



News Release

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Weather Fluctuations Create Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Hazards

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Recent warmer weather, coupled with heavy rain and snow, has created a recreation paradise for visitors to California’s outdoors. While this is a great time to enjoy our state’s natural beauty, it is imperative to take proper precautions and be aware of potential dangers. Below you will find some basic safety tips from California State Parks to help ensure a safe outdoor adventure:

Wear a Life Jacket: Conditions change quickly in open water and even the best swimmers can misjudge potential hazards and their skills when boating or swimming. Wearing a [properly-fitted life jacket](#) can increase survival time. A life jacket can also provide some thermal protection against the onset of hypothermia and keep you afloat until help arrives.

Boat Responsibly: Take a [boating safety class or course](#) to further minimize boating accidents. Also, avoid consuming alcohol and operating boats at high speeds. Last year, the top three causes (statewide) of recreational boating accidents were operator inattention, excessive speed, and operator inexperience.

Hazards: Adjust your boating activities to the water conditions. High, fast water brings large amounts of debris, including tree trunks and branches. In some areas of the state, water conditions are still low enough to make for hazardous boating. Areas that were easily navigated a year ago may be dangerous this year. Keep a proper lookout for trees, snags, sandbars, etc.

Heat Precautions: With temperatures above 70 degrees in many locations, take precautions against the unusual winter heat by staying hydrated and avoiding prolonged exposure to the sun, especially in areas where the sun is reflecting off of a body of water.

Swim Responsibly: When cooling off, beach users should stay in designated swim areas and be alert for rip currents and sneaker waves.



Parental Supervision: Actively supervise children in and around open bodies of water, giving them your undivided attention. Appoint a designated “water watcher”, taking turn with other adults. Teach children that swimming in open water is not the same as swimming in a pool. They need to be aware of uneven surfaces, river currents, ocean undertow and changing weather.

Practice Safe Road Habits: Off-highway vehicle users, hikers, bikers, motorists, equestrians, swimmers and boaters utilize areas intended for multiple uses. Please be courteous and respectful of others as we share the outdoors. Follow proper procedures and obey speed limits. Reduce speeds on turns and in heavily congested areas, and do not pass on blind curves. Allow extra room and stopping distance when approaching other vehicles.

Do Not Walk Off-Trail: Walking off-trail increases your chance of suffering an injury or getting lost. Stay on the marked [trails](#) and let someone back at camp or at home know where you are going and when you plan on returning.

File a Plan: Whatever your outdoor activity may be, it is always a good idea to tell a responsible person where you are going (in detail) and when you expect to return. Ask that person to notify local law enforcement if you do not return on time.

Plan Ahead: You should plan ahead and find out if your favorite location has any operating restrictions or reduced services. Boaters, if your desired location is closed and you opt to boat in a river or the ocean, remember that operating vessels in these environments is very different than in lakes.

For more safety tips, please visit www.dbw.parks.ca.gov and www.ohv.parks.ca.gov. For travel tips about the type of activities you can do in California’s 280 state parks, please visit www.parks.ca.gov/traveltips.

Responsible for almost one-third of California's scenic coastline, the California state park system includes 280 parks, beaches, trails, wildlife areas, open spaces, off-highway vehicle areas, and historic sites. It consists of approximately 1.59 million acres, including over 339 miles of coastline, 974 miles of lake, reservoir and river frontage, approximately 15,000 campsites and alternative camping facilities, and 4,456 miles of non-motorized trails.

State park units include parks, underwater preserves, and reserves; redwood, rhododendron, and wildlife reserves; state beaches, recreation areas, wilderness areas, and reservoirs; state historic parks, historic homes, Spanish era adobe buildings, including museums, visitor centers, cultural reserves; as well as lighthouses, ghost towns, waterslides, conference centers, and off-highway vehicle parks.

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California State Parks

Provides 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. Learn more at www.parks.ca.gov.

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 and Drought.CA.Gov.

