You must display a CO warning sticker; it’s the law

Any new or used motor driven vessel, other than personal watercraft, must display a CO warning sticker, visible to passengers, on the interior of the vessel.

How do I get one?

If you own a motor driven vessel that is registered with the Department of Licensing (DOL), the sticker will be given to you when you renew the registration.

If you purchase a motor driven vessel from a dealer, the dealer will attach a CO warning sticker before the transaction is completed.

If you purchase a motor driven vessel from an individual, DOL will give you the stickers when the vessel ownership is transferred.

Will a CO warning sticker installed by the manufacturer or issued by another state meet this requirement?

Yes, any sticker warning of the dangers of CO poisoning will be accepted, provided the warning sticker is attached to the interior of the vessel and is visible to the passengers.

For questions about the CO sticker, contact Department of Licensing at (360) 902-3770 and press option 5. For more CO information visit the US Coast Guard website at www.uscgboating.org.
CO can accumulate in all of the following manners:

- Inadequately ventilated canvas enclosures.
- Exhaust gas trapped in enclosed places.
- Blocked exhaust outlets.
- Another vessel’s exhaust. CO from the boat positioned next to you can be just as deadly.
- “Station wagon effect” or back drafting.

At slow speeds, while idling, or stopped, CO can remain at dangerous levels in and around your boat, even if the engine is no longer running.

“Teak Surfing”

Teak surfing requires an individual hold on to the swim platform of a vessel underway while it builds up a wake to be able to body surf.

Its Dangers

Teak surfing puts the individual directly in the path of the vessel’s exhaust and poisonous external carbon monoxide. The Coast Guard warns that teak surfing exposes people to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide and two other deadly risk factors:

- Exposure to a boat’s propeller. A typical recreational propeller can travel from head to toe on an average person in less than one tenth of a second.
- Failure to wear a lifejacket.

Not only is it dangerous, it’s against the law

It is a violation of Washington State law, punishable by a fine of up to $100, to operate a vessel’s engine while a person is occupying or holding on to the swim platform, swim deck, swim step, swim ladder or teak surfing behind the motorized vessel. The law provides exceptions for briefly assisting with docking or departure, exiting or entering the vessel, or engaging in law enforcement or emergency rescue activity. However, there is no exception for teak surfing behind the vessel at any time.