



# News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Steer Clear on Crowded Waterways during Labor Day Weekend** *Navigation “Rules of the Road” Help Boaters Avoid Collisions*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) anticipates an increased number of recreational boaters on waterways during the upcoming Labor Day weekend. With nearly 14 percent of all recreational boating accidents each year occurring during the summer holiday weekends of Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day, boaters are reminded that following simple navigation rules can greatly decrease the chances of being involved in an accident.

In 2015, 503 boating accidents, 232 injuries and 49 fatalities were [reported to DBW](#). The statistics from last year also show that 40 percent of boating accidents were involved a collision with another boat (34 percent) or fixed objects (6 percent).

“Just like highway rules, navigation rules tell boat operators about right of way, signaling to other boats and how to avoid collisions on the water,” said DBW’s Deputy Director Lynn Sadler. “Not only must boat operators keep a sharp lookout for fast moving vessels, submerged hazards or swimmers and paddlecraft, they must know navigation rules in order to quickly and safely respond to changing conditions.”

Below are some basic navigation rules that every boat operator should know:

- **Boat at safe speeds.** Do not exceed 5 miles per hour within 100 feet of a swimmer, or 200 feet of a swimming beach, a swimming float, a diving platform, a lifeline, or a dock with boats tied to it.
- **Keep a safe distance from other boats and obstacles.**
  - Designate a person aboard the vessel to help you act as a lookout.
  - Keep a sharp lookout and give way to larger, faster boats.



- Communicate your intended movement such as passing or turning to an oncoming vessel using sound or light signals.
- Whenever you are traveling through a narrow channel or coming around a bend where it's hard to see oncoming traffic, always keep to the right side.
- Never obstruct or anchor in a channel, launching area, or route, or interfere with the travel of other boats.
- **Lookout for hazards.** 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.

To review light and sound signals or the navigation rules, please download a copy of the [ABC's of California Boating](#) and/or take a [boating safety course](#). And always remember to wear properly-fitted [life jackets](#). Please visit [www.BoatCalifornia.com](http://www.BoatCalifornia.com) for more information on how to properly and safely enjoy California's waterways.

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#### **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. Learn more at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://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](http://SaveOurWater.com) and [Drought.CA.Gov](http://Drought.CA.Gov).*

