



Life Jackets/Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

California's Recreational Boaters Encouraged to Wear Life Jackets & Save Water

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) encourages recreational boaters this year to wear life jackets and save water.

Recreational boating activity and boating accidents increase during the boating season, which runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day. It is critical for boaters to plan ahead, exercise precaution and encourage everyone in a boat to wear a life jacket in order to minimize the risk of being involved in a boating accident or reduce the severity of them.

PLAN AHEAD: You should plan ahead and find out if your favorite boating spot has any boating operating restrictions. If your favorite spot is closed for boating and you opt to boat in a river or ocean, remember that operating vessels in these environments is very different than in lakes. Plan ahead, take a boating safety class or invite someone with experience to show you how to boat safely in rivers or the ocean.

EQUIP YOUR BOAT: Make sure your boat is ready for the boating season. All required equipment must be onboard. Most importantly, make sure you have Coast Guard-approved and properly fitted life jackets for everyone on board.

HAZARDS: Adjust your boating activities to the drought conditions. Water conditions are low enough in many places to make for hazardous boating. Areas that were easily boated a year ago may be dangerous this year. Keep a proper lookout for trees, snags, sandbars, etc.

BOAT RESPONSIBLY: Take a boating safety class or course to further minimize boating accidents. It is also critical for everyone in a boat to practice common sense measures, such as wearing life jackets at all times, avoiding the consumption of alcohol and operating boats at safe speeds. Last year, the top three causes (statewide) of boating accidents were operator inattention, excessive speed and operator inexperience.

In addition to DBW's safety media campaign, the division will be carrying out several life jacket awareness campaigns during National Safe Boating Week (May 17-23) and throughout the summer. Programs encourage life jacket use through the distribution of free life jackets, loaner stations and a trade-in event (May 17). The division encourages water enthusiasts to partake in these programs. Remember, never get too comfortable around water when recreating, no matter how low the levels are.

For more boating safety tips and laws, or resources visit www.BoatCalifornia.com. Information on how to conserve water or about the "Save Our Water" public education program can be found at www.saveourH2O.org.

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