

OPERATION DRY WATER

NATIONAL BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE
AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN



**OPERATION DRY
WATER**

www.operationdrywater.org

**CAMPAIGN
PRESS
KIT**



Produced under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.



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Operation Dry Water 2024

National boating under the influence (BUI)
awareness and enforcement campaign

Press Kit

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Campaign Overview

OPERATION DRY WATER

July 4 – 6, 2024

About Operation Dry Water:

- Operation Dry Water heightened awareness and enforcement weekend is taking place July 4 - 6, 2024.
- Operation Dry Water is a national awareness and enforcement campaign focused on reducing the number of alcohol - and drug- related incidents and fatalities and fostering a stronger, more visible deterrent to alcohol and drug use on the water.
- Operation Dry Water is coordinated by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard as well as local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.
- Agencies from all 56 U.S. states, trusts and territories are expected to participate in Operation Dry Water and in the 2024 Operation Dry Water heightened awareness and enforcement weekend, July 4 - 6.
- Launched in 2009 by NASBLA in partnership with the United States Coast Guard, Operation Dry Water has been a highly successful campaign, drawing public attention to the dangers of boating under the influence (BUI) of alcohol and drugs.
- Since the inception of the Operation Dry Water Campaign in 2009, law enforcement officers have removed 6,869 BUI operators from the nation's waterways and made contact with over 2.8 million boaters during the annual three-day weekend. The campaign continues to make a significant impact on boater safety and spreading the message of the danger of boating under the influence.
- Operation Dry Water weekend is held annually near the Fourth of July holiday, a time known for increased boating activity and prevalent alcohol use, leading to subsequent boating incidents and fatalities.





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- Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating incidents; where the primary cause was known, it was listed as the leading factor in 16% of deaths according to U.S. Coast Guard *Recreational Boating Statistics 2021*.
- The Operation Dry Water outreach and awareness campaign is in effect year-round. Through the efforts of NASBLA, the U.S. Coast Guard, participating law enforcement agencies, and boating safety partners nationwide, Operation Dry Water aims to raise awareness about the dangers of boating under the influence and change the cultural acceptance of drinking and boating.





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Fact Sheet **OPERATION DRY WATER** **July 4 - 6, 2024**

Operation Dry Water 2023

- In 2023, 488 local, state, and federal agencies participated in Operation Dry Water. Over the three-day heightened awareness and enforcement weekend law enforcement officers contacted 302,146 boaters, made 717 BUI arrests, and issued 42,822 citations and warnings for safety violations.
- In 2023, over 7,700 officers from 488 local, state, and federal agencies participated in the 72 hours of heightened BUI enforcement.

About Boating Under the Influence (BUI):

- U.S. Coast Guard 2022 data reveal that alcohol use remains the primary known contributing factor recreational boater deaths.¹
- Operating a boat with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or higher is against federal law and most state laws.
- Alcohol can impair a boater's judgment, balance, vision, and reaction time. It can also increase fatigue and susceptibility to the effects of cold water immersion.
- Sun, wind, noise, vibration, and motion—common stressors in the boating environment—can intensify the side effects of alcohol, drugs, and some medications.
- Impairment can be even more dangerous for boaters than for drivers, since most boaters have less experience and confidence operating a boat than they do driving a car.
- The relative risk of death is equivalent for drinking operators and drinking passengers, and for men and women.²





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- Persons found to be boating under the influence can expect to incur severe penalties. If a boat operator is BUI, the voyage may be terminated, the boat may be impounded and the operator may be arrested. Penalties vary by state but can include fines, jail, loss of boating privileges, even loss of driving privileges.
- A three-year field evaluation by the Southern California Research Institute completed in 2011 validated a battery of tests for marine use that are now the basis for efforts to implement a National Marine Field Sobriety Test standard.
- Combined with chemical tests using blood, breath, and urine samples, these validated ashore and afloat tests give marine law enforcement officers an impressive arsenal in their ongoing efforts to enforce BUI laws.
- Alcohol is also dangerous for passengers. Intoxication can lead to slips, falls overboard and other dangerous incidents.
- It is illegal in every state and territory to operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. BUI laws pertain to all vessels, from canoes and rowboats to the largest ships.

Other Boating Safety Facts:

- 85% of people who drowned in a recreational boating incident were not wearing a life jacket.³ Always wear a life jacket!
- Boat operator instruction is a significant factor in avoiding and surviving accidents. In accidents where the operator's instruction was known, 74% of deaths occurred on boats where the operator had not received any boating safety instruction.⁴
- In 2022, there were 11,770,383 recreational vessels registered in the United States.⁵

(1, 3-5) Source: U.S. Coast Guard *Recreational Boating Statistics 2022*

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





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