**Talking Points**

**OPERATION DRY WATER**

**July 2 - 4, 2021**

With boating under the influence continuing to be a major factor in accidents and deaths on our nation’s waterways, officers with local, state and federal agencies will again team up for **Operation Dry Water**, a national BUI awareness and enforcement campaign.

For the twelfth year, officers will be on the water providing heightened enforcement and awareness about the dangers of drinking while boating. Operation Dry Water 2021 heightened awareness and enforcement three-day weekend is July 2 - 4, over the Fourth of July – a holiday known for drinking and boating, and deadly accidents.

* [Agency name], [other cooperating state/local agencies], the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, and the U.S. Coast Guard are joining together in an intensified effort to detect impaired boaters and enforce boating under the influence (BUI) laws in [state].
* Heldnear the Fourth of July holiday, Operation Dry Water is a national weekend of BUI detection and enforcement aimed at reducing the number of alcohol and drug-related accidents and fatalities and fostering a stronger and more visible deterrent to alcohol and drug use on the water.
* Operation Dry Water 2021 weekend is July 2 - 4. [Agency] officers will be conducting BUI [focused enforcement, saturation patrols, breathalyzer tests, checkpoints] on [ODW-designated waters] and educating the public on the dangers of boating under the influence.
* In 2020, more than 7,500 officers from 620 local, state, and federal agencies across the nation participated in Operation Dry Water. Over the three-day weekend law enforcement officers contacted 105,517 vessels and 305,466 boaters, made 625 BUI arrests, and issued 37,325 citations and warnings for safety violations.
* Agencies from all 56 U.S. states and territories are expected to participate in Operation Dry Water, and in the 2021 heightened awareness and enforcement weekend July 2 - 4.
* Launched in 2009 by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) in partnership with the United States Coast Guard, Operation Dry Water has been a highly successful effort to draw public attention to the dangers of boating under the influence (BUI) of alcohol and drugs.
* Alcohol is the leading contributing factor in recreational boating deaths; in 2019, boaters impaired by alcohol were a factor in 23% of boating fatalities.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* BUI is illegal. Operating a recreational vessel with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of [state BAC limit] or higher is against [state] law.
* Boating under the influence applies to drugs, as well as alcohol. Even some prescription medications can make operating a recreational vessel unsafe. Check with your doctor about the effects of any medications you may be taking.
* Penalties for BUI include fines, jail, [impoundment of the boat, loss of boating privileges, even loss of driving privileges].
* A three-year evaluation of afloat field sobriety tests was completed in 2011 and published by the Southern California Research Institute. This study – produced under a grant awarded to the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators – validated a battery of tests for marine use and is the basis for a push to implement a National Marine Field Sobriety Test standard.
* Alcohol can impair a boater's judgment, balance, vision and reaction time. It can increase fatigue and susceptibility to the effects of cold-water immersion.
* Alcohol use by passengers presents a danger regardless of the activity of the operator.2
* Sun, wind, noise, vibration and motion – "stressors" common to the boating environment – intensify the effects of alcohol, drugs and some medications.
* Alcohol use is dangerous for passengers too. Intoxicated passengers can easily slip, fall overboard or suffer other life-threatening accidents.
* We would rather arrest you than have to tell your family you've been killed in a boating accident.
* If you are boating under the influence, we will find you.

For more information, boaters can access [operationdrywater.org](http://www.operationdrywater.org), [nasbla.org](http://www.nasbla.org), [uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org) or [agency website].

2 Source: NASBLA *Boating Under the Influence (BUI) Report*

1. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Recreational Boating Statistics 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)