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Boaters getting last minute rides in before seasons end should be aware of wind

By Gordon Severson [CONNECT](#)

Posted: Oct 14, 2015 7:13 PM CDT
Updated: Oct 14, 2015 7:13 PM CDT

DANE COUNTY (WKOW)— An Autumn day in Southern Wisconsin comes with plenty of surprises, a sudden chill and an unforgiving wind. For boaters looking to get a last minute ride in before the season ends, officials urge caution.

"If you get out into the middle you can get pounded pretty good in the big waves on Lake Mendota," Dane County Sgt. John Brogan says.

So far this week, lake rescue teams in our area have responded to two calls of boaters going into the water. The first happened Monday on Crystal Lake.

"Two guys were in a small boat and they were getting gas to a pontoon that was stranded in the middle of the lake," Brogan explains. "It sounds like they got a little over their head with the small boat and some big waves ended up capsizing the boat going in the water. They were rescued by fire personnel, but their boat is still under the water."

The other rescue was performed Tuesday morning in Jefferson County. Officials say a man went into the water on Lake Koshkonong, but was able to get out on his own before the lake rescue team arrived. His boat is still at the bottom of the lake.

Rescue officials say the windy conditions this week could lead to some unsafe situations on the water in the coming days. They say this is the time of year when people start to take their boats, lifts and docks out of the lakes before storing them for the Winter.

Brogan says the most common call they receive this time of year is for boats that weren't tied up properly.

"Actually we had one come loose yesterday. It kind of drifted all the way across Lake Mendota and ended up on the shore line. Fortunately, no damage. no one was on board," Brogan explains.

Brogan says he also sees plenty of boaters run out of gas in the middle of the lake, which puts them in a dangerous position where they lose control of their vessel and the wind's too strong for them to get out and swim to shore.

Kayakers and canoers must also worry about strong winds with their small vessels more likely to take on water. During a ride-a-long Wednesday afternoon 27 News saw only one brave kayaker in Lake Mendota.

"If you have people that have a kayak or canoe and they're not experienced with big waves that can turn into a rescue situation really quick," Brogan explains.

Deputies say the best thing you can do is download a weather app on your smart phone, so you know wind conditions before going out. They say boaters should also be aware that calm conditions on the shore line here don't necessarily mean calm conditions on the water. With the lake effect, a ten mile per hour wind could easily feel more like twenty or thirty.

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