

# PRESS RELEASE

## CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Divisions of Boating and Waterways, Historic Preservation and Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation

### For Immediate Release

Aug. 28, 2018

### Contact:

Adeline Yee | Information Officer  
(916) 651-8725

## Division of Boating and Waterways Urges Safe Boating Practices this Labor Day Weekend

*Accident Stats Show Life Jacket Wear is Critical on Crowded Waterways*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – With boaters and water enthusiasts heading to California’s waterways for summer’s last hurrah this Labor Day weekend, the Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) is reminding everyone to take extra precautions to prevent a tragic outing. Wearing a life jacket is the number one way that someone can increase his or her chances of surviving a boating-related accident.

California’s recreational boating statistics repeatedly show the holiday weekends of Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day to have the most accidents and account for 15 percent of accidents each year. The majority of drowning victims are often found not wearing life jackets. Nationwide, the U.S. Coast Guard reports that three out of four boating fatalities could have been prevented if the victims had been wearing life jackets.

“This coming holiday weekend and beyond, we urge boaters to always wear a life jacket,” says DBW Acting Deputy Director Ramona Fernandez. “Life jackets are the easiest and best preventive action boaters can take to stay alive. For water enthusiasts who may not have a life jacket, there are many life jacket loan stations throughout the state where they can borrow jackets while they recreate on shore or while wading, floating or rafting.”

Many of today’s life jackets are lightweight, easy to move in, and come in many sizes, styles, and shapes for every person and every sport. No matter what type of life jacket is chosen, it is important that a life jacket fits properly. Life jackets designed for adults will not work for children.

Below are some other tips on life jacket use:

- **Coast Guard-Approved:** Only approved life jackets should be used on the water, and boaters may be cited for lacking proper equipment. All life jackets approved for use by the Coast Guard will have an approval number located on the inside label.
- **Proper Fit:** Life jacket sizes come with weight or chest measurements, and should fit snug rather than purchased to allow a wearer to “grow into.” A small life jacket may not

provide enough flotation to keep a person afloat. One that is too large can slip off upon entry into the water or could ride up around the face and obstruct breathing.

- **Intended Boating Activity:** Always check the life jacket label to ensure it is approved for the intended boating activity.
- **Good Condition:** Check the life jacket before using to ensure it is in good condition. Jackets with rips, tears, mildew, loose or missing straps, frayed webbing, broken zippers or buckles, hardened stuffing or faded label instructions lose their strength and buoyancy and must be replaced.

In partnership with public and private entities, DBW provides U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets to loaner boards within park units and many fire department 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](#)

Under California law, a life jacket is required for each person on board a recreational vessel. Children under 13 years of age on a moving vessel of any length, all personal watercraft riders, and anyone being towed behind a boat are required to wear a life jacket while recreating. The law does not apply to children under 13 years of age who are on a sailboat and are constrained by a harness tethered to the sailboat, in an enclosed cabin, or on a vessel engaged in an emergency rescue situation.

DBW manages a number of safety programs and provides resources to encourage safe boating on California's waterways. For more boating and water safety information or laws, please visit [BoatCalifornia.com](http://BoatCalifornia.com).

###

**Subscribe** to California State Parks News online at [www.parks.ca.gov/news](http://www.parks.ca.gov/news) or email us at [newsroom@parks.ca.gov](mailto:newsroom@parks.ca.gov).

### **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](http://www.parks.ca.gov).*

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Blog](#) | [Periscope](#) | [Flickr](#)

### **Division of Boating and Waterways**

*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. Learn more at [www.dbw.parks.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov).*

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#)