

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Diego Lifeguards Issue Boating Safety Tips for 4th of July Weekend

Recreational boating is a fun and enjoyable way to spend the 4th of July weekend. San Diego has a wide variety of opportunities for boaters including Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean. While a wonderful source of recreation, boating can be a potentially dangerous sport for people who are unprepared or unaware of safety regulations. Not knowing or obeying the nautical “rules of the road,” using alcohol or drugs while operating a boat, or choosing not to wear your life jacket are clearly NOT the smart things to do. Wearing a life jacket can reduce the number of boaters who drown each year by approximately 80%.

Boat operators are responsible for the safety of everyone on board and those around the boat. A good operator keeps a lookout when driving and takes preventative measures to avoid getting into hazardous situations.

No matter how much experience you have, it’s always a good idea for everyone to review boating safety rules before departures.

Minimum Age

No person under the age of twelve (12) may operate a motorized vessel with more than fifteen (15) horsepower. Children ages twelve (12) to sixteen (16) must have a person eighteen (18) years of age or older on board in order to operate a vessel. (There are some limited exceptions.)

General Vessel Speed

No person may operate a vessel at a speed greater than five (5) miles per hour within 100 feet of a swimmer or surfer.

Ocean Vessel Speed

No person may operate a vessel in excess of five (5) miles per hour within 1,000 feet of the oceanfront coastline of the City of San Diego. Separate boating regulations apply to Mission Bay.

Mission Bay Vessel Speed

The speed limit on Mission Bay from sunset to sunrise is five (5) miles per hour. At other times, certain areas have a designated speed limit of five (5) miles per hour or less. These include:

- a. Wherever buoys are posted with a five (5) mile per hour limit near bridges
- b. Within 100 feet of shore
- c. Within 100 feet of another vessel

Equipment

Although equipment requirements vary depending on the size and type of boat, most pleasure boaters are required to have the following on board while underway:

- a. One throwable flotation device
- b. One wearable flotation device for each person on board
- c. One marine type fire extinguisher for motorboats of a closed hull construction
- d. Navigation lights if operating after sunset
- e. One sound producing device
- f. One visual distress signal
- g. Appropriate registration cards, numbers, and stickers

Contact: San Diego Lifeguards
On-duty Public Information Officer
619-221-8950



San Diego Lifeguards Beach and Pool Safety Tips

Learn To Swim

Learning to swim is the best defense against drowning. Teach children to swim at an early age. Children who are not taught when they are very young tend to avoid swim instruction as they age. Swimming instruction is a crucial step to protecting children from injury or death.

Swim Near a Lifeguard

The United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) statistics show the chance of drowning at a beach without lifeguard protection is almost five times as great as drowning at a beach with lifeguards, and the chance of drowning at a beach protected by USLA affiliated lifeguards is 1 in 18 million (.0000055%).

At Home you're the Lifeguard

The CDC reports drownings for children ages 1 to 4 are most likely in a pool. Many of these deaths occur in the few moments it takes a parent to answer a telephone or doorbell. NEVER leave a child alone anywhere near a pool. Make sure it is completely fenced, that the fence is locked, and that there is no access from the home to the pool.

Swim with a Buddy

Many drownings involve single swimmers. When you swim with a buddy, you have someone who may be able to help, and signal for assistance from others. At least have someone onshore watching you.

Check with the Lifeguards

Lifeguards work continually to identify hazards that might affect you. They can advise you on the safest place to swim, as well as places to avoid. Talk to them when you first arrive at the beach and ask them for their advice.

Enter Water Feet First

Serious, lifelong injuries, including paraplegia, occur every year due to diving headfirst into unknown water. Bodysurfing can result in a serious neck injury when the swimmer's neck strikes the bottom. Check depth before diving, then go feet first the first time; and when bodysurfing, always extend a hand ahead of you.

Learn Rip Current Safety

USLA reports some 80% of rescues by USLA affiliated lifeguards at ocean beaches are caused by rip currents. If you are caught in a rip current, remain calm and don't try to swim directly to shore. Instead, swim parallel to shore until you feel the current relax, then swim to shore. Most rip currents are narrow and a short swim parallel will bring you to safety.

Obey Posted Signs and Flags

Signs at the beach are intended to help keep you safe and inform you about local regulations. Read the signs when you first arrive and follow their direction. Flags may be flown by lifeguards to advise of hazards and regulations that change from time to time. You can usually find informational signs explaining the flags, or just ask the lifeguard.



Wear a Life Jacket

California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) reports 524 boating accidents statewide in 2014. From 2010-2014, there were 233 fatalities; 65% of those victims drowned and of those, 80% were not wearing lifejackets. Most involve people who never expected to end up in the water, but fell overboard or ended up in the water when the boat sank. Children are particularly susceptible to this problem, and in many states, children are required to be in lifejackets whenever they are aboard boats. www.boatcalifornia.com

Use Sunscreen and Drink Water

Everyone loves a sunny day, but exposure to the sun affects your body. Without sunscreen, you can be seriously burned. The sun's rays can also cause life-long skin damage and skin cancer. To protect yourself always choose "broad spectrum" sunscreen rated from 15 to 50 SPF, or clothing that covers your skin, and reapply sunscreen regularly throughout the day. The sun can also dehydrate you quickly. Drink lots of water and avoid alcohol, which contributes to dehydration. If you feel ill, be sure to contact a lifeguard.

Keep the Beach and Water Clean

Nobody likes to see the beach or water littered with trash. Even in places where beach cleaning services pick up trash daily, it may linger on the beach for hours, causing an unsightly mess and threatening the health of birds and animals. Do your part. Pick up after yourself and even others. Everyone will appreciate you for it.

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