



Boater Advisory



Department of Boating and Waterways NEWS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California law enforcement officers will be out in force on the state's waterways during the weekend of June 28 through 30 for Operation Dry Water.

Operation Dry Water is an annual nationwide effort to highlight the risks and dangers of operating boats under the influence. The stepped up enforcement raises awareness of operating boats under the influence of alcohol or drugs in advance of the Fourth of July holiday. Falling on a Thursday, this year's Independence Day will kick off a four-day weekend for thousands of California boaters seeking quality time with friends and family.

One quick way to end the fun is drinking alcohol, not only for those operating boats, but for everyone aboard. Out of 53 boating fatalities during 2012, 35 percent were alcohol related.

“Mixing drinking and boating drastically increases the odds for a painful or even tragic outcome, not to mention the humiliation and expense of getting arrested,” said Department of Boating and Waterways Acting Director Sylvia Ortega Hunter. “We’re also calling attention to the dangers of passengers becoming intoxicated, because drunken passengers can easily fall overboard, swim near propellers, or in small vessels, cause capsizes by leaning or standing up.”

Alcohol can impair a boater's judgment, balance, vision and reaction time. It can increase fatigue and susceptibility to the effect of cold-water immersion. Sun, wind, noise, vibration and motion “stressors” common to the boating environment – intensify the side effects of alcohol, drugs and some prescription medications.

In California, it is against the law 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 also be arrested if conditions are deemed to be unsafe. If convicted, a person may be sentenced to jail for up to six months and assessed 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 find their voyage terminated and their vessel impounded.

For more information on this annual event, visit <http://www.OperationDryWater.org>. California specific boating laws and safety tips may be found at www.BoatResponsibly.com.

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