



OPERATION PADDLE SMART "IF FOUND" Sticker



When the Coast Guard or local emergency responders receive a report or discovers a paddle craft adrift, there is no way to determine if the vessel was washed off of a beach during high tide or was separated from its owner during the course of a boating accident. In these situations, the Coast Guard has to assume the owner is in trouble and needs assistance until it can find evidence to support otherwise. As a result the Coast Guard and local harbor masters spend hundreds of thousands of tax dollars per year searching for potential people in distress when there was no one in danger to begin with.

To combat this growing problem, the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary have launched Operation Paddle Smart. The cornerstone of Paddle Smart is providing owners of kayaks, canoes, standup paddleboards, and other unregistered watercraft a free "If Found" sticker for their boat to help reduce the number of unnecessary search and rescue cases.

The stickers are weatherproof, reflective, and provide room for the vessel owner's name and two phone numbers using a waterproof marker. It is important to put two valid phone numbers on the sticker, since a cell phone could end up in the water if the vessel turns over. The second number provides an alternate way to check if an emergency exists or to arrange for return of property to its owner. **The "If Found" sticker should be placed in a highly visible location inside the vessels cockpit or near the operator's station.**

Operation Paddle Smart is simple, beneficial and free. Its goal is to educate paddle-sport enthusiasts how to be safe, be responsible boaters and help emergency responders in search and rescue situations. It could be the key to a safer and more enjoyable boating season as well as help recover your property if lost and it might save your life.

Vessel Identification Sticker for Canoe, Kayak or Rowboat

IF FOUND - CONTACT

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

Use waterproof marker

