



News Release

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DBW Provides Survival Guide for the 2017 Summer Season ***Cold water shock and life jackets are this year's key messages*** *National Safe Boating Week May 20-26*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) urges recreational boaters and water enthusiasts to take the necessary precautions this summer, starting with life jacket wear, to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. This summer season begins with some of the highest water levels and coldest water not seen or felt in many years. Swift and cold water can create treacherous conditions for everyone, including experienced swimmers.

Recreational boating fatalities related to swift water conditions are a tragic but yearly occurrence throughout California. These incidents are especially prevalent during California's high water years. In the midst of the state's drought or low water period of 2012-2016, DBW's annual boating accident statistics confirm that 23 fatalities occurred in swift water conditions. During the state's high water years of 1993, 1998, 2005, 2010 and 2011, that number more than doubled, with a total of 48 California residents losing their lives in swift water conditions.

"Summertime in California always means heading to the water for some fun, and given the rainy season we've had, we're sure to see even more activity than usual on our waterways this year," said DBW's Deputy Director Lynn Sadler. "However, it is crucial for boaters and water enthusiasts to know that the water is running very cold. Jumping into cold water can cause many effects, including an involuntary gasp for air when you're under water which can lead to panic and start the drowning process."

Cold-water immersion is dangerous. Not wearing a life jacket while recreating in cold water makes it even more perilous. Education is the key. Below are the stages of cold-water immersion and some do's and don'ts:

- **Stages of Cold-Water Immersion:**
 - *Cold Shock:* A person has one minute to adjust to the cold shock response.
 - *Swimming Failure:* A person has about 10 minutes of meaningful movement to get help and get out of breathing.



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- *Post-Rescue Collapse:* A person “gives up” and collapses after or right at the time of rescue.
- **Do not enter the water if it’s too cold.** The average body temperature is 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. The average pool temperature is 84 to 86 degrees. Some of California’s rivers are currently running at temperatures between 30 to 40 degrees. Such cold temperatures can literally take your breath away.
- **Do control breathing, don’t gasp.** A sudden unexpected fall into cold water causes an involuntary gasp (or torso) reflex. It takes less than ½ cup of water in a person’s lungs to drown. When someone remains calm, they have a greater chance of self-rescue.
- **Don’t panic if you fall into the water.** Stay afloat with the help of a life jacket, regain control of breathing, and keep head above water in view of rescuers. If possible, look for ways to increase buoyancy. If in the water with others, huddle together with everyone facing inwards to help everyone stay afloat and keep warm.
- **Don’t apply heat to extremities like arms and legs of a rescued victims.** This sudden change in temperature could cause cardiac arrest.
- **Do make sure everyone is wearing a properly-fitted life jacket.** Life jackets that are too big will ride up around your face. If it’s too small, it will not be able to keep your body afloat. Life jackets designed for adults will not work for children.
- **Do file a float plan** with someone trusted that includes details about the trip, launch area, marina, boat, passengers, towing or trailer vehicle, communication equipment and emergency contacts.

DBW manages a number of safety programs and provides resources to encourage safe boating on California’s waterways. Many programs and events will kick-off during National Safe Boating Week (May 20-26). Every year, recreational boating advocates from across the United States and Canada use this week before Memorial Day weekend to remind boaters on the importance of life jacket wear and other key safety messages.

Below are California’s safety programs for 2017. The division encourages boaters and water enthusiasts to take advantage of these resources.

Life Jacket Loaner Stations

In partnership with public and private entities, DBW provides life jackets to loaner boards within park units and loan stations so that an individual or family can borrow a life jacket for a day or a weekend by simply completing a loan form. [View Loaner Sites](#)

2017 Life Jacket Trade-In Events

Beginning Saturday, May 20, boaters and water enthusiasts will have the opportunity to have their life jackets inspected by professionals. If a life jacket is found to be unserviceable or the wearer has outgrown it, a new, properly-fitted Coast Guard-



approved life jacket will be given in exchange, at no cost while supplies last. Similar events will be added throughout the summer. [View Life Jacket Trade-In Events](#)

Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day – May 19

National Safe Boating Week kicks off with “Wear Your Life Jacket to Work” day this Friday, May 19. Californians are encouraged to wear a life jacket to work, take photos and share them on DBW’s social media sites: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) using the hashtags #BoatCA and #SaveTheOnesYouLove. Wearing a life jacket outside of a water activity heightens awareness of different life jacket styles and demonstrates their comfort and versatility.

Safety Media Campaign

In an effort to decrease boating fatalities in California, DBW manages a safety media campaign. This year’s message – “Save the Ones You Love” – encourages water enthusiasts always to wear a life jacket. The campaign targets recreational boaters via various communication platforms in the top five, high-boating accident areas of California (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). [View Campaign Material](#)

Free BoatCA app

DBW has developed a boating facility locator app version of its web-based boating locator - BoatCA. The free app offers an array of boating safety information, float plan emails, clean and green boating practices, as well as information on nearly 1,000 boating locations and facilities. The app is available now on [iTunes](#). The Android version is coming soon.

For more boating and water safety information or laws, please visit [BoatCalifornia.com](#).

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About DBW

[DBW](#) enhances public access to California’s waterways and promotes on-the-water safety to California’s more than four million motorized and non-motorized boaters through programs funded by vessel registration fees, boating fuel tax dollars and boating facility construction loan payments. For more information, visit www.dbw.parks.ca.gov.



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