



River Watch Program

Every year our local major rivers and lakes experience an ever increasing volume of boating enthusiasts who take advantage of the weather and water only the Okanagan can offer. Ranging from sailing to power boating virtually every type of water craft can be found somewhere, but associated to the increasing volume of river users, we also have a proportionate increase in individuals who do not go about their river activities in a safe manner.

The unfortunate aspect of many reported incidents to the police surrounding unsafe boating practices is that the information received is not adequate enough for them to investigate. Due to the significant size of the Shuswap River, Mabel, Kalamalka and Okanagan Lakes and limited resources available to the Enderby, Lumby and Vernon RCMP regular routine patrols and enforcement are not possible.

As a result of concerns raised by many boating enthusiasts we are in the process of establishing a program entitled "River Watch" where volunteers who use the river will also act as eyes and ears for the police and report incidents should they be observed.

There will be a strict reporting criteria and protocol for these volunteers to follow and, if warranted, these types of occurrences will be reported to the police for follow-up investigation. The objective is to encourage those who follow the rules while enjoying safe boating to be part of the solution when observing those who do not follow the same rules. The program is not designed to be punitive but to be proactive by assisting the education of all boaters to do so in a safe and responsible manner.

Education is the key to this program and the enforcement of existing legislation governing safe boating would be used only as a last resort in the most flagrant of circumstances. The intention is to create the safest possible environment for all who use our rivers and lakes whether they be experienced or beginners.

River Watch

Protocol

1. Upon observation of a reportable offence complete the reporting form with as much information as available.
2. Fax the reporting form or deliver it to the Regional Programs Coordinator, City of Vernon Community Policing Office... ATTN: Kathryn Birnie (250) 260-5866. All details on reporting form can also be emailed to kbirnie@vernon.ca or phoned to (250) 260-5276, Ext. 3.
3. Upon review of the form it will be decided if the information provided will support the generation of an investigative file.
4. If an investigative file is indicated the reporting form will be provided to the appropriate detachment (Enderby or Lumby) for processing and assignment to an RCMP officer.
5. If an investigative file cannot be created the information will be retained for a period of time allowing the opportunity for additional information to be collected.
6. Should an investigative file lead to a prosecution the person submitting the initial report **must** be prepared to give evidence in court.



Incident Reporting Form

Date: _____ Incident Time: _____ am/pm

Location: _____

Observed Incident:

(Use reverse if necessary)

Vessel/Vehicle Description:

Registered owner/operator (if known): _____

Vessel/Vehicle License Number (found on front sides of boat): _____

(Example: 13K1234 or BC1234)

Length: _____ Breadth: _____

Propulsion: (circle one)

Outboard Inboard Jet Sailing Other: _____

Number of people on board: _____

Operator Details:

M/F Age Height Weight Hair

Clothing: _____

Other Descriptors: _____

Complainant Details: (If this matter proceeds to court, contact details must be provided if you are prepared to give evidence).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Fax: City of Vernon Community Policing Office (250) 260-5866

ATTN: Kathryn Birnie

Email: kbirnie@vernon.ca

Phone: (250) 260-5276