

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Division of Boating and Waterways | Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division | Office of Historic Preservation

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California State Parks Offers Tips to Recreate Safely This Fourth of July Holiday

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - Fourth of July is around the corner and for many outdoor enthusiasts, it is the perfect time for camping, hiking and swimming with family and friends. California State Parks wants our visitors to recreate safely and enjoy their time by keeping their loved ones safe.

Because the hot summer weather invites many people to head into the water, whether it be in lakes, rivers or the ocean, it is important to protect loved ones from accidental drownings. Drowning is the fifth leading cause of accidental deaths in the U.S. About 10 people die from unintentional drownings every day, but can easily be prevented by learning water safety and lifesaving techniques.

Below you will find 10 tips to stay safe during this Fourth of July holiday:

- 1. Wear a Life Jacket:** Make sure your life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard-approved and properly-fitted. Several public and private entities make life jackets available to the public on a loan basis. [View Locations](#)
- 2. Protect Your Loved Ones:** Know your limits. Swimming in a lake, ocean or river is different than swimming in a pool. If someone is in distress, seek help from a lifeguard or call 9-1-1 if one is not available. Supervise children at all times by appointing a designated “water watcher,” taking turns with other adults. Do not assume that someone is watching them.



3. **Do not enter the water if it is too cold:** Waterways continue to rise as snow melts and can be dangerously cold and swift. Even the strongest swimmers can be stunned by cold water and become incapacitated.
4. **Ocean Rip Currents:** If you get caught in one, stay calm and do not fight the current. Swim or float parallel to the shore until you are out of the current and then swim toward the shore.
5. **Avoid Alcohol:** Operating your boat or an off-highway vehicle with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or more is against the law. Impaired boaters will be stopped and can be arrested even with lower BAC if the conditions are not safe. Your boat can be impounded.
6. **Know the Rules/Laws:** Take the time to visit the [webpage](#) of the park you plan on visiting and learn about the rules, such as parking, if dogs are allowed and closed areas. It is also important to learn the laws for recreating in boats and/or off-highway vehicles.
7. **Prepare an Itinerary:** No matter what type of recreation activity you will be participating in, leave an itinerary of your trip with a family member/friend with information such as name/age of all participants, travel destination and expected return date. This will ensure law enforcement personnel have a better understanding of your location in the event of a rescue.
8. **Natural Resources:** Whether you are hiking, horseback riding or operating an off-highway vehicle, stay on designated trails. You are not only protecting natural resources, but you are also ensuring that you do not get lost.
9. **Use the buddy system:** Hike or swim with a friend or family member. This is key especially if you are bit by a snake, encounter other wildlife or need medical attention. Buddies can seek help for you.
10. **Wildlife:** View wildlife from a distance. Never feed or touch them. Be cautious of where you are stepping. If you see a snake, maintain a distance of 6 feet. Most bites occur when people get too close or try to touch them.

Additional safety tips and information on laws can be found online at www.parks.ca.gov/safetytips.

With over 340 miles of coastline, 970 miles of lake and river frontage, 15,000 campsites, and 4,500 miles of trails, California State Parks contains the largest and most diverse recreational, natural, and cultural heritage holdings of any state agency in the nation with 280 state parks. More than 67 million people annually visit California's state park system. Invent your adventure online at www.parks.ca.gov.

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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.

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