



# News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
May 19, 2016

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## **Improved Boating Conditions in California Renews Importance of Life Jacket Use this Season** *State promotes life jacket use through trade-in events and media campaign*



**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – As the 2016 California boating season begins with improved water conditions across the state, it is more important than ever to wear a life jacket.

The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that 75 percent of recreational boater deaths could be prevented every year if the victims had been wearing a life jacket. In California last year, 65 percent of recreational boaters who drowned were not wearing a life jacket.

“While California is still in a drought, we are seeing some lake levels higher than in years past, leading to more boating activity this year,” said DBW Deputy Director Lynn Sadler. “Keeping this summer fun and safe means to wear a life jacket and to ‘Save the Ones You Love’ by encouraging them to also wear life jackets when on the water.”

To promote the life jacket message, DBW manages a myriad of safety outreach programs including a public service campaign. This year’s campaign, which will be launched during National Safe Boating Week (May 21-27), raises awareness on life jacket use through the message of “Life Jackets Save Lives.” The campaign will target recreational boaters through a



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combination of strategic radio and ad placements and social media messaging during high volume summer weekends in the top five boating accident areas of the state: San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Inland Empire (Riverside-San Bernardino-Colorado River), and the coastal areas of Los Angeles and San Diego.

## Life Jacket Trade-Ins

This year, DBW continues to partner with more than 50 life jacket trade-in events across the state beginning this Saturday, May 21, as a part of National Life Jacket Trade-In Day, which kicks off National Safe Boating Week. Other events will be held throughout the summer.

These events provide recreational boaters the opportunity to have life jackets inspected by professionals. If a life jacket is found to be unserviceable or the wearer has outgrown the life jacket, a new, properly fitted Coast Guard-approved life jacket will be given in exchange, for free. Event locations and times by county can be found on [DBW's Website](#).

Life jacket trade-in partners include a number of state parks, aquatic centers, the Drowning Accident Rescue Team, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadrons and local law enforcement agencies.

When choosing the right life jacket, water enthusiasts should ensure the following:

- **Coast Guard-approved:** All life jackets approved for use by the Coast Guard will have an approval number on the inside label. Only these types of life jacket should be used when boating. Boaters could be cited if they do not have Coast Guard approved life jackets on board their vessel.
- **Proper size:** Life jackets are categorized by weight or chest size. They should fit snug and should never be purchased to “grow into”. A lifejacket that is too small may not provide enough flotation to keep a person afloat. One that is too large can slip off upon entry into the water or could ride up around the face and prevent normal breathing.
- **Intended boating activity:** Check the inside label of the life jacket to make sure it is approved for your boating activity.
- **Good condition:** Life jackets with rips, tears, mildew, loose or missing straps, frayed webbing, broken zippers or buckles, hardened stuffing or faded label instructions must be replace.

For more information on the public service campaign or California's boating laws, please visit [www.BoatCalifornia.com](http://www.BoatCalifornia.com).

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## ***National Safe Boating Week***

DBW partners with the National Safe Boating Council to promote recreational boating safety awareness in the week leading up to the Memorial Day weekend, the traditional beginning of the summer boating season. For more information about National Safe Boating Week and national resources, visit [SafeBoatingCampaign.com](http://SafeBoatingCampaign.com).





### **Division of Boating and Waterways Mission**

*DBW is a division within California State Parks. The division provides safe and convenient public access to California's waterways and leadership in promoting safe, enjoyable and environmentally sound recreational boating.*



### **California State Parks Mission**

*To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation.*

### **California's Drought**

*Every Californian should take steps to conserve water at home, at work and even when recreating outdoors. Find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](http://SaveOurWater.com) and [Drought.CA.Gov](http://Drought.CA.Gov).*

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