

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Divisions of Boating and Waterways, Historic Preservation and Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation

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California Participates in a National Awareness and Enforcement Campaign to Reduce Alcohol- and Drug-Related Accidents

Message to avoid alcohol use is key for the upcoming Fourth of July Holiday

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) announced today the participation of more than 40 California marine law enforcement agencies in the national boating under the influence (BUI) awareness and enforcement campaign dubbed “[Operation Dry Water](#).” From Friday, June 29 to Sunday, July 1, law enforcement agencies across the United States will increase patrols and/or carry out BUI checkpoints to help reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related accidents and fatalities and foster a stronger, more visible deterrent to their use on the water.

Launching Operation Dry Water before the Fourth of July holiday is key to preventing accidents and saving lives. California and U.S. Coast Guard recreational boating statistics repeatedly show the Fourth of July as the deadliest holiday for accidents. Alcohol was a contributing factor in [31 percent](#) of California’s boating fatalities over the past five years where testing was conducted. Nationally, alcohol is the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents.

“California’s waterways during the upcoming Fourth of July holiday will be crowded,” stated Division of Boating and Waterways Acting Deputy Director/Boating Law Administrator Ramona Fernandez. “It is critical that boat operators be sober and attentive of their surroundings to safely react to unforeseen circumstances. Designating a sober passenger to help check unsafe behaviors is helpful. It is also important to know that even drunken passengers are at risk. They can easily fall overboard, swim near a propeller or lean over the side.”

Everyone onboard a boat is at risk when using alcohol and/or drugs and this may:

- Impair a boater’s judgment, balance, vision and reaction time.
- Increase fatigue and susceptibility to the effect of cold-water immersion.
- Intensify common boating “stressors” of sun, wind, noise and vibration.
- Intensify the side effects of alcohol, drugs and some prescription medications.

It is important to note that there is no open container law for recreational boaters, but it is against the law in California to operate a boat or water ski with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 percent or more. A person with a BAC less than 0.08 percent may be arrested if conditions are deemed unsafe. BUI convictions can result in up to six months in jail and/or fines of up to \$1,000. Two convictions within seven years could add a jail term of up to one year. Boaters caught operating under the influence may also have their voyage terminated and their vessel impounded.

This year's Operation Dry Water participants include:

California State Parks

Folsom Lake (*within Placer, El Dorado and Sacramento counties*)

Lake Oroville (*Butte County*)

Millerton Lake (*Fresno County*)

City Police Departments

Sausalito

South Lake Tahoe

Suisun

County Sheriff Departments

Butte

Calaveras

Contra Costa

Del Norte

El Dorado

Fresno

Glenn

Imperial

Lake

Los Angeles

Madera

Mariposa

Mono

Napa

Placer

Plumas

Sacramento

San Bernardino*

San Joaquin

Shasta

Solano

Sonoma

Stanislaus

Sutter

Tehama

Yolo

Yuba

Harbor Patrols

Santa Barbara

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Eglebright Lake (*Yuba and Nevada counties*)

U.S. Coast Guard Stations

Bodega Bay

Channel Islands Harbor

Golden Gate

Humboldt Bay

Lake Tahoe

Los Angeles-Long Beach

Monterey

Morro Bay

Noyo River

Rio Vista

San Francisco

Vallejo

A map of participating agencies with their contact information can be found at: www.OperationDryWater.org/agencies. California specific boating laws and safety tips may be found at: www.BoatCalifornia.com.

Launched in 2009 by the National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, Operation Dry Water has been a highly successful campaign, drawing public attention to the dangers of boating under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Since the inception of the campaign, law enforcement officers have removed 3,038 BUI operators from the nation's waterways and made contact with over 1.1 million boaters during the annual three-day weekend.

**In an Operation Dry Water 2017 Annual Report, NASBLA named California's San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office the "Top Agency Award - Small Category" for deploying 10 officers and making 13 boating under the influence arrests during last year's campaign.*

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About Division of Boating and Waterways

DBW is a division of California State Parks. The division enhances public access to California's waterways and promotes on-the-water safety to California's more than four million motorized and non-motorized boaters through programs funded by vessel registration fees, boating fuel tax dollars and boating facility construction loan payments.

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