

Dear King County families,

Welcome to summer 2024! As your children get ready for summer break, it's important to remember that water activities are not without risk. King County has experienced a rise in preventable drowning fatalities since 2019, with preliminary data showing 30 deaths in 2023. Many of these deaths could have been avoided with life jacket use and supervision. It's crucial to prioritize water safety to protect our kids.

To stay safe this summer, the **King County Department Natural Resources and Parks**, the **King County Sheriff's Office and Public Health – Seattle & King County** advise the following:

- Wear a USCG-approved life jacket when swimming, and during boating activities. It's mandatory for children under 12 on vessels under 19 feet. [Learn to choose the right life jacket here.](#)
- Learn to swim and self-rescue. Swim lessons are available at low or no cost to qualifying families in Seattle and many surrounding areas seattle.gov/parks/pools/swim-seattle. Or check with your local park department.
- **Supervise children closely** near water and appoint a dedicated “*water watcher*.”
- Avoid alcohol, cannabis, or other impairing drugs during water activities and while supervising.
- Learn CPR. Visit kingcounty.gov/cpr for training information on Hands-Only CPR.

River Safety:

Avoid river activities as they pose high-risk due to the absence of lifeguards, rapidly changing conditions, cold and fast current, and unstable rocks. Even if shallow areas feel warm, moving or deep waters can be dangerously cold, leading to cold water shock or hypothermia.

- Always wear a life jacket when near or recreating in a river, creek, lake or Puget Sound.
- Watch children close and keep them near you so you can reach them immediately in case of an emergency.
- Choose safer swimming options with lifeguards present, such as a swim beach or pool.

Boating Tips:

- Inform someone of your boating plans; as well as when and where you expect to put in and take out your boat.
- Have an emergency contact ready.
- Don't boat alone; include a craft with oars for rescues.
- Bring a dry bag with food, water, and warm clothes.
- It's very important to wear a lifejacket as one never knows when they'll end up in the water unexpectedly.

Resources:

- For safety tips and resources [King County Water Safety](#).
- For lifeguard schedules, swim lessons, and life jacket stations [King County Area Public Lifeguarded Beaches and Summer Outdoor Pools](#).
- Locate nearby life jacket loaner stations “[Washington State Parks Life Jacket Loaner Map](#).”
- Get a 20% off the regular price of any life jacket in stock at Big 5 Sporting Goods via [Seattle Children's Drowning Prevention Network](#).

Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

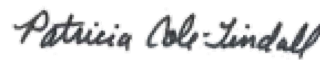
Sincerely,



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