

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT  
OF  
BOATING AND WATERWAYS**

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS

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<http://www.dbw.ca.gov>

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## **Avoid a Boating Accident by Taking a Safety Course**

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) reminds boaters that safety courses can help prevent accidents on the water this summer. Department statistics show that in 2008, only 18 percent of operators involved in accidents had formal boating safety training.

“Unfortunately every year, many boaters get hurt or die,” said DBW Director Raynor Tsuneyoshi. “Accidents can be avoided by taking a boating safety course to learn about state and federal boating laws, rules of the road, boat handling, required and recommended equipment, navigational aids and other safety tips.”

Some key boating laws intended to make California’s waterways safer include:

### **Life Jackets**

Children under 12-years-old must wear a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved life jacket when on a moving vessel of 26 ft. or less.

Everyone on a personal watercraft (popularly known as a jet ski) and anyone being towed behind a boat must wear a USCG approved life jacket.

USCG-approved life jackets must be carried for each person on board and must be easy to get to in case of an emergency.

### **Operation**

A person must be 16 years of age or older to operate a vessel powered by a motor of more than 15 horsepower.

A person 12 to 15 may operate any vessel powered by a motor of more than 15-horsepower, if he or she is supervised on board by someone at least 18 years of age.

### **Alcohol**

It is against the law for anyone to operate a boat or motor vehicle with a blood alcohol concentration of .08 percent or more.

### **Teak Surfing**

Due to carbon monoxide poisoning, it is against the law to teak surf or drag behind a boat.

## **Water Skiing**

When using a boat to tow a person on water skis, there must be in the boat, in addition to the operator, an observer of at least 12 years of age.

The observer will raise a flag to warn other boats about gear or skiers in the water. The flag must be orange or red and at least 12 inches square or rectangular.

Inflatable life jackets are not approved for use while water skiing.

DBW offers a complimentary correspondence boating safety course designed for home study that allows students to progress at their own pace. Those who pass the course with a score of 80 percent or better are awarded with certificates recognized by many insurance companies for boat insurance discounts.

To order a course or to find out more about California boating safety information and laws, please visit [www.BoatSmarter.com](http://www.BoatSmarter.com).

The Department of Boating and Waterways enhances public access to California's waterways and promotes on-the-water safety through programs funded by vessel registration fees, boating fuel tax dollars and boating facility construction loan payments.