmers can become overwhelmed and drown.

8. Air Filled or Foam Toys are not Safety Devices

Don't use air-filled or foam toys such as "water wings", "noodles", or inner tubes in place of a life jacket, they are not designed to keep swimmers safe.

LIFE JACKET LOANER PROGRAM

Life jackets save lives. If you need a life jacket borrow one for free. At the loaner station you can take one off the rack and return it when you are finished.

They are located at the parking lot where SR202/SR203 intersect, 37122 SE Fish Hatchery Rd (Plum's Landing Boat Launch) and at SE 44th Place (Zurfleuah Boat Launch) at the confluence of the Raging river and Snoqualmie river in Fall City.

