



MEDIA RELEASE

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State Marine Law Enforcement Officials Crack Down on Boating Under the Influence

(June xx, 2009, Washington, DC) - Recreational boaters may want to think twice before reaching for that cold beer this weekend. The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, launches ***Operation Dry Water*** the weekend of June 26 - 28, 2009. Operation Dry Water is an enforcement effort designed to highlight the dangers of operating a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Boating Under the Influence (BUI) is illegal in all 50 states and territories.

Impaired boaters found to be boating under the influence can expect penalties to be severe. They may include fines, jail, and loss of boating or even driving privileges.

In 2007, the U.S. Guard reported 21percent of all boating fatalities were a result of alcohol use. Marine law enforcement officers, as part of Operation Dry Water, will be out in full force in 43 states and territories, searching for boat operators whose Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) exceeds the national limit of .08%. Authorities contend this BUI crackdown is just as important as highway patrol officers arresting drunk drivers.

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“We want people to have fun while recreational boating,” said Capt. Richard Moore, national spokesperson for Operation Dry Water, boating law administrator for the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, and current president of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. "But alcohol use is a problem on the water. We recommend that people avoid alcohol whenever they are boating, and we will have zero tolerance for anyone found operating a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs."

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. Sun, wind, noise, vibration and motion – “stressors” common to the boating environment – intensify the side effects of alcohol, drugs, and some prescription medications.

According to the National Recreational Boating Statistics, published annually by the U.S. Coast Guard, deaths, injuries and accidents on the water that result from alcohol involvement have been trending downward from a high of 704 alcohol-related boating accidents in 1998 to 421 accidents in 2007. Even with the downward trend, however, alcohol use is still the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents. Capt. Moore said, “We would rather arrest someone than have to tell their family and friends they're never coming back.”

For more information visit <http://operationdrywater.org>.

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The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators is a national nonprofit organization that works to develop public policy for recreational boating safety. NASBLA represents the recreational boating authorities of all 50 states and the U.S. territories. NASBLA offers a variety of resources, including training, model acts, education standards and publications. Through a national network of thousands of professional educators, law enforcement officers and volunteers, NASBLA affects the lives of over 83 million American boaters.