



SHERIFF KOOTENAI COUNTY



SHERIFF **BEN WOLFINGER**

UNDERSHERIFF **DAN MATTOS**

Media Release

For Immediate Release:
June 28, 2018

Contact: PIO Det. D. Stinebaugh
208-758-1045 / 208-446-2236
sopio@kcgov.us

Coast Guard urges boating safety in Coeur d'Alene throughout 4th of July holiday

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho – The Coast Guard will be conducting operations on Lake Coeur d'Alene, located on the border between Idaho and Washington, to assist local maritime law enforcement and maintain a safe waterway during an expected busy week leading up to and through Independence Day.

Coast Guard boat crews and law enforcement team members will be working alongside Kootenai County Sheriff deputies and other local partners to deter, detect and conduct enforcement against illegal charter operations by:

- Preventing potential illegal charters with a preemptive outreach and education campaign;
- Boarding potential illegal charters to confirm compliance;
- Ensuring recreational boating safety is maintained and prevent/deter boating under the influence during the holiday week.

Kootenai County is home to 19,554 registered boaters. The greater Coeur d'Alene/Spokane metropolitan has over 40,000 registered boaters. The Kootenai County Sheriff's department employs two full-time and eight seasonal deputies.

Lake Coeur d'Alene is one of 61 navigable lakes in Idaho, six of which have federal jurisdiction.

"The Coast Guard presence will strengthen and aid our local safety and enforcement efforts in patrolling the 70 navigable square miles of Coeur d'Alene Lake," said Ben Wolfinger, Kootenai County Sheriff. "The Coast Guard is a preeminent federal safety and response agency and they will help us achieve our goal of preventing boating accidents or fatalities."

Illegal charter operations pose significant safety risks and are a nationwide problem. Multiple fatal and potentially fatal accidents recorded in recent years have been linked to illegal charters.

A vessel carrying "passengers for hire" (i.e. someone who contributes any economic benefit, monetary contribution or a donation as a condition of carriage) requires a Coast Guard licensed or credentialed operator. In addition, if carrying more than six passengers, the vessel must have a valid Certificate of Inspection issued by the Coast Guard. These requirements provide proof that the Coast Guard has verified both the operator and the vessel meet specific minimum federal safety standards.

The Coast Guard routinely maintains its presence on navigable waterways in order to ensure compliance with all federal requirements. During the coming months, this will include partnering with local law enforcement to promote safe and legal charter operations being conducted on the federal waterways in the Pacific Northwest. Operators found to be in violation of these requirements may be subject to voyage termination and civil penalty action.

If passengers want to verify a captain's license or the inspected status of a commercial passenger vessel, report a suspected illegal charter operation, or if a vessel operator desires more information on how to meet federal requirements, please call the Coast Guard contacts below for your specific area:

- Sector Puget Sound: (Westport, Washington, north to the U.S./Canada border including inland rivers and lakes in Idaho and Montana) 206-217-6001
- Marine Safety Unit Portland Inspections Department 503-240-9374
- Sector Columbia River: (Westport, Washington, south to Lincoln City, Oregon, including inland rivers and lakes) Chief Warrant Officer Bill Hockensmith 503-861-6124
- Sector North Bend: (Lincoln City, south to the Oregon/California boarder including inland rivers and lakes) Chief Warrant Officer Scott Manning 541-756-9627

Sheriff Ben Wolfinger
By: Det. D. Stinebaugh