

NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Marine Patrol officers to participate in Operation Dry Water

BILOXI, Miss. – Marine Patrol officers with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources will participate in Operation Dry Water this weekend, a national event designed to reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related deaths on the water.

Officers will be on the water from Friday, June 30, through Tuesday, July 4, to make boaters aware of how they can be safe on the water and avoid accidents.

"This campaign is important because it keeps boaters informed of laws related to boat-and-water safety and also reminds them how to be safe on the water," said Keith Davis, chief of Marine Patrol.

Operation Dry Water is coordinated by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Other agencies participating include the state Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and U.S. Coast Guard Station Pascagoula.

The campaign focuses on reducing the number of fatalities on the water from alcohol and drug use, and also fostering a stronger, more visible deterrent to using these substances while operating a vessel.

Marine Patrol officers will be looking for boating violations, as well as for people who are driving a boat under the influence.

Davis also reminded boaters that recent weather events have made it more dangerous to be on the water.

"The large amount of rain we have received recently has caused the rivers to flood, so boaters should use caution when going to sand bars for docking and swimming," he said. "Also, as the water recedes, boaters need to maintain a sharp lookout to avoid a collision with potential debris being pulled out of the rivers into the Gulf.

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"Another issue is the current," Davis said. "The current is higher than normal and can be fatal if not handled properly."

He advises boaters to take all the necessary safety precautions before heading out onto the water.

"Know what safety equipment is required for your vessel, and keep up with weather conditions throughout the day," he said. "File a float plan with a family member or friend and tell them what time you're leaving, where you're leaving from, your destination and what time you're planning on returning."

Davis also recommends having a radio or cell phone on the boat in case of an emergency.

Now that summer is here, more people will be boating, and everyone needs to obey the rules of the water, he said.

"Every year, thousands of people are arrested across the country because they are driving a boat while impaired," he said. "Our goal is to educate people about the rules of boating and ensure everyone stays safe."

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at dmr.ms.gov.

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