



# Operation Dry Water

## Enforcement of BUI Laws to be Stepped Up Statewide June 25-27

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

**SACRAMENTO, June 21, 2010** – Looking forward to relaxing on the boat this weekend with that ice chest full of cold beer? Better think again. California boating law enforcement officers, as part of a national coordinated effort of stepped-up enforcement known as Operation Dry Water, will be out in force the weekend of June 25-27 looking for boat operators whose blood alcohol concentration exceeds the state limit of .08 percent.

“In 2009, 41 percent of all reported California boating fatalities were alcohol related,” said California Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) Acting Director Lucia Becerra. “Boating is fun, but when you mix in alcohol and drugs, it can be deadly.”

Operation Dry Water may include increased patrols, breathalyzer tests, and checkpoints, as well as boater education. Impaired boaters caught this weekend can expect penalties to be severe. According to California State Law, a person convicted of operation of a vessel while intoxicated could receive up to a \$1,000 fine, six months in jail or both.

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.

Boaters should also think twice about designating a sober operator. 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.

Last summer, agencies and organizations from 46 states and five territories participated in the first ever Operation Dry Water weekend. Over that three-day weekend, 2,442 marine law enforcement officers made contact with 17,454 recreational vessels and issued 5,320 boating safety warnings, 283 boating under the influence citations and 1,127 citations for other violations. This year, all 56 states, trusts and territories are expected to participate, searching for boat operators whose alcohol or drug impairment makes them a danger to other boaters.

“There will be arrests this weekend, and some boaters will face the consequences of boating under the influence,” added California Boating Safety Officers Association President Cary Smith. “But we’d much rather arrest someone than to have to tell their friends and family they’re never coming back.”

DBW will be hosting Operation Dry Water for California in cooperation with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, the U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Fish and Game, California State Parks, California Boating Safety Officers Association and participating law enforcement agencies.

To find out more about Operation Dry Water, visit [www.OperationDryWater.org](http://www.OperationDryWater.org). For California boating safety information and laws, visit [www.dbw.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.ca.gov).