

Water Safety  
By Pat Gripp, Council Partner

With the arrival of summer, many people turn to water. Swimming. Boating. Water skiing. And with these water activities comes fun. In order to maintain the “fun” part of water activities, safe practices are a must.

According to SafeUsa.org/water, in 1996, 4000 people drowned in the United States. 1,000 were under the age of 15. And, the statistics have risen. So, following safe procedures is a must.

- Learn to swim. Always swim with a buddy, never alone.
- Learn CPR.
- Always use a Coast Guard approved PFD (personal flotation device/life jacket) with a whistle attached when boating. Do not use an air filled swimming aid in place of a PFD.
- Never drink alcohol before or during swimming, boating, or water skiing. Never drink alcohol while supervising children around water. In 1996 nearly 1,000 children younger than 15 years of age drowned in the U.S. 25%-50% of adolescent and adult drownings involve alcohol use. In 40%-50% of drownings among adolescent males, alcohol is a major contributing factor.

The McKenzie Rural Fire Department sponsors a PFD loan program for those who want to enjoy the McKenzie River in a boat, but do not have PFD's. The PFD's may be borrowed at the Leaburg Store, the Vida Market, and Harbick's Country Store. The devices may then be returned to any of the participating markets.

Always remember that following safe practices around water will ensure a fun, tragedy-free summer.