



News Release

For Immediate Release
June 29, 2016

Contact:
[Dennis Weber](#)
(916) 651-8724

Boat Safe this Fourth of July Holiday Weekend *Human Propelled Recreational Boaters are Especially Vulnerable*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) reminds boaters to use caution on the water this Fourth of July holiday weekend. DBW's recreational boating accident data shows that more boating accidents occur during this holiday than any other—waterways are crowded, people are boating in groups or with many people aboard their vessels. Distractions are numerous. The data also shows that human-propelled boating, such as paddling, kayaking, canoeing, rafting and standup paddleboarding, is especially vulnerable to accidents.

An analysis of paddlecraft accidents from two time periods show a 49 percent increase from 39 fatalities on California waterways in 2001-2005 to 58 in 2011-2015. With the increased popularity of paddlesports in recent years, it is vital that participants are aware of safe boating practices.

“Kayaking, canoeing and rafting are great ways to enjoy California’s beautiful waterways, and it is important to do so in a safe manner,” said DBW Deputy Director Lynn Sadler. “Our waterways during the Fourth of July weekend will be filled with power boaters and paddlers, and many will be inexperienced. We encourage all recreational boaters to take a boating safety course and learn navigation rules in order to avoid accidents.”

Power boat operators are also being asked to keep speeds down in crowded waterways and ask their passengers to help them spot difficult-to-see paddlecraft. Below are some additional safety practices when on the water:

All Recreational Boaters

- Always wear appropriate [life jackets](#)
- Take a [boating safety course or class](#)



- You may have people aboard your vessel who do not normally boat. Familiarize them with the location of the safety equipment and how to be safe aboard your boat (e.g. keep hands inside near dock, carbon monoxide, propeller safety, etc.)
- Designate a person aboard the vessel to help you act as a lookout
- Keep a sharp lookout and give way to larger, faster boats
- Leave the alcohol at home
- Keep seated to minimize risk of capsizing
- Load the boat properly and never exceed the stated capacity
- Avoid extreme conditions

Human-Propelled Recreational Boaters

- Stay near the shore and cross channels with care
- Carry an efficient sound signaling device such as a loud whistle
- Use a white navigation light when paddling at night or in low visibility
- Never paddle alone

Last year California had 503 recreational boating accidents, 232 injuries, and 49 fatalities. Detailed data on California's 2015 Recreational Boating Accident Statistics can be found online on DBW's [website](#). The statistics the report reflect every reported recreational boating accident in California in 2015. State law requires boaters involved in accidents to file a written report with DBW when a person dies, disappears or requires medical attention beyond first aid. A report is also required when an accident results in damage to a vessel or other property exceeding \$500 or there is a complete loss of a vessel. Boaters can find a printable [California Boating Accident Report Form](#) online.

For more boating safety information, please visit www.BoatCalifornia.com.

###

Subscribe to California State Parks News via e-mail at info@parks.ca.gov or via [RSS feed](#).

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.

