



Labor Day Weekend Safety Advisory

This just in from the California Department of Boating and Waterways:

BOATERS URGED TO OPERATE SAFELY OVER LABOR DAY WEEKEND

SACRAMENTO -- The Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) reminds boaters to operate safely and wear their life jackets this upcoming Labor Day weekend. The three holiday periods of Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day in 2008 accounted for six fatalities in California. Five of them occurred during the September holiday.

“When waterways get crowded, the chances for collision increase,” said DBW Director Raynor Tsuneyoshi. “It is important that boaters maintain a proper lookout, abstain from alcohol and wear a life jacket.”

Some key boating safety tips to keep in mind this holiday weekend:

- **Pay attention to your surroundings.** Operator inattention was the leading cause of boating accidents last year. While the operator is ultimately responsible for maintaining a proper lookout, it is a good idea to designate someone else on board to help watch for other traffic, especially on a large boat or in congested areas.
- **Mixing alcohol and boating is dangerous.** Of all reported fatalities, 49 percent were alcohol related in 2008. A designated driver is not enough on vessels. The concept works well in cars, but drunken passengers on boats can easily fall overboard, swim near the propeller or cause loading problems by leaning over the side or standing up in small vessels, causing vessels to capsize. Everyone who drinks alcohol on board is at risk.
- **Wear a life jacket.** Of the 32 drowning victims in 2008, more than half knew how to swim. Knowing how to swim is one of the most common reasons given for not wearing a life jacket and gives boaters a false sense of security. Often the victim has a serious injury or is knocked unconscious and cannot swim. Other factors that can affect swimming ability include cold water immersion, heavy clothes or alcohol consumption.

For more information on boating safety or to order a boating safety course, please visit www.BoatSmarter.com or call (888) 326-2822.

Remember, “If it’s your boat, it’s your responsibility.”