



YAKIMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ROBERT UDELL, Sheriff

TRAFFIC DIVISION

P.O. Box 1388 Yakima, Washington 98907

TELEPHONE: (509) 574-2500

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*****For Immediate Release*****

Media Release OPERATION DRY WATER



Date: 6/10/2021

Contact: Deputy Scot Swallow

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Marine Patrol

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Incident:

Location:

Date:

With the upcoming Fourth of July, the Yakima County Sheriff's Office Marine Patrol Division wants to remind boaters to have a safe and sober time while they are boating.

Members of the Yakima County Sheriff's Office will be out on our local waters patrolling and watching for boaters who may be impaired or operating in an unsafe manner. Members will also be conducting boat safety inspection to make sure that everyone has the required and operational life jackets and other required equipment.

Washington State laws require that anyone operating a boat is required to be in possession of a BOATER'S EDUCATION CARD. (For those born after January 1st 1955)



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For those operating a personal watercraft, you must be at least 14.
For the paddle boarders, you must have a PFD/life jacket and a distress signaling device (whistle) while on the water.

See you all on the water.

Campaign Overview

OPERATION DRY WATER July 2 – 4, 2021

About Operation Dry Water:

Operation Dry Water heightened awareness and enforcement weekend is July 2 - 4, 2021.

Operation Dry Water is a national awareness and enforcement campaign focused on reducing the number of alcohol - and drug- related accidents and fatalities and fostering a stronger, more visible deterrent to alcohol and drug use on the water.

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

Agencies from all 56 U.S. states, trusts and territories are expected to participate in Operation Dry Water and in the Operation Dry Water 2021 heightened awareness and enforcement weekend, July 2 - 4.

Launched in 2009 by NASBLA in partnership with the United States Coast Guard, Operation Dry Water has been a highly successful campaign, drawing public attention to the dangers of boating under the influence (BUI) of alcohol and drugs.

Since the inception of the Operation Dry Water Campaign in 2009, law enforcement officers have removed 4,720 BUI operators from the nation's waterways and made contact with over 1.8 million boaters during the annual three-day weekend. The campaign continues to make a significant impact on boater safety and spreading the message of the danger of boating under the influence.



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Operation Dry Water weekend is held annually near the Fourth of July holiday, a holiday known for increased boaters on the waters where alcohol use is prevalent, as are subsequent boating accidents and fatalities. National Association of State Boating Law Administrators

Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; where the primary cause was known, it was listed as the leading factor in 23% of deaths according to U.S. Coast Guard Recreational Boating Statistics 2019.

The Operation Dry Water outreach and awareness portion of the campaign is in effect year-round. Through the outreach efforts of NASBLA, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the participating law enforcement agencies nationwide, Operation Dry Water focuses on spreading awareness of the danger of boating under the influence as well as changing the cultural acceptance of drinking and boating.

Operation Dry Water 2020

In 2020, 620 local, state, and federal agencies participated in Operation Dry Water. Over the three-day heightened awareness and enforcement weekend law enforcement officers contacted 305,466 boaters, made 625 BUI arrests, and issued 37,325 citations and warnings for safety violations.

In 2020, over 7,500 officers from 620 local, state, and federal agencies participated in the 72 hours of heightened BUI enforcement.

About Boating Under the Influence (BUI):

U.S. Coast Guard 2019 data reveal that alcohol use remains the primary known contributing factor recreational boater deaths.¹

Operating a boat with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or higher is against federal law and most state laws.

Alcohol can impair a boater's judgment, balance, vision, and reaction time. It can also increase fatigue and susceptibility to the effects of cold-water immersion.

Sun, wind, noise, vibration, and motion – “stressors” common to the boating



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environment – intensify the side effects of alcohol, drugs, and some medications.

Impairment can be even more dangerous for boaters than for drivers, since most boaters have less experience and confidence operating a boat than they do driving a car.

The relative risk of death is equivalent for drinking operators and drinking passengers, and for men and women.

Persons found to be boating under the influence can expect to incur severe penalties. If a boat operator is BUI, the voyage may be terminated, the boat may be impounded and the operator may be arrested. Penalties vary by state but can include fines, jail, loss of boating privileges, even loss of driving privileges.

A three-year field evaluation by the Southern California Research Institute completed in 2011 validated a battery of tests for marine use that are now the basis for efforts to implement a National Marine Field Sobriety Test standard.

Combined with chemical tests using blood, breath, and urine samples, these validated ashore and afloat tests give marine law enforcement officers an impressive arsenal in their ongoing efforts to enforce BUI laws.

Alcohol is also dangerous for passengers. Intoxication can lead to slips, falls overboard and other dangerous accidents.

It is illegal in every state and territory to operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. BUI laws pertain to all vessels, from canoes and rowboats to the largest ships.

Other Boating Safety Facts:

86% of people who drowned in a recreational boating accident were not wearing a life jacket.³ Always wear a life jacket!

Boat operator instruction is a significant factor in avoiding and surviving accidents. In accidents where the operator's instruction was known, 70% of deaths occurred on boats where the operator had not received any boating safety instruction.⁴



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In 2019, there were 11,878,542 recreational vessels registered in the United States.