

OPERATION DRY WATER

NATIONAL BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE
AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN



OPERATION DRY
WATER

www.operationdrywater.org

AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN
RESOURCES KIT



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



NATIONAL BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE AWARENESS & ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN



Operation Dry Water 2026

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

Awareness Campaign Resources

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Awareness Campaign Fact Sheet OPERATION DRY WATER July 3 - 5, 2026

About Operation Dry Water:

- ▶ Operation Dry Water 2026 is taking place July 3 – 5, 2026.
- ▶ Operation Dry Water (ODW) 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.

The campaign is coordinated by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard and local, state and federal law enforcement agencies across the country.

- ▶ Officers located in all 56 U.S. states, trusts, and territories, representing local, state, and federal agencies, are expected to participate in the 2026 Operation Dry Water heightened awareness and enforcement weekend, scheduled for July 3 - 5.
- ▶ Established in 2009 by NASBLA in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, Operation Dry Water has become one of the nation's most effective boating safety initiatives, drawing sustained public attention to the dangers of boating under the influence (BUI) of alcohol and drugs.
- ▶ Since the campaign's launch, law enforcement officers nationwide have removed 7,954 impaired operators from the nation's waterways and made contact with more than 3.3 million boaters during the annual three-day enforcement period — reinforcing the lifesaving message that impaired boating is both illegal and dangerous



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- ▶ Operation Dry Water is held annually around the Fourth of July holiday, a period historically associated with increased boating activity, alcohol consumption and serious boating incidents.
- ▶ While the heightened enforcement weekend occurs each summer, Operation Dry Water is a year-round outreach and awareness campaign. Through ongoing education, enforcement and partnerships, the initiative works to change the culture surrounding impaired boating and promote safer choices on the water.

Operation Dry Water 2025

- ▶ In 2025, 451 local, state, and federal agencies participated in Operation Dry Water. Over the three-day heightened awareness and enforcement weekend law enforcement officers contacted 232,694 boaters, made 501 BUI arrests, and issued 34,545 citations and warnings for safety violations.
- ▶ In 2025, 7,311 officers from 451 local, state, and federal agencies participated in the 72 hours of heightened BUI enforcement.
- ▶ **[Insert State/Agency 2025 ODW event data, i.e. number of BUI arrests, BUI citations issued, number of other safety violations, boater/vessel contacts.]**

About BUI:

- ▶ **[Insert any new or enhanced BUI laws in your state.]**
- ▶ 2024 U.S. Coast Guard data reveal that alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in recreational boater deaths.¹
- ▶ **[Insert percentage of state recreational boating injuries/fatalities where BUI of alcohol or drug use was a primary contributing factor.]**



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- ▶ Operating a boat with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or higher is against federal law and most state laws. **[Insert your State BAC limit]**
- ▶ 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 in a car, since most boaters have less experience and confidence operating a boat than they do driving a car.
- ▶ 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, and 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.



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- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Alcohol use by passengers presents a danger regardless of the activity of the operator.²

Other Boating Safety Facts:

- ▶ 87% of people who drowned in a recreational boating incident were not wearing a life jacket.³ Always wear a life jacket!
- ▶ Boating safety education plays a critical role in preventing and surviving incidents. In cases where operator instruction was known, 69% of fatalities occurred on vessels operated by individuals who had not received formal boating safety education.⁴
- ▶ In 2024, there were 11,674,073 recreational vessels registered in the United States.⁵
- ▶ **[Insert the number of registered vessels in your state.]**

(1, 3-5) Source: U.S. Coast Guard *Recreational Boating Statistics 2024*

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



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Ideas for Promoting Operation Dry Water

OPERATION DRY WATER

July 3 - 5, 2026

Raising awareness about boating under the influence requires getting the information out through multiple outlets to capture the attention of the news media and the public. Here are some promotional ideas for your Operation Dry Water campaign:

- ▶ Partner with neighboring law enforcement agencies to broaden outreach efforts and expand enforcement visibility during Operation Dry Water.
- ▶ Collaborate with agencies that do not have marine units to launch a joint public safety campaign promoting sober operation both on the road and on the water.
- ▶ Work with local media outlets and partner agencies to host a media day ahead of Operation Dry Water weekend. This allows reporters to conduct interviews and capture video without disrupting patrol operations during the enforcement period.
- ▶ Schedule a media ride-along prior to Operation Dry Water weekend. Ensure multiple officers are available for interviews and have patrol boats ready to take media crews on the water for video opportunities.
- ▶ Display Operation Dry Water banners at boat launch ramps, marinas or on marine law enforcement vessels. Distribute brochures or promotional items to boaters while on the water.
- ▶ Partner with local alcohol retailers, convenience stores, and restaurants to display Operation Dry Water posters and flyers in high-visibility areas — such as windows and cooler doors — reminding the public to stay sober on both the road and the water.
- ▶ Coordinate with local alcohol retailers (liquor stores and convenience stores) and restaurants to display Operation Dry Water posters and flyers in high-visibility locations — such as windows and cooler doors — reminding everyone to stay sober on both the road and the water.
- ▶ Place a damaged or wrecked boat with an Operation Dry Water banner along a highway or lake access road with heavy boat-trailer traffic to draw attention and reinforce the message.

- Continued -



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- ▶ Use your agency's social media platforms to share messaging before, during and after Operation Dry Water weekend. Post photos and videos highlighting enforcement efforts, officer engagement and safe boating behaviors throughout the campaign.
- ▶ Utilize hashtags to enhance your social media posts.

The official campaign hashtags are:

- #OperationDryWater
- #OpDryWater
- #ODW26

Other safe boating hashtags:

- #BoatSafeBoatSober
- #BoatSober
- #SafeBoating
- #neverBUI

Downloadable graphics for print banners, brochures, flyers and more can be found [here](http://operationdrywater.org) at operationdrywater.org.



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Social Media Messages OPERATION DRY WATER July 3 - 5, 2026

- ▶ #OperationDryWater weekend takes place nationwide July 3 – 5. Always boat sober. #ODW26
- ▶ During #OperationDryWater weekend, boaters may encounter sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols. To learn more about the dangers of boating while impaired, visit www.operationdrywater.org.
- ▶ Alcohol remains the leading known contributing factor in boating fatalities. Never drink and boat. #OperationDryWater
- ▶ Passenger sobriety matters. Alcohol use by passengers can be just as dangerous — and sometimes more deadly — than alcohol use by the operator. #ODW26
- ▶ During the 2025 #OperationDryWater weekend, officers contacted more than 232,000 boaters to educate them on the importance of sober boating. #OpDryWater
- ▶ Our message this weekend — and all year-round — NEVER boat under the influence. #OpDryWater
- ▶ The federal BAC limit for boating under the influence is 0.08, the same as driving a car. Impaired boating is impaired driving. #DrunkBoatingisDrunkDriving #OperationDryWater
- ▶ As part of the #OperationDryWater campaign, law enforcement agencies nationwide will remove impaired operators from the water to help keep everyone safe. Please support your local officers. #ODW26
- ▶ Impaired boating IS impaired driving! #OperationDryWater
- ▶ Like drunk driving, drug-impaired boating is illegal and dangerous in every state and territory. Operating a vessel while impaired puts everyone at risk. #OpDryWater
- ▶ Keep yourself, friends and family safe by NEVER drinking and boating. #NeverBUI #OperationDryWater
- ▶ U.S. Coast Guard 2023 data reveal that alcohol use remains the primary contributing factor recreational boater deaths. #BoatSober and save lives. #ODW25



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- ▶ Officers will conduct heightened enforcement patrols to remove impaired boaters during #OperationDryWater. #NEVERbui
- ▶ Drunk boating causes preventable deaths every year. Don't put your life — or someone else's — at risk. #NEVERbui #OperationDryWater
- ▶ To combat #drunkboating, officers across the country will be out in force during #OperationDryWater
- ▶ Boaters found operating under the influence may face serious penalties, including fines, jail time, loss of boating privileges, and possible loss of driving privileges. #BoatSober #OperationDryWater
- ▶ For additional impaired-boating information and resources visit Operationdrywater.org #OpDryWater
- ▶ Alcohol and drugs play a major role in boating fatalities. Keep everyone safe by keeping alcohol and drugs off the boat altogether. #OperationDryWater
- ▶ Alcohol use by passengers poses a risk, regardless of who is operating the boat. Encourage everyone on board to #BoatSober. #OpDryWater
- ▶ It is illegal to operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. #ODW26



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Hashtags:

#OperationDryWater

#OpDryWater

#ODW26

Handles:

Facebook: @OperationDryWater

X: @OpDryWater

Helpful links:

www.operationdrywater.org

www.nasbla.org

www.uscgboating.org

www.facebook.com/OperationDryWater

www.facebook.com/NASBLA

www.facebook.com/UScoastguard

www.x.com/OpDryWater

www.x.com/nasbla

www.x.com/uscg



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"The Operation Dry Water campaign is coordinated nationally by the [National Association of State Boating Law Administrators](#) (NASBLA) and is produced under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund administered by the [U.S. Coast Guard](#)."