



## BOATING THE JORDAN RIVER SAFELY

### 1) KNOW BEFORE YOU GO.

- a. Go with someone who has experience boating that section of the Jordan River
- b. Scout out the entire trip before you go. Identify hazards, and how to get around them, and be sure everyone in your group knows as well.
- c. Know when to prepare for exiting the river, and leave extra space between boaters in large groups to ensure everyone has time to exit safely.
- d. If you are unsure, do not go.

### 2) ALWAYS WEAR A PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE.

- a. Life jackets can be rented at a variety of local sporting goods stores or from university outdoor programs.
- b. A helmet is recommended for inexperienced boaters, and for experienced whitewater boaters during periods of higher flows.

### 3) DO NOT BOAT DURING HIGH RIVER FLOWS.

- a. Water flows depend on a variety of factors from snowpack levels, temperature, storm events, and Utah Lake water levels.
- b. In general, avoid boating the river:
  - i. **Between the months of April, May or June or**
  - ii. **When water levels are above 1000 cubic feet per second.**
- c. Visit the following links to determine real time water flows for the Jordan River:
  - i. **Jordan River Surplus Canal Monitoring Station** – For much of the year, the majority of the Jordan River water is diverted into the Jordan River Surplus Canal. While measuring the level of the canal, rather than the river, data from this monitoring station can help estimate Jordan River water levels upstream from the canal diversion (anything south of approximately 2100 South).  
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?10170500>
  - ii. **Jordan River at 1700 South Monitoring Station** - This monitoring station provides water level data for the Jordan River at 1700 South in Salt Lake City.  
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?10171000>



## KEY WATER SAFETY LESSONS FROM THE SALT LAKE COUNTY SHERIFF'S SWIFTWATER SEARCH & RESCUE TEAM

- Boaters should be aware of any area where water quickly changes elevation. Places where water drops off are called low-head dams.
  - Watch for any horizontal line across the river as an indicator of a low-head dam. Low-head dams are a safety hazard in any type of flow, but are especially dangerous in the spring runoff.
  - These low-head dams create a current that draws water and debris back towards the dam. The current can easily trap a person, tossing them back and forth like a washing machine.
  - The amount of air mixed in with the water from this hydraulic feature reduces the density and weight of the water. When the water has less density, personal floatation devices lose their buoyancy and become ineffective.
  
- The force of water increases as its volume increases. As water volume doubles, the force of the water quadruples. As it triples, the force is nine times stronger.
  
- The spring is the wrong time to be in or anywhere near the river for four reasons:
  1. The water is very cold and can cause hypothermia. In addition the shock of such cold temperatures can cause people to black out almost instantaneously.
  2. The water is muddy, visibility is low and high run off can drag fence posts, shopping carts and other debris into the water to create hidden hazards called keepers or strainers. People can easily become entrapped by the pressure of the water pushing them up against a strainer.
  3. High flows result in very low clearance under bridges prohibiting boats from safely floating under.
  4. A river current always moves you to the center of the stream. Even if you intend on floating along the edge of the river, you will be quickly pulled to the center.