

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 2026

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

Awareness Campaign Resources

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Campaign Overview

OPERATION DRY WATER

July 3 – 5, 2026

About Operation Dry Water:

- Operation Dry Water heightened awareness and enforcement weekend is taking place July 3 - 5, 2026.
- 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 2026 Operation Dry Water heightened awareness and enforcement weekend, July 3 - 5.
- 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 7,954 BUI operators from the nation's waterways and made contact with over 3.3 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 20% of deaths according to *U.S. Coast Guard Recreational Boating Statistics 2024*.
- 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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**OPERATION
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Fact Sheet

OPERATION DRY WATER

July 3 - 5, 2026

About Operation Dry Water:

- The 2026 Operation Dry Water heightened awareness and enforcement weekend will take place July 3 - 5.
- Operation Dry Water is a nationwide awareness and enforcement campaign dedicated to reducing alcohol- and drug-related boating incidents and fatalities while assembling a visible deterrent to impaired operation 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.
- 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.





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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 passengers². 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:

- 87% 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 incidents where the operator's instruction was known, 69% of deaths occurred on boats where the operator had not received any boating safety instruction.⁴
- In 2024, there were 11,674,073 recreational vessels registered in the United States.⁵

(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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"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](#)."

