



ROCKY WATSON, SHERIFF  
TAD LEACH, UNDERSHERIFF

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## KOOTENAI COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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### Media Release

On 06-23-10 at approximately 1805 hours Deputies from the Kootenai County Sheriff's Department and personnel from Northern Lakes Fire Department, responded to a report of a boat fire on Hayden Lake in the Hayden Lake Marina.

The initial reports indicated two subjects were in the water trying to tow the burning boat out of the marina by grabbing onto the bow eye and swimming. Another boater responded to the area and assisted in removing the burning vessel away from the marina and bringing the subjects safely on board.

Personnel from Northern Lakes Fire Department responded via the water with their fire boat and by land in fire trucks to put out the fire.

The boat owner, Mark R. Koontz 49 from Liberty Lake and his 17 year old son were at the Hayden Lake Marina fueling their vessel. They pumped 30 gallons of gas and then pushed away from the dock. Mr. Koontz said the boat was hard starting as if it may have been flooded so he pushed the throttle forward as he has in times past and tried to start the boat again. This time the engine backfired and fuel exploded, blowing the engine cover off this 23' Regal power boat. The boat subsequently caught fire and was fully engulfed before the fire department could arrive on scene. Fire department personnel were able to contain the fire but the boat sank before it could be retrieved off the water.

Mr. Koontz was uninjured but his son sustained slight burns to his face and singed hair. He was treated and released at the scene. There were life jackets on board the vessel but none were being worn.

The Sheriff's Department would like to remind boaters that it is critical to properly maintain the backfire flame arrester on boat motors and run the mechanical blower for a minimum of four (4) minutes prior to starting any motor boat. Adhering to these safety procedures greatly reduces the risk of explosions on vessels.

The incident remains under investigation.

Rocky Watson, Sheriff  
By: Sgt. Matt Street  
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