



## MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ***Operation Dry Water to be held June 27-29***

BILOXI, Miss. – Several law enforcement agencies on the Coast are participating this weekend in Operation Dry Water, a national campaign to promote awareness and enforcement of boating under the influence.

Agencies along the Coast that will take part in the campaign include Marine Patrol officers with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, officers from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, D'Iberville Police Department and Harrison County Sheriff's Office.

"People know the danger of getting behind the wheel of a car when they've been drinking, and those same dangers exist when operating a boat," said Rusty Pittman, interim chief of MDMR's Marine Patrol. "We want people to enjoy our beautiful waterways, but we also want them to know the risks and consequences of boating under the influence."

From June 27-29, law enforcement at the local, state and federal levels will be on heightened alert for those violating boating under the influence laws. These officers will be educating boaters about the dangers of boating under the influence of drugs and alcohol, as well as removing from the water those who choose to boat while impaired.

"The D'Iberville Police Department takes water safety seriously," said Clay Jones, deputy chief. "Our goal is to minimize the number of tragedies that occur on our waterways. Partnering with DMR on safety education and enforcement initiatives, such as Operation Dry Water, is a great way to meet this goal."

In 2013, officers across the nation checked 144,044 recreational boaters and made 290 BUI arrests during the three-day weekend. Along the Coast, officers checked 1,299 boaters and issued 46 citations, none for BUI.

Operation Dry Water was launched in 2009 by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and the U.S. Coast Guard to help draw public attention to the dangers of boating under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

From 2009 to 2013 there was a 37 percent decrease in the number of recreational boater deaths where alcohol use was listed as the known primary contributing factor, according to the U.S. Coast Guard recreational boating statistics. From 2012 to 2013, there was a 31 percent decrease in the number of alcohol-related recreational boater deaths - the most significant decrease in the past five years.

"The mission of Operation Dry Water and the law enforcement officers who participate is to reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related deaths on the water," said John Fetterman, deputy executive director of NASBLA. "Boating should be a fun and enjoyable time spent with friends and

family. We are asking that boaters make sure their voyage remains enjoyable by boating sober. Too many accidents and deaths are caused by those who chose to boat under the influence."

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 [www.dmr.ms.gov](http://www.dmr.ms.gov).

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