Talking Points
SPRING ABOARD

- The annual Spring Aboard campaign informs and motivates boaters to prepare for the boating season by providing information on how to enroll in a boating knowledge or skills based education course.

- U.S. Coast Guard statistics indicate that of the accidents where the level of operator education was known, 70% of boating fatalities occurred on boats where the operator had never received boating education instruction.*

- Last year, 24 recreational boating fatalities occurred in Washington state. Only one operator had record of receiving boating education instruction. Paddlers accounted for 13 of the 24 fatalities.**

- Boating education is about more than avoiding accidents. Educated boaters are more confident boaters and they are able to enjoy the boating experience much more.

- To qualify for a Washington State Boater Education Card, boaters are required to complete a state-approved course which meets the national boating education standards.

- Boat operators born before Jan. 1, 1955, are exempt from the Washington requirement but may choose to get a card if they plan to go boating in Canada or Oregon, which require proof of having completed a boating education course. The Washington State Boater Education Card is valid in those two areas.

- As of Feb. 28, 2021, more than 404,712 people have a Washington State Boater Education Card.

- Forty-nine states and U.S. territories require proof of completing of a boating education course for operators of some powered vessels.

- When required by law, the minimum fine for not carrying a valid Boater Education Card in Washington state is $99.

Source:  *U.S. Coast Guard Recreational Boating Statistics 2019

 ** Washington State Recreational Boating Accident Data 2020