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TO: News / Assignment Desk or News Editor

Safety Tips for Boating Season

The Memorial Day holiday weekend traditionally marks the start of boating season on the Delta. A large number of people are expected to be on the water this weekend and throughout the summer to go fishing, boating or take part in water sports, like water-skiing.

“We encourage people to come out to enjoy the Delta, but to always be safe, smart, and alert,” said Contra Costa Sheriff David Livingston. “Many boating accidents could be prevented and the U.S. Coast Guard says that 80% of boating fatalities could have been prevented by wearing a life jacket.”

The Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff Marine Services Unit would like to remind boaters of important laws, rules, and tips:



-Anyone 60 years of age or under who operates a vessel that is propelled by an engine, regardless of whether the engine is the principal source of propulsion, must have in their possession a California Boater Card. By 2025, anyone operating a motorized vessel will be required to possess a California Boater Card. For more information, go to: Californiaboatercard.com.

-All vessels, including stand-up paddle boards (SUPs), must have a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket for each person. The life jacket must fit the person intending to wear it. Children under 13 must always wear a life jacket while aboard any vessel, regardless of length, unless they are surrounded by an enclosed cabin or bulkhead. We encourage everyone, regardless of age, to wear a personal floatation device at all times when on the water.

-The law allows children 12-15 years of age to operate boats with a motor of more than 15 horsepower or sailboats over 30 feet if supervised on board by an adult at least 18 years of age who is in possession of a California Boater Card.

-Boats 16 feet and larger are required to have a life ring or square U.S. Coast Guard approved throwable flotation device which must be immediately accessible.

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Contra Costa County
Office of the Sheriff
David O. Livingston
Sheriff



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

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-Always travel at a safe speed. Slow down in narrow channels and blind areas and navigate on the right side of the waterway. In crossing situations, the boat on the right has the right of way.

-The operator of a vessel involved in towing a skier must display, or cause to be displayed, a red or orange water ski flag to indicate a downed skier, a skier in the water preparing to ski, a ski line extended for the vessel, or a skier in the water in the vicinity of the vessel.

-Blue Light law — Any vessel approaching, overtaking, being approached, or being overtaken by a moving law enforcement or emergency vessel operating with a siren or an



illuminated blue light, or any vessel approaching a stationary law enforcement vessel displaying an illuminated blue light, shall immediately slow to a speed sufficient to maintain steerage. Boaters cannot make a wake near a law enforcement vessel displaying a blue light.

-Always have an emergency kit that includes a flashlight, warm clothing, cell phone, VHF radio and chart. For emergencies on the water, boaters should call 911 or Sheriff's Dispatch at (925) 646-2441. Be

sure to file a float plan before you depart. Go to this link for more information on float plans and how to fill one out:

<https://uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/floating-plan.php>

-Be aware of potential carbon monoxide poisoning that can occur when the motor is running while occupying the swim platform or in vicinity of the vessel's transom.

-Boating under the influence (B.U.I.) enforcement is a high priority. Those arrested for B.U.I. will face similar consequences as those who drive a motor vehicle under the influence, including fines and possible jail time.

The 'ABC's of Boating', a handbook of boating rules, is available from most boating shops. Boaters can go to the California Division of Boating and Waterways website at: dbw.ca.gov for information on boating safety and the California Boater Card. If anyone has any questions about boating safety, please contact the Marine Services Unit at (925) 754-7018.

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