



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDMR encourages boater safety over Labor Day weekend

BILOXI, Miss. – Labor Day weekend marks the unofficial end of summer, and many Coast residents and visitors take advantage of the holiday to go boating.

Keith Davis, chief of Marine Patrol for the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, is asking boaters to take the proper precautions as they celebrate the three-day weekend.

"We want people to enjoy the water and have fun, but we also want them to be safe," Davis said. "People need to make sure their boat is in proper working order before taking it out on the water, and they need to have the proper safety equipment on board."

He also advises boaters to have a designated driver if they plan on drinking alcohol on the water.

"We will have extra officers on duty this weekend, so if you are going to drink, let someone else drive the boat," Davis said. "You shouldn't get behind the wheel of a car or boat if you've been drinking."

Davis is stressing the importance of boater safety for the holiday, but it's also one of his top priorities for Marine Patrol.

"It is my goal as the new Marine Patrol chief to reduce the number of accidents and fatalities on the water," he said. "We want everyone on the Coast who goes out on the water to be safe."

The MDMR will offer more boater safety courses in various locations throughout the year to make it more convenient for residents. The law requires that anyone born after June 30, 1980 take a boat-and-water safety course, but MDMR officials encourage everyone to take a refresher if they plan to go boating.

Lt. Patrick Levine is the boat and water safety officer for Marine Patrol, and he has scheduled classes once a month in each of the following locations: The Bolton Building on Bayview Avenue in Biloxi; the Grand Bay NERR in Jackson County and the Pass Christian Oyster Check Station.

A complete schedule is available at dmr.ms.gov.

Levine said the topics covered in the classes include basic navigational aids, safety equipment and safety information. The classes also teach the legal requirements of boating.

"In order to avoid a collision with other boaters, know and follow the rules of navigation," Levine said. "We want people to keep a sharp lookout and be courteous when they are on the water. Marine Patrol wants to see fewer boat and water accidents, and one of the ways we can have this is through education."

Photo courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Lt. Patrick Levine teaches boat and water safety courses for the MDMR. More classes will be offered this year in three different locations.

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.

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