

# Washington State Open Water Drowning Prevention Strategies: How Local Organizations and Coalitions Can be Involved in Statewide Policy Advocacy

## 1. Compile best practices and advocate for safer water recreation site guidelines:

- Identify someone in your coalition or community to be part of a task force to work on identifying best practices related to water recreation sites.
- Advocate for access to lifeguarded pools and beaches.

## 2. Strengthen Boating Under the Influence (BUI) law by replicating Oregon's law (BUI has the same penalty as DUI, increased penalties, and implied consent):\*

- Use policy briefs and other resources (under development) available at [www.seattlechildrens.org/dp](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp) to educate policymakers.
- Contact your county sheriff marine patrol and Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) members. Partner with them to educate state legislators in your community about the importance of strengthening the law.
- Work with your local marine patrol to have zero tolerance related to BUI law enforcement.

## 3. Strengthen life jacket law by replicating Oregon and the United States Coast Guard (requires children 12 and under to wear life jackets on all boats instead of just on boats under 19 feet) and/or increase the age of mandatory life jacket use to 14:\*

- Use policy briefs and other resources (under development) available at [www.seattlechildrens.org/dp](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp) to educate policymakers.
- Contact your sheriff marine patrol and Washington Association of Sheriff and Police Chief members. Partner with them to educate state legislators in your community about the importance of strengthening the law.
- Work with your local marine patrol to have zero tolerance related to life jacket law enforcement.

## 4. Surveillance:

- Identify someone in your coalition or community who is interested in working on a small task force to compile all data sources and information related to drowning such as: EMS runs, parks and recreation, Child Death Review, and news clippings.

## 5. Life Jacket Loaner Programs:

- Identify someone in your coalition or community who is interested in reviewing an updated version of the life jacket loaner program guide.
- Identify swimming and boating sites in your community that need life jacket loaner programs and set a goal and action plan to have life jackets at those sites.

## 6. Partnerships:

- There are a number of organizations listed in the policy guide to partner with around open water drowning prevention. Identify local representatives in your community and set a time to meet with them to educate them about the policy priorities, local and state water safety activities, and develop a plan to support improvement of both the policies and activities.

\* The hope is to introduce a bill for updated BUI and life jacket laws in the 2012 session.