



# News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
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[Media Kit](#)

## 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.

[California's 2013 boating accident statistics](#) show that fatalities can be decreased significantly when wearing a life jacket. Of the 38 boating fatalities in 2013, 68 percent of victims drowned. Of that group, 81 percent were not wearing a life jacket. Life jackets save lives. There is no excuse not to wear one. Modern life jackets are much more comfortable, lightweight and stylish than the bulky orange style most boaters are familiar with.

This year, boaters are also being asked to adopt a new habit. Our state is facing one of the most severe droughts in history. Water is a precious commodity in California, and we must all do our part to conserve our water resources. Because of the drought and low water levels, recreational boating may be impacted throughout the season in some bodies of water. Let's conserve together. Conserving can keep water in our lakes and therefore provide more recreational opportunities.

That's this year's theme for DBW's public safety outreach campaign: "Be a hero. Wear your life jacket and save water".

"Boating accident statistics repeatedly show us that life jackets can save lives", said Sylvia O. Hunter, Deputy Director of DBW. "Therefore, this year's boating safety media campaign



focuses on the fact that we must ensure everyone that is on a boat or recreating near water to wear a life jacket.”

So what should boaters expect this boating season? Below are some tips from DBW to boaters on how they can safely and responsibly enjoy California’s waterways:

- **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](http://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](http://www.saveourH2O.org).

**NOTE TO MEDIA: Story opportunities on boating and water safety can be scheduled with California State Parks.**

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*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.*

*About DBW*

*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.*

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