

General Information on Injury Issues “Preventing the Predictable and Preventable”

What we want the public to know:

- ◆ Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for Washingtonians and Americans ages 1 to 44.
 - ◆ Injuries also cause serious, lifelong disabilities such as spinal cord injury leading to paraplegia or quadriplegia, traumatic brain injury leading to coma or having to relearn all functions of living, disfiguring burns, amputation of arms or legs, and other injuries.
 - ◆ Injuries are not accidents – most injuries are **predictable** and, therefore, **preventable**.
 - ◆ People need to do more than just know about injury. People need to take action to protect themselves and families, and to reduce their risk so they can keep doing what they love in life and to reach their full potential.
 - ◆ In Washington State between 2008 and 2012, there were 19,755 fatal injuries among all ages (average of 3,951 each year). Another 238,230 people were hospitalized for non-fatal injuries.
 - ◆ Risk reduction is a combination of awareness, education, using the right gear, and taking action:
 - Understand potential outcomes or consequences from risky behavior.
 - Be responsible for your actions.
 - Assess situations for their risk and answering – is it worth the risk?
 - Being as safe as possible in each situation.
 - Obey laws that help reduce risk, i.e. speed limits, hand-held cell phone ban, use of seat belts, child restraints, motorcycle helmets, life jackets, and mandatory boater education.
 - ◆ Correctly and consistently use risk-reducing tools and equipment, such as:
 - Seat belts
 - Child safety and or booster seats
 - Life jackets
 - The correct helmet for motorcycle, bicycle, and horseback riding, snow and water skiing, sledding, skateboarding, scooter riding, and other high speed activities where the human head is not well protected
 - Smoke alarms
 - Carbon monoxide alarms
 - Alcohol and drug treatment services, including Alcoholics Anonymous
 - Gun safes, lock boxes, or trigger locks for safer storage of firearms
 - Anger management classes

- Parenting classes
- Education classes and skills training to learn how to use:
 - Motor boats (through Washington State Parks Recreational Boating program)
 - Kayaks, canoes, and other non-motorized water craft through local clubs and instructors
 - Youth hunter firearm training (through Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Motorcycle training and endorsement (through Washington State Department of Licensing)
 - Use of chainsaws, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and (personal water craft) Jet Skis (through manufacturers)

- ◆ Injuries are expensive. According to federal agencies, for injuries that happened in 2000, the total costs will ultimately be:
 - Over \$80 billion in medical care costs
 - \$1 billion for fatal injuries
 - \$33.7 billion for hospitalized injuries
 - \$45.4 billion for non-hospitalized injuries
 - There is also an estimated \$326 billion in lost productivity – when people can't work, lose their wages and benefits, cannot do household activities, and others may need to leave jobs to care for the injured person.

- ◆ Please, for the sake of you, your family and friends:
 - Slow down
 - Think ahead
 - Be smart
 - Stay alive
 - Reduce your risk for all types of injuries
 - Live to your full potential

Information and Resources

- ◆ Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Center for injury Prevention and Control www.cdc.gov/ncipc
- ◆ Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center, Seattle www.hiprc.org
- ◆ The Health of Washington State – Injury and Violence
- ◆ Safe Kids Washington www.safekidswashington.org
- ◆ Safe Kids Worldwide www.safekids.org
- ◆ Safe States Alliance www.safestates.org
- ◆ The Washington State Injury and Violence Prevention Guide – January 2013 (PDF)

July 21, 2014