

# SCA

small craft advisory

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- **Swim Decision**
- **New Marketing Manager**

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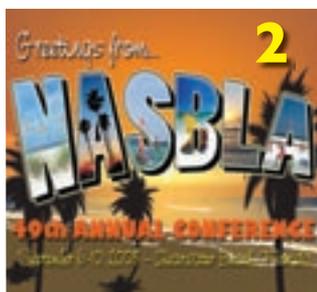
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## ABOUT THE COVER

The Alaska Office of Boating Safety recently created an educational video on cold water immersion. The film debunks some myths about hypothermia and explains cold water immersion.

*Photo courtesy Alaska Office of Boating Safety*



The official publication of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators

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## Cold Water Immersion Video Partnership Produces Prodigious Product



John Fetterman  
NASBLA President

As we write this month's column, it is winter and temperatures are cold from Kentucky to Maine. That seems like a good starting point for an issue of *Small Craft Advisory* focused on cold water immersion. Please note that we said "cold water immersion" and not "hypothermia" – a grossly misused and often misunderstood term frequently associated with VCP (very cold people.)

Cold water immersion is a phrase that characterizes the actual circumstances and physiological responses encountered in a sudden exposure to cold water (with temperatures as great as 68 degrees Fahrenheit, and colder.) Hypothermia, on the other hand, is a condition in which an organism's temperature drops below that required for normal metabolism and bodily functions. Casualties of boating accidents often are victims of the effects of cold water immersion (coupled with a failure to wear life jackets), but rarely succumb to the effects of hypothermia. Knowing the difference, and taking steps to prepare for sudden cold water immersion, might actually save your life and the lives of others.

We know this because we are students of the Gordon Giesbrecht school of cold water immersion. Dr. Giesbrecht, a professor of thermophysiology at the University of Manitoba, served as the subject matter expert for an exciting new video training project developed by Jeff Johnson and his staff in the Office of Boating Safety in Alaska's Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. According to Dr. Giesbrecht, "you should hope to stay alive *long enough* to succumb to the effects of hypothermia." And you just might (stay alive, that is) if you learn the lessons from this video.

The just-completed video distills decades of research and experienced-based learning into a 20-minute summary of everything you need to know about the dangers of boating in a cold water environment. The video not only dispels the conventional wisdom related to cold water immersion and hypothermia but also provides practical training and survival tips for those who suddenly find themselves in frigid waters. And

above all else, the in-the-water, in-your-face film clearly demonstrates the indispensable value of always wearing a life jacket when boating in colder climates.

Intended as a teaching aid targeted primarily at boaters in the Land of the Midnight Sun, our friends in the state of Alaska have generously offered to make the video available to state boating agencies, boating instructors, nonprofit organizations and others throughout North America.

"The work that Jeff [Johnson], his staff and their crew of professional videographers have done in assembling this footage, and the safety lessons that go along with it, will yield fruit for the boating safety community from coast-to-coast for years to come," says Maine BLA and NASBLA President Major John Fetterman. "The year-round value of this information to the boaters of our state and other states and provinces across the northern-tier is immeasurable, not to mention its applicability to seasonal sportsmen and other cold-weather enthusiasts who put themselves at risk of cold water immersion from the Gulf of Maine to the Gulf of Mexico each spring and fall."

Through a special arrangement with the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and their project partners at Transport Canada and the University of Manitoba, the cold water immersion video will be made available to boating professionals worldwide exclusively through NASBLA. While this arrangement secures the rights to copy and disseminate the video itself, we are also pleased to announce that the United States Power Squadrons has stepped forward with a funding initiative that will provide for the replication, packaging, and shipping and handling of the product at no cost (or minimal cost) to the recipient as well.

NASBLA is fortunate to have members and partners such as the Alaska Office of Boating Safety and the United States Power Squadrons who share with us the critical insights of risk-

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Greetings from...

# NASBLA

## 49th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

September 6-10, 2008 – Clearwater Beach, Florida

Please join us for the 49th annual NASBLA conference September 6 – 10, 2008,  
at the Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort (400 Mandalay Ave) in Clearwater Beach, Florida!

### **Friday, Sept. 5**

Executive Board Meeting

### **Saturday, Sept. 6**

New BLA Orientation (morning)  
First-time Attendee Orientation

### **Sunday, Sept. 7**

Committee Meetings and Briefings  
Exhibit Set-up  
Opening Ceremonies  
President's Reception

### **Monday, Sept. 8**

Workshops  
Business Meetings  
Awards Banquet

### **Tuesday, Sept. 9**

General Sessions  
On-water Demonstrations  
Breakout Sessions  
Committee Meetings

### **Wednesday, Sept. 10**

General Sessions  
Closing Event – Evening Beach Party!

## Conference Agenda Shaping Up

NASBLA's 49th annual conference will be held September 6-10, 2008, at the Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort (400 Mandalay Ave) in Clearwater Beach, Fla.

NASBLA staff members are working on the agenda. While the conference is returning to its traditional Sunday night opening, this year's schedule has a few changes. See ad on the previous page for a brief outline of the agenda.

Hotel reservations can be made online by calling 727.461.3222. Visit the NASBLA website, [www.nasbla.org](http://www.nasbla.org), for the online reservations link. Be sure to mention group code NAS8GA to receive the conference rate of \$149 per night, plus tax.

For more information, visit [www.nasbla.org](http://www.nasbla.org).

## NASBLA Releases BUI Training Schedule

This year, NASBLA will be offering five Boating Under the Influence Detection and Enforcement seminars. The nonprofit organization developed this training to help prevent the rise of alcohol-related accidents and fatalities on the nation's waterways. Statistics from the U.S. Coast Guard show that the percentage of boating accidents, injuries and fatalities caused by alcohol – those in which alcohol was reported as a contributing factor – has steadily risen over the past several years.

NASBLA's Boating Under the Influence Enforcement Training is a 24-hour seminar. It covers detection and general deterrence, legal considerations, note taking and testimony, detection phases, the administration and evaluation of standardized field sobriety tests (afloat and ashore), evaluation of volunteer drinking subjects, processing the arrested subject, preparation for trial, and logistical planning. The training also includes a live alcohol workshop.

This year NASBLA is conducting five Boating Under the Influence Detection and Enforcement seminars, one of which is a train-the-trainer course. The dates and locations for the seminars are as follows:

April 8-10, 2008 . . . . .Boulder City, Nevada  
May 6-8, 2008. . . . .Lucas, Kentucky  
June 3-5, 2008 . . . . .Vancouver, Washington  
June 17-19, 2008\* . . . . .Madison, Wisconsin (Train-the-Trainer course)  
July/August (TBD) 2008\* . . . .Hawaii

*\*Dates and locations subject to change.*

The BUI seminar is intended for active local, state or federal marine law enforcement officers. Registration is typically limited to 32 attendees per seminar, so be sure to apply early. Visit [www.nasbla.org](http://www.nasbla.org) for more information and to register for a seminar.



## NASBLA Adds Marketing Manager

NASBLA has created a new staff position and hired Tom Hayward as its marketing manager. Hayward began Jan. 14, 2008, and his duties include building NASBLA's brand, initiating NASBLA's development program and being the lead staff on the commemoration of NASBLA's 50th Anniversary. Tom also staffs NASBLA's Marketing & Outreach Subcommittee and as serves as a marketing resource to the states.

NASBLA's executive board authorized the new marketing position as part of 10-point fundraising strategic plan adopted last summer. The association's leadership remains committed to deepening and diversifying NASBLA's financial resources portfolio through the development of new sources of funding.

"We are very excited about the potential Tom brings to our strategic fundraising initiative and the contributions he will make in defining and sharpening our image. Like the majority of our other staff positions," noted NASBLA Executive Director John Johnson, "the new marketing manager position represents an important value-added proposition for our members since it is funded outside of the revenue stream provided by membership dues."

Tom has an impressive set of credentials in both the corporate and nonprofit worlds. Most recently he's been branch manager for National City Bank in Lexington, Ky. He has also served as managing director of Actors Guild of Lexington where he had primary responsibility for development and fundraising activities for the theater. While there he instituted higher levels of giving and ensured a stable giving cycle. He was also a marketing/public relations manager at Gucci America Inc. where he worked to create brand exclusivity and promote Gucci's brand image. While at Gucci, he also worked with various charities and nonprofits to plan and sponsor fundraising events consistent with company priorities.

Tom grew up in LaSalle, Mich., a small town on the shores of Lake Erie – 15 miles north of Toledo. Lake Erie was literally his front yard and he grew up sailing, skiing and fishing. His father raced yearly in the Port Huron – Mackinac race and Tom and his brother became the crew. Tom attended Saint Meinrad Seminary in Indiana and holds a degree in communication arts from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. ■

## Welcome Aboard NASBLA Welcomes Three New Boating Law Administrators

As people pursue new opportunities, organizations reorganize and politics influence staff appointments, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators continues to see new faces among its members.

We welcome these new members aboard and encourage them to become involved in NASBLA and reap the benefits of their membership.



**Captain Bob Huffaker  
Alabama**

Capt. Bob Huffaker was appointed as Alabama's boating law administrator in February 2007 to fill

the position after the former BLA, Maj. Larry Kelley, retired.

Huffaker graduated from Jacksonville State University in 1970 with a bachelor of science degree in business administration. He joined the Alabama Marine Police Division in March 1971 as a patrol officer. He was assigned to Mobile County, in the southern part of the state, and patrolled the Mobile Bay area, several rivers, Dauphin Island, the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Sound.

After three years, he transferred to District 2 in the north-central part of Alabama and patrolled an inland impoundment on the Coosa River system until 1986. He was promoted to lieutenant and was assigned to Montgomery, where he served as assistant district supervisor of District 3. In 1988 he was appointed as head of the division's education and training sections. In April 1997 he was promoted to chief of operations and held

that position until his current appointment as chief of law enforcement and state boating law administrator.

An avid boater, Capt. Huffaker believes that "an educated boater produces a safer and more enjoyable marine experience and environment." Therefore, he feels it's crucial to reach as many boaters as possible with safety messages. He suggested the way to reach boaters would be through an aggressive nationwide boating education campaign.

As Alabama's BLA, Capt. Huffaker plans to continue an aggressive training program for patrol officers in the areas of boating under the influence enforcement and certification, accident investigation, officer survival, customer service, and boater safety certification. He also would like to certify all enforcement personnel for the National Incident Management System. To further help improve boating safety on Alabama's waters, Capt. Huffaker plans to implement a statewide life jacket awareness program targeting adults and children.



**Pamela Dillon  
Ohio**

Pamela Dillon, who once served as a deputy chief of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Watercraft, has returned as the division's new chief. In this position she also serves as the state's boating law administrator.

"Pam is a well-known figure in Ohio's boating community," said Sean D. Logan, ODNR director. "She is widely respected for her enthusiasm and support of paddlesports, as well as her background and knowledge of law enforcement. She is a valuable addition to our ODNR senior staff."

Dillon began as a state watercraft officer for Ohio in 1977 and remained with the Division of Watercraft through 2002, serving the final six years as division deputy chief overseeing law enforcement and education programs. During her tenure with the Division of Watercraft, Dillon helped develop the Ohio River Rescue Training program, the first state-sponsored training program of its kind in the United States. In October 2002 she left the ODNR to serve as executive director of the American Canoe Association (ACA), the largest and oldest paddlesport organization in North America. She was appointed chief of the ODNR Division of Watercraft on October 1, 2007.

Born and raised in Portsmouth, Ohio, Dillon now resides in Columbus, Ohio. To call her an avid paddler would be quite an understatement. Dillon owns four canoes, eight kayaks and an inflatable. She also enjoys sailing and powerboating. A life member of the ACA, Dillon also serves on the Board of Governors of the International Whitewater Hall of Fame and is a public member of the National Boating Safety Advisory Council as well as a member of the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC). She has served as a board member and past chair of the NSBC, a board member of the Future Fisherman Foundation and a member of the Paddlesport Industry Association.

Looking at boating safety, Dillon lists the biggest pressing needs as securing legal and safe access, encouraging safe youth participation in all forms of boating, and continued diligence in education and law enforcement efforts. As Ohio's BLA, she is already looking at ways to improve safety on the state's waterways. One goal she's made is to increase voluntary usage of life jackets.

### **Lieutenant Adam Gormely Maine (inland)**

In the latter part of October 2007, Game Warden Sergeant Adam Gormely of Greenville was promoted to the rank of Southwestern Division Lieutenant. Stationed in Gray, Maine, Gormely oversees 35 game wardens in the southern third of the state. In this position, he was tasked with the duties of assistant boating law administrator (BLA) for Maine. After serving as assistant BLA for just one week, he was named the state's inland boating law administrator, following the resignation of the former boating law administrator.

Gormely began his career in 1990 as a deputy game warden with the Maine Warden Service. He was hired full-time as a district game warden in 1995 and was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 2006.

Up until his promotion, Gormely was the local Cub Scout Pack Master. However, the new job required that he and his family move to a new town, so he's had to relinquish his duties as Pack Master.

An avid boater, Lt. Gormely is excited to be the inland BLA and said he plans on "jumping in with both feet." He cites Major John Fetterman, the state's coastal BLA and the current president of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, as a "huge resource" in this new endeavor.

Having served as BLA for just a couple months, Lt. Gormely has already begun examining ways to improve boating safety on the state's waters. One strategy involves examining areas in Maine that have a high level of complaints. The goal is to determine the types of grievances being reported and targeting law enforcement efforts to curb the problems.

Lt. Gormely also wants to better utilize the North American Safe Boating Campaign to increase boaters' awareness of boating safety. The North American Safe Boating Week takes place the week before Memorial Day Weekend. However, the weather is still rather cold at that time in Maine, so neither boaters nor law enforcement officers are really thinking about boating and the boating safety messages often go unnoticed. Lt. Gormely plans to work with his agency's Information and Education Division to produce and distribute boating safety handouts to draw attention to the boating safety week and boating safety in general.

To further enhance education efforts, Lt. Gormely will focus on supplementary programs, such as PaddleSmart and PaddleSafe. He also plans to strengthen positive reinforcement efforts. For example, rather than citing boaters for not having a sound-producing device onboard, officers could hand out free whistles with a friendly reminder about required equipment. This would work to create a positive impression of law enforcement efforts and increase boaters' knowledge. ■

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## **It's Your Turn: A Defensive Boating Primer**

By Gail Kulp

Two paddles way up for the newest video from the American Canoe Association.

The video, titled "It's Your Turn: A Defensive Boating Primer," is a short film less than 8 minutes in length. Despite its short running time, it conveys a lot of useful information. The video provides a basic understanding of the Navigation Rules, especially as they apply to paddlecraft such as canoes and kayaks.

Paddlecraft users are encouraged to wear bright clothes, carry a sound and light signal, and keep a constant lookout while boating in congested areas. A canoe and a kayak are often invisible to radar and large powerboats have a difficult time seeing the much smaller paddlecraft in the water. This is even more true if there are large waves, bad weather, or even a bright glare from the sun on the water.

The video explains that "the Rules of the Road are really just the rules of common sense." A kayaker should not try to beat out a large cruise ship crossing the main channel. Instead, the kayak should wait until the ship has passed and then attempt to cross the channel if it is clear and safe.

Also included with the video is a CD-ROM of supplemental material. The PowerPoint presentation helps an instructor discuss the concepts introduced in the video. A flyer advertising a free poster on defense boating for paddlers is also included with the video.

For more information or to obtain a copy of the video, please visit the American Canoe Association at [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org).



# Wireless Cutoff Switch

## Offers Additional Safety for Boaters

Engine cutoff switches work very well – when they are used. However, many boaters fail to use lanyard engine cutoff switches when on their boats. They give various reasons for not wearing these switches. For example, some boaters find a tethered cutoff switch to be a hassle because it can restrict movement and is prone to tangle. Sometimes boaters simply forget to attach the lanyard.

Anthony Viggiano, a Connecticut businessman who is also an avid boater and boat owner, has developed a device to make boating safer. Viggiano was inspired to create a wireless boat engine cutoff switch after a friend nearly lost his life in a boating accident. Named AUTOTETHER™, this wireless switch shuts off a boat's engine in the event that the boat operator falls into the water.

Viggiano, a resident of Groton Long Point, Conn., developed the idea for AUTOTETHER with Martin LoSchiavo of Rocky Hill, Conn.

"Boating is one of the world's most pleasurable activities," Viggiano said. "But...it requires diligence on the part of boat operators to ensure their safety and the safety of others onboard."

The U.S. Coast Guard estimates there are 77 million boaters nationwide. Also, according to U.S. Coast Guard statistics, in 2006, boating accidents resulted in 710 fatalities, up from 697 in 2005. Falls overboard was reported as the fourth most common type of boating accident in 2006, contributing to 202 deaths.

Unlike traditional lanyard engine cutoff switches that require the operator to be tethered to the boat, the manufacturer describes AUTOTETHER as an unobtrusive wireless unit that clips into the ignition switch. It operates via a transmitter that sends radio waves to a receiver connected to the boat's ignition. When the sensor is submerged in water,

the signal between the transmitter and the receiver is instantly broken – because radio waves do not travel through water – and AUTOTETHER activates the ignition cutoff switch.

"With AUTOTETHER there is no lanyard because it is a wireless device. It offers safety and enhanced freedom to the boat operator. AUTOTETHER also prevents the occurrence of dangerous accidental-disconnects since the operator is not directly tied to the ignition switch," Viggiano said.



*AUTOTETHER, a wireless engine cutoff switch, can be used on or off the boat to improve safety on and around the water. Photo courtesy AUTOTETHER Inc.*

"Perhaps the greatest benefit of the AUTOTETHER system," said co-inventor LoSchiavo, "is that it not only protects the boat operator but also protects up to three passengers. We have heard numerous stories where a passenger fell overboard and the boat operator was not immediately aware of it to stop the boat," LoSchiavo said.

In addition to shutting off the engine when the boat's operator falls overboard, the AUTOTETHER will set off an alarm if passengers or pets wearing AUTOTETHER sensors fall out of the boat and into the water. Passengers wearing sensors can shut off the boat's engine by pushing the red alert button.

AUTOTETHER has other benefits over existing wireless devices. It is completely portable. It can be transferred from boat to boat with the proper clip. It also can be used to monitor a water skier or a tuber with the alarm only and not shut off the boat if he or she goes in the water.

AUTOTETHER is patented and trademarked. For more information, visit [www.autotether.com](http://www.autotether.com). ■

# Cold Water Shocks

## Oregon Reporter

By Justin Hogan, Public Affairs Intern, and Ashley Massey, Public Affairs Specialist for the Oregon State Marine Board

Each spring, the Oregon State Marine Board sends out media kits with important information about boating and water safety. This year, the kit contained a fact sheet on cold water immersion that caught the attention of television station KATU reporter Brian Barker. Barker contacted the Clackamas County Marine Patrol and expressed an interest in a ride-along and something a bit unconventional. Barker wanted to demonstrate to viewers how dangerous cold water can be, even when the temperature outside is balmy, by taking the plunge himself.

With his feet planted on the swim platform at the stern of the sheriff's boat, Barker nervously offered a bit of advice: "The point is – don't do this." Barker promptly jumped into the Willamette River, wearing a properly fitting life jacket. After being briefly submerged, Barker broke the surface gasping for air, exclaiming: "I'm breathing fast right away...If I didn't have a life preserver on, I'd be panicking." Being an athlete in good physical condition, Barker was

especially surprised when the cold water took an immediate effect. But for those familiar with cold water immersion, it's no surprise. Barker was experiencing the inevitable first stage of cold water immersion – initial cold shock. It occurs

within the first three to five minutes of immersion and causes involuntary gasping, hyperventilation, panic and vertigo – all of which can result in water inhalation and drowning. No matter how strong or athletic the person, the effects can be deadly.

Within minutes, Barker began to experience the second stage of cold water immersion – short-term swim failure. In this phase, manual dexterity, hand grip strength and speed of movement can all drop by 60 to 80 percent. Commenting retrospectively on his condition, Barker noted: "I can't get air into my lungs. My arms and legs start to go numb." His breathing became more pronounced and difficult, while his limbs became like weighted clubs attached to his body. Barker's condition digressed through the stages of cold water immersion before the eyes of his audience.

With a tremulous voice and shivering lips, Barker awkwardly stumbled over his words: "But I can see how...how this could kill somebody. I could see how you...you would...uh...you would lose your, uh...what am I trying to say?" Looking back, Barker explained his condition: "I can no longer piece together a sentence. I begin to panic, and I get out." Surprisingly, Barker was only immersed in the cold water for about four minutes. Oftentimes, that's all it takes.

The alarming fact is that cold water robs the body of its heat 25 times faster than air. The difference between life and death, between survival and tragedy, can be as simple as wearing a life jacket and being prepared.

Thankfully, Barker did not have to experience the fourth state of cold water immersion: post-immersion collapse during or after a rescue. Regardless, his point was sharply conveyed.

The safety message became very real for Brian Barker and for everyone who watched the program. His demonstration created a visceral experience, and he spoke with the conviction of someone who has experienced the danger firsthand. This television segment brought public awareness on the danger of cold water immersion to an entirely new level.

To view the Brian Barker Cold Water Immersion clip, visit [www.katu.com/home/video/7383841.html?video=pop&t=a](http://www.katu.com/home/video/7383841.html?video=pop&t=a). ■



from the HELM continued from page 1

based and knowledge-based interventions that will make our waters safer for all boaters and the foresight and initiative to turn that knowledge into action. Our association is pleased and proud to

serve as a conduit to make this informative, life-saving resource available to boating professionals everywhere.

Be sure to monitor NASBLA's website at [www.NASBLA.org](http://www.NASBLA.org) for more information on how to obtain the new cold water immersion video as early as next month. ■

# Taking the

# PLUNGE

By Megan Piersma, Alaska Office of Boating Safety

My instructions for the day include jumping off a boat into 35 degree water and “swimming until failure.” As you can imagine, this causes me to feel a tad nervous. All for the sake of good footage? Or maybe education, which makes me feel much better about doing something so seemingly ridiculous. “You did what? On purpose?” are the questions I get asked most frequently by folks after finding out I went swimming in Kenai Lake, which in May 2007 was just a week after the ice went out.

I work for the Alaska Office of Boating Safety in Anchorage. My job involves teaching various boating programs to children and adults across the state. A pretty sweet job, if you ask me. But for that week in May, I was not the education specialist for the state – I was a poorly

surely be at the head of the boating safety front. This short video (about 25 minutes long) describes in detail the four stages of cold water immersion and the importance of being prepared while out on the water. It covers everything from trip plans and life jackets to water survival and treatment of victims of cold water immersion. All said, it’s a fabulous video for anyone remotely interested in boating.

But back to the exciting portion of this story. My part in all of this is to provide some striking footage showcasing the first two stages of cold water immersion: the cold shock response and cold incapacitation. In order to do this accurately, I need to actually experience these stages. So, I get on the park ranger’s boat that will take me out to the middle of the lake (this way there is no chance of me cheating by swimming right to shore where I would then proceed to run away, never to come back again). There is another boat right next to the one I’m on containing the film crew and rescue swimmers. Strangely, this whole crazy operation is actually very safe. In the water already are a rescue swimmer and a cameraman with an underwater camera (to get the really good shots of me struggling underwater, of course...). So, into the water I jump, feet first, fully clothed, NO life jacket, wetsuit or drysuit. Just in normal, everyday clothing.

My head goes completely under and I come up sputtering, gasping, hyperventilating, just plain freaking out. Thirty-five degrees is VERY cold. I can’t breathe, I can’t think, I can’t figure out what to do with my arms and legs. I continue to gasp/hyperventilate/freak out for another couple of minutes until suddenly I am able to take a deep inhale and I can feel everything calm down. I just experienced the first stage of cold water immersion: cold shock response. An apt name, to be sure. Next stage: cold incapacitation. My duty: swimming until failure. In other words, I am to swim until I’m no longer able to and start to drown and then my knight in neoprene will save me. (Oh goody.)

I start to swim using the breast stroke. Nice and strong, right toward shore. All I can think of at this point is how incredibly painful my hands, groin and armpits are. My hands are the only thing exposed directly to the water and my armpits and groin are experiencing a cold current whisking past due to my swimming motion. I’m experiencing cold incapacitation: blood in my extremities is being rerouted to my core (peripheral vasoconstriction), which renders my hands, feet, arms and legs pretty useless. Painful and dangerous, especially if one is not wearing a life jacket (which I’m not). It helps if I close my eyes and

concentrate on my breathing, but all I really want to do is curl up in a tiny little ball and be warm. I want to get out of that water so badly that I have mentally fixated on that shore 120 or so feet ahead of me. People watching from shore have made bets on how far my scrawny body will make it – 50 feet seems to be the general consensus.

At about 40 feet, my head dips just slightly into the water, just enough to get water over my lips. This terrifies me. It seems I have reached swimming failure and the boys on the beach are exchanging cash. My body is just singing in pain – everything



Megan Piersma with the Alaska Office of Boating Safety served as a cold water swimmer in the office’s new DVD titled Cold Water Boating. Her icy swim is conducted in a safe environment with a rescue swimmer in the water nearby and a rescue boat following alongside.

Photos courtesy Alaska Office of Boating Safety

paid actress for a very exciting cold water immersion video my office is filming.

My office is collaborating with a score of talented, internationally known experts ranging from rescue specialists to scientists to university professors on what will

hurts. Head, neck, face, lungs, arms, legs, groin, hands, brain, pride. Suddenly, what I'm calling my "survival instinct" kicks in and I'm off like a shot. No way am I drowning today. No thank you. I swim all the way to shore, after promptly passing my in-water cameraman and leaving my rescue swimmer behind. I make it to shore! And as soon as I feel the sand on my chest, everything in my body just gives up. It seems to be a pretty common phenomenon—people spend hours in the water, clinging to a piece of debris or the side of their boat and as soon as they see the Coast Guard or rescue boat, they just give up and slide into the water, drowning just minutes away from safety. Apparently, this is what happened to me. As soon as my body reached safety, it was done. It just checked out. Nothing would work proper—I couldn't pull myself completely out of the water, couldn't use my arms or legs, had a hard time breathing.

After the rescue swimmers decided that they could provide interference and carry me up farther on shore, one of the cold water experts began asking me questions. How do I feel? What was I thinking while swimming? Was I cold? I couldn't formulate my answers because my brain was all fuzzy; much less actually get the answers out my mouth. I felt like I had just been to the dentist for fillings on both sides. After a while, maybe 20 minutes or so, I was able to stand up woozily yet unassisted and walk (very much assisted) back to our staging area. I was undressed and redressed by a gaggle of wonderful ladies and then put into my down jacket and a sleeping bag. I proceeded to violently shiver for another half hour or so. I had a tremendous ice cream headache for the rest of the day and my joints felt tight and painful. I felt cold and very tired for the rest of the week.

What's most amazing is that even though I was in the water for about 3 minutes, I was not hypothermic whatsoever. My internal body temperature did not drop a single degree, nor was I in any sort of medical danger. Yes, I was extremely cold and uncomfortable, but I was doing just dandy. It was, however, possibly the most painful experience I've gone through as of yet. Because my cold water immersion



*After making it to shore, Megan collapsed and had to be helped from the water. Even at this point, she was not hypothermic—her internal body temperature had not dropped at all.*

"event" was fairly traumatic, I came away with a brand-new appreciation for cold water. It's easy to underestimate what cold water can do to your body and your brain. So, my recommendation is to always be prepared when you're out on the water and to always, always wear a life jacket. Another piece of advice: avoid, at all costs, even if you're getting paid, volunteering to demonstrate "swimming until failure." ■

## Alaska Produces Cold Water Boating Video

By Joe McCullough, Alaska Office of Boating Safety

The Alaska Office of Boating Safety has completed the production of *Cold Water Boating*, an educational video that explains the effects of cold water immersion and debunks some of the myths of hypothermia. Several agencies participated in the making of the video including the U.S. Coast Guard, Canadian Coast Guard, Alaska State Parks, University of Manitoba and U.S. Air Force. Some of folks representing these agencies even volunteered to take a plunge in the icy water.

The video's core message is the importance of wearing a life jacket when boating, especially in cold water. A properly fitted life jacket increases survival time when immersed in cold water from mere minutes to possibly hours – but only if the life jacket is worn. The video will soon be available to boating safety professionals across the continent.

"We're hoping that viewers everywhere will take the message seriously," said Joe McCullough, Alaska's Education Coordinator. "We want boaters to understand a little more about the phenomenon of cold water immersion. Once they understand, we believe they'll employ safe practices whenever they go out on the water... and save a few lives as a result."

Copies of the video will soon be available through NASBLA. A special arrangement with the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and their project partners at Transport Canada and the University of Manitoba has secured the rights to copy and disseminate the video itself. Additionally, the United States Power Squadrons has developed a funding initiative to provide for the replication, packaging, and shipping and handling of the product. Check the NASBLA website, [www.nasbla.org](http://www.nasbla.org), for details on how to order copies of the *Cold Water Boating* video.

# To Swim or Not to Swim

By Kimberly Jenkins

It's January. The location is a large lake in Western Kentucky. While the air temperature is an unseasonably mild 54 degrees Fahrenheit (12 degrees Celsius), the water temperature is around 43 F (6 C). A fisherman is cruising along the water in his motorboat, returning home after a day of fishing for walleye. The boat hits a submerged object, ripping a hole in her hull. The sudden impact causes the boat to decelerate very quickly. The boater finds himself thrown overboard and into the frigid water.

Now the boater must endure cold water immersion.

Cold water immersion has four stages: cold shock, functional disability (swimming failure), immersion hypothermia and post rescue collapse. Death can occur in any of these stages, but most often occurs in the first two.

*Editor's Note: Both Mike Folkerts, Recreational Boating Safety Specialist with the U.S. Coast Guard, and Jesse Harrup, National Directorate Commodore for Recreational Boating Safety with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, provide*

*excellent descriptions of these stages in their articles on pages 18-19 and page 20, respectively.*

So let's say our boater survives the initial cold shock, gets his breathing under control and gets his wits about him. Fortunately he used an engine cutoff system so that when he was thrown overboard, the boat's engine stopped and the vessel came to rest nearby. However, it's taking on water and sinking.

What should the boater do?

Traditionally boaters have been taught to stay with the boat and to try to get out of the water. It's important to get as much of the body out of the water because water transfers heat away from the body approximately 25 times more rapidly than air. If getting out of the water is not possible, boaters have been advised to stay near the boat and use the Heat Escape Lessening Position (HELP), or huddle if there's more than one person, to conserve heat and help reduce the risk of hypothermia.

However, in recent years, experts have separated hypothermia from cold water immersion. Hypothermia is defined as an abnormally low body temperature, often caused by prolonged exposure to cold. Cold water immersion is characterized as the event that often precedes actual hypothermia.

Dr. Gordon Giesbrecht, a professor of thermophysiology at the University of Manitoba, when referring to a cold water immersion event said, "You should be lucky to live long enough to die of hypothermia." It's a common misperception that hypothermia will set in almost immediately after a person lands in cold water. However, a person will not start to become hypothermic for about 15 minutes and won't become severely hypothermic for a long time after that. In fact, a person could survive in cold water for an hour or two, depending on the circumstances and given that he or she doesn't drown first. (That's why wearing a life jacket is crucial.) However, the effects of cold water immersion begin immediately upon entering the water, which brings us back to our boater.

He's survived the initial cold water shock, but the next several minutes are critical because the cold is going to zap the boater's strength. The boat is nearby. Should he stay with the boat?

No simple answer exists for this question. Numerous factors must be taken into account. The biggest consideration is whether the boater is wearing a life jacket. If not, then the only option is to get to the boat and try to get out of the water.

When a life jacket is worn, the boater could have a couple options, depending on water conditions, the boater's proximity to shore, his physical condition, and the likelihood of help being in the vicinity. Let's say the water is very choppy, with three-foot waves and the boater is a considerable distance from shore. It would be best for him to stay with the boat because that would increase his visibility to a rescue crew.



*In the case of a capsizing in cold water, boaters have traditionally been taught to stay with the boat and to try to get out of the water. However, under certain circumstances boaters may want to swim for shore—IF they are wearing a life jacket.*

# 1 – 10 – 1

On the other hand, let's say our boater is about the length of a football field away from shore and the water is relatively calm. Moreover, our boater, who's wearing a life jacket, is in decent health. He's not sure if help is in the area and no longer has access to his VHF radio since it's in the sinking boat. The boater *could* decide to swim to shore.

Why would he make such a decision? First, his boat is sinking, so it offers no permanent place of safety. Second, he is wearing a life jacket which will greatly improve his chances. Third, since he was unable to signal a mayday before the situation became critical, he doesn't know how long it will be before help arrives. And last, with his proximity to shore he should be able to swim there in less than 45 minutes.

"There is always a probability that you could be wrong in your decision-making," cautioned Dr. Giesbrecht when discussing the swim decision.

It is possible for a boater to overestimate his or her swimming ability or underestimate the distance to shore.

"If you're wearing a life jacket and you're wrong, the worst thing that could happen is that you don't make it to shore. If you succumb to the latter stages of cold water immersion – swimming failure and immersion hypothermia – with a life jacket, you'll still float, even if unconscious," explained Dr. Giesbrecht. "However, if you're not wearing your life jacket and you make the wrong decision about swimming, there is only one outcome – drowning."

The lesson to take away from this – and to pass along to boaters – is that it is essential for boaters to wear a life jacket when boating, especially in cold water. Wearing a life jacket won't guarantee survival. However, not wearing a life jacket almost certainly guarantees death in a cold water immersion scenario. ■

- 1 minute –** protect airway and get control over breathing
- 10 minutes –** perform the most important functions before strength and dexterity are diminished
- 1 hour (or more) –** before loss of useful consciousness

- DON'T waste time removing shoes/clothing.
- LOCATE everyone – check behind and under the boat.
- KEEP EVERYONE TOGETHER.
- ASSESS THE SITUATION – look around for nearest source of safety.
- Concentrate efforts on making and acting on good decisions.
- Maintain positive mental attitude.
- Be prepared at all times to signal potential rescuers.

## Consider swimming if:

- Wearing a life jacket
- Likelihood of rescue is low (event was not witnessed, no means of communication)
- Close to place of safety\* (based on ability and fitness, able to reach goal in less than 45 min swimming time)
- Not able to get out of the water by climbing onto boat or other object
- Moving water (such as a river)

## In this case...

**Ocean or lakes** - swim on back, upper arms to sides of chest, thighs together to retain heat, knees bent, flutter kick with lower legs. Use floating objects if available.

**Rivers** – swim as above, but point feet downstream to fend off rocks, angle body to current with head pointed toward the bank of choice (ferry angle). If necessary flip over on stomach and head first to scramble over the top of strainers.

## Consider NOT swimming if:

- NOT wearing a life jacket
- Likelihood of rescue is high - event was witnessed or others know your situation and position (via MAYDAY, cell phone)
- NOT close to safety (based on ability and fitness you would NOT be able to reach goal in less than 45 min swimming time)
- Able to get out of the water by climbing onto boat or other object
- Rough water
- Must leave a place of safety (such as leaving the shore to go after a drifting/moving boat)

## In this case...

Get out the water. If still with the boat, try to get back in. If swamped, bail. If overturned and small enough, try to re-right it. At least climb on top of it or other floating objects, getting as much out of the water as often as possible.

If not possible to get out of the water, extend in-water survival time. Avoid unnecessary movement. Protect high heat loss areas (head, neck, under arms, groin). If wearing a life jacket, HELP and HUDDLE may be useful in some circumstances.

# Marine Law Enforcement in Northern Idaho

By Dave Dahms, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

Awesome snow-capped mountains, breathtaking fall colors and water smooth as glass. Sound like a great day to be on the lake? It certainly was for John Fetterman, president of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and Matt Long, director of Government Affairs for NASBLA. The spectacular scenery was the background for a recent visit to Northern Idaho. John and Matt were joined by Fred Messmann, boating law administrator (BLA) for Nevada, and Dave Dahms, Idaho's BLA.

The NASBLA crew was recently in the area to attend the States Organization for Boating Access conference in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. An hour north of Coeur

Purcell mountain ranges and provides countless picture postcard panoramic scenes. The stunning mountain views, coupled with bountiful wildlife and tens of thousands of acres of open water, make Pend Oreille a popular destination for many recreational boaters. The lake is also a very popular fishery and attracts anglers from all over the Northwest, as well as a growing number of waterfowl hunters.

According to Lt. Kelly, one of the biggest challenges for their county marine law enforcement program is the sheer acreage of water that needs to be patrolled. A yearly staff of 14 to 16 marine officers and six patrol boats ranging from 21 to 28 feet are the tools behind the massive patrol effort. In addition to Lake Pend Oreille, the county is also responsible for marine law enforcement efforts on Priest Lake, the Pend Oreille River and several other smaller bodies of water that put the total boatable acreage in Bonner County close to 120,000 acres.

One of the goals of the county's program is to be self-sufficient. "We have several officers that are true craftsman," said Kelly. "In addition to marine patrols, these officers can repair our boats, build needed items, such as storage lockers and docks, and maintain our outboard engines."



Lt. Cary Kelly (left) of the Bonner County Sheriff's Office served as a host to a group of representatives from the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators during a recent trip to Idaho. Members of the group included Idaho Boating Law Administrator Dave Dahms and NASBLA President John Fetterman (right). Photos by Fred Messmann, NDOW

d'Alene lays Lake Pend Oreille, the largest water body in the state. The beautiful resort town of Sandpoint served as home base for this trip. Sandpoint is located in Bonner County, home of nearly 10,000 registered boaters and one of Idaho's largest county marine law enforcement programs.

Lt. Cary Kelly and Sgt. Ron Raiha of the Bonner County Sheriff's Office hosted the group. Lake Pend Oreille is located at the intersection of the Selkirk, Cabinet and

A combination of state grant money, county vessel account (boat registration) funds, and inmate labor has helped Bonner County build and maintain an impressive marine building, where patrol boats are stored and staff can perform routine maintenance on vessels and trailers year-round. In addition, the building has a separate training facility complete with Internet access, TV/DVD player, and a PowerPoint projector that is used for boating safety classes and officer training.

Lt. Kelly credits Sheriff Elaine Savage, the Bonner County Waterways Advisory Committee, and County Commissioners for their support in improving the marine law enforcement program. In addition, Kelly also credits the strong partnership with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and the availability of state grants for construction of the marine building and purchase of patrol boats and outboard motors. A systematic approach over the last few years has allowed the county to replace older inboard/outboard motors with new, highly efficient four-stroke outboard motors, enabling the county to substantially reduce fuel costs.

Pursuant to state code, county sheriff departments are the lead agencies for marine law enforcement in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) is home of the state boating program and provides support for the county-based programs. In Federal Fiscal Year 2007, IDPR provided \$650,000 in grant funding to local counties for marine law enforcement activities. In addition, IDPR, along with county partners, coordinate three training programs for county officers: the annual Marine Law Enforcement Academy, which provides instruction in state carriage requirements, accident investigation, Operation Under the Influence (OUI) detection, basic boat handling skills and live on-the-water boat inspection scenarios; the Personal Watercraft (PWC) Search and Rescue class, which students are trained in search and rescue PWC operation in flat-water conditions, as well as Class I, II, and III whitewater environments; and the Marine Officer Survival Tactics course, which teaches the use of force principles and arrest techniques for water-based scenarios and includes live-



*Patrol boats such as this one are stored and maintained in a marine building that was built through a combination of state grant money, county vessel account (boat registration) funds, and inmate labor in Bonner County.*

tolerance policy for drinking and boating. As a result of increased enforcement activities, the county has arrested over 100 boaters for OUI over the last three boating seasons. In addition, the county has partnered with IDPR to increase the number of boating safety classes available to the public.

Sgt. Matt Street, lead marine deputy for the county, credits the county-sponsored two-week marine law enforcement training academy for producing highly trained incoming officers. "OUI detection and accident investigation are high priorities," says Street. "This allows our new officers to feel comfortable in a classroom setting before getting on the water." Increased patrols in known problem areas have definitely had an impact; the county has reported fewer incidents and accidents over the last two boating seasons.

fire drills and vessel to vessel contact drills. All training courses are certified by POST.

In addition to the grant funding and training courses, IDPR annually funds travel expenses for county officers to attend various law enforcement training sessions including the Marine Patrol Officers Course (MPOC), the annual International Association of Marine Investigator (IAMI) training conference, the NASBLA Level 1 and Level 2 accident investigation, as well as NASBLA Boating Under the Influence training.

Bonner County is not the only success story in Northern Idaho. Under the leadership of Sheriff Rocky Watson, the Kootenai County Sheriffs Office also has reason to boast. Kootenai County is home to over 20,000 registered boaters, as well as Coeur d'Alene, Hayden and Hauser lakes, and the Spokane River. Similar to Bonner County, Kootenai County is an extremely popular destination for recreational boaters, anglers and hunters. In addition to local boaters, both counties have a large influx of out-of-state boaters to deal with. Together with Bonner County, the two counties account for approximately 35 percent of all Idaho registered boaters and about 27 percent of the state's boatable water.

Most years, Kootenai County marine patrol officers deal with more boating accidents and fatalities than any other county in Idaho. Drinking and boating and operator inexperience are the major contributors. To deal with the situation, Kootenai County has adopted a zero-

Increased funding from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund is one of the major contributors to the success of Idaho's county-based marine law enforcement programs. Grant funding to the counties has nearly doubled over the last few years, enabling counties to hire more officers and purchase additional equipment. With more funds available, IDPR has been able to commit additional resources for county marine law enforcement training opportunities. Additionally, IDPR is planning to establish even more opportunities for counties such as an emergency fund to help counties repair damaged patrol boats and motors in a timely manner.

NASBLA President John Fetterman noted that the success of Idaho's county-based marine law enforcement program is a direct result of increased funding and cooperative partnerships. "The marine law enforcement programs in Northern Idaho are very impressive. As a member of the NASBLA Executive Board for the last few years, I personally find it very satisfying to see the dramatic impact that increased funding has had on state boating programs and look forward to making sure that NASBLA helps lead the way during re-authorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund." ■

## Idaho Boaters Designate County to Receive Registration Fees

The state of Idaho has a unique system in place that allows boaters to decide what county receives their boat registration dollars. Boaters are encouraged to designate the county where they choose to boat most frequently. The money helps fund the county recreational boating services and marine law enforcement activities.

Boaters are also able to designate a second county. Designating certain counties will allow those counties to receive 85 percent of the registration fee for boating improvement projects and marine law enforcement activities.

"Idaho's boating registration designation program exists to offer enthusiasts the opportunity to 'pay where they play' and support local waterways financially," said Dave Dahms, manager of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation's Boating Program and the state's boating law administrator.

## Chilling Fatality Statistics for Connecticut's Cold Water Months

The typical boating season in Connecticut begins in April and runs through the end of November. The highest boating activity occurs in June, July, August and September. In fact, in the last 15 years 78 percent of all boating accidents occurred during these months. However, a recent 15-year analysis of Connecticut's boating fatality data (1993-2007) discovered "chilling" statistics regarding the remaining 22 percent of boating accidents that occurred during Connecticut's cold water months, October through May.

- These 22% of accidents accounted for 57% of all fatalities during the 15 years.
- Three-quarters of fatality victims were not wearing life jackets.
- The leading cause of death was drowning without a life jacket (68%).
- 46% of fatality victims were in manually propelled vessels where almost all drowned (95%) and were not wearing a life jacket (74%).
- October had the highest number of fatalities of any month of the year.
- 1 out of 6 boating accidents occurring in cold water months resulted in a fatality. (In comparison, 1 out of 26 boating accidents occurring June through September resulted in a fatality).

Boaters who were fatally injured in accidents during Connecticut's cold water months often went out on days when the weather was considered beautiful for the season. However, as boating safety professionals know, seasonally warm weather does not reduce the dangers of cold water immersion.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is working to reduce boating fatalities during these months. The DEP recently expanded its regulation

for mandatory life jacket wear between October 1 and May 31 to include all manually propelled vessels. Previously, only canoes were subject to the regulation.

Additionally, the DEP's Boating Division will distribute a new pamphlet to inform boaters of the dangers of cold water immersion. The pamphlet covers such topics as preparing for a boat trip, preventing and treating hypothermia, surviving in cold water, and other important information on how cold water affects the body. To view the pamphlet electronically, visit the Connecticut DEP website at [www.ct.gov/dep/boating](http://www.ct.gov/dep/boating).

## National Boating Safety Advisory Council Continues Pushing for Federal Education Requirement

During the 80th meeting of the National Boating Safety Advisory Council (NBSAC), Council members unanimously voted in favor of a resolution recommending that that U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) continue to seek statutory authority to require that a boat operator, on waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, possess a certificate showing completion of an education course or its equivalent. The Council also

recommended that the USCG assemble a task force to develop a draft of the minimum proposed mandatory education requirements that meet current educational standards. The objective of this task force is to resolve multiple interpretations, advance the process, and clarify their intent prior to legislative authorization.

Consistent with previous years, the Coast Guard's 48th annual report, *Boating Statistics 2006*, indicates that 70 percent of reported deaths occurred on recreational boats where the operator had not received any formal boating safety instruction. On average, approximately 700 people die in recreational boating accidents each year. Boating safety experts believe that requiring recreational boaters to have boating safety instruction could save numerous lives each year.

NBSAC was established by the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971. The law requires the secretary of U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard by delegation, to consult with the Council in prescribing federal regulations, and other issues regarding other major boating safety matters.

The Council consists of 21 members drawn equally from state officials responsible for boating safety programs; representatives of the boat manufacturing industry; representatives of national recreational boating organizations; and the general public. The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security appoints NBSAC members and the Director of Prevention Policy of the U.S. Coast Guard is the Council's sponsor.

## National Safe Boating Council Hires New Outreach Manager

Rachel Burkholder, a Spring 2007 graduate from Frostburg State University in Frostburg, Md., has joined the National Safe Boating Council as the new outreach manager. In her new role, Burkholder is responsible for the coordination of the North American Safe Boating Campaign as well as year-round safe boating efforts.



Prior to joining the National Safe Boating Council, Burkholder graduated magna cum laude from Frostburg State University with a bachelor's degree in communication studies and recreation and parks management. She has previous experience working in the recreation industry as an outdoor education program specialist for the YMCA and has worked with both Navy and Army Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) in past years.

"We're excited to welcome Rachel as the new outreach manager. Her educational background and the time she has spent in the recreation field will complement well to make her a great match for this position," said Virgil Chambers, executive director of the National Safe Boating Council.

Burkholder began working for the National Safe Boating Council in December 2007 and will continue to learn the mission and traditions of the NSBC over the next few months. Her previous experiences with communications and recreation, as well as her fresh insight with the NSBC, will help her fit well within the position and the organization as a whole.

#### About National Safe Boating Council

Formed in 1958, the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the foremost coalition for the advancement and promotion of safer boating through education and outreach. The NSBC is comprised of more than 333 national, regional and local boating and water safety agencies, organizations and corporations that are all committed to boating safety.

### **Ohio, BoatU.S. Work to Expand Boater Safety Education Options**

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Watercraft and the BoatU.S. Foundation for Boating Safety & Clean Water signed an agreement in November that recognizes the Internet-based boater safety education course

offered by BoatU.S. as meeting Ohio's boating education standards and those of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). The agreement was signed during Confluence 2007, a biennial boating conference hosted November 7-9 by the Division of Watercraft.

"The agreement offers additional opportunities for Ohioans to complete a boater safety education program, which we highly recommend for all boaters as a way to ensure they enjoy our waterways safely," said Pamela J. Dillon, chief of the ODNR Division of Watercraft and boating law administrator for Ohio.

The Division of Watercraft said the shared signing of its Memorandum of Understanding with BoatU.S. recognizes the standards and requirements established by the state of Ohio and NASBLA to ensure that high quality boating education programs are offered. For decades, boating safety education programs were only available through classroom instructional programs. In recent years, boating education has been made more accessible by offering Internet-based programs.

Approximately 10,000 Ohioans annually complete boating education programs offered by the United States Power Squadrons, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and other boating partners. The Division of Watercraft offers its own Ohio Boating Education Course, a home-study course and a proctored proficiency exam that allows boaters to obtain the education requirements they need.

In 2000, Ohio enacted a state law that requires any person born on or after January 1, 1982 to be able to show proof they have completed an approved boater safety education course if they operate any powered watercraft over ten horsepower. The law also applies to the operation of any rental watercraft over ten horsepower and to those persons who meet the age requirement in providing supervision to underage boat operators.

### **Fishing Participation Has Dropped**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released the complete 2006 *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* on Nov. 7, 2007. The report serves as the baseline for examining how Americans are spending their time and money outdoors.

According to the survey, 87.5 million U.S. residents 16 years and older participated in wildlife-related recreation, a six-percent increase from the last survey in 2001. However, the number of hunters and anglers fell from 37.8 million in 2001 to 33.9 million in 2006. The most recent survey also showed an eight-percent increase in the number of wildlife-watchers since 2001, but reported little change in total expenditures for that activity.

The *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* has been conducted every five years since 1955 and is one of the nation's most important



*The latest information compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shows that the number of anglers and hunters has fallen about nine percent since 2001. Photo by Tim Smalley/MN DNR*

wildlife-related recreation databases. It is considered the definitive source of information concerning participation and expenditures associated with hunting, fishing and other forms of wildlife-related recreation nationwide.

The full *Survey* – and other reports and earlier *Surveys* – can be downloaded at <http://federalasst.fws.gov/surveys/surveys.html>.

## **METS Speaker Urges Industry to Develop Better Products**

*from Trade Only Today*

Taking the hassles out of boating and making the sport more fun are key elements to expanding the recreational boating industry, said Randy Repass, founder and chairman of boating accessories retailer West Marine.

Repass, an avid sailor, was keynote speaker at the opening breakfast reception at the Marine Equipment Trade Show, which was held Nov. 13-15, 2007, at the Amsterdam Rai. METS, now in its 20th year, had 1,130 exhibitors from 37 countries.

Repass cited competition with other outdoor activities and computer games, high energy costs and environmental issues as challenges facing the recreational boating industry.

While the industry cannot control some factors, such as weather and the economy, companies can build better-quality products to make the industry stronger, he said.

Hot, new products such as navigation systems and onboard entertainment systems make boating more attractive to time-starved, fuel-conscious consumers, according to Repass.

Repass recently returned from cruising the South Pacific with his family, and says

he experienced firsthand the hassles of dealing with boat repairs on days when he had planned to be under way.

“Cruising is jokingly referred to as repairing your boat in beautiful anchorages around the world,” Repass said. “As a result of our experience, it’s obvious to me that we need to increase the ratio of fun to hassle.”

## **NTSB Highlights Progress on Recreational Boating Safety, Outlines Steps for Continued Improvement**

Recent actions taken by the marine industry and state legislatures to advance boating safety are moving the industry in the right direction, but additional measures are required to further reduce recreational boating fatalities, injuries and accidents, maintains National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chairman Mark V. Rosenker.

In his address at the Marine Retailers Association of America (MRAA) annual conference in Las Vegas on Nov. 27, Chairman Rosenker focused on the use of personal flotation devices, which is on the NTSB’s Most Wanted list of safety recommendations, and the safety of sole state passenger vessels.



Following a brief summary of safety recommendations issued by the NTSB in March 2006 after a Board-sponsored 2004 forum on personal flotation devices, Rosenker called upon attendees to continue to “work to change the boating culture to better accept the wearing of life jackets.”

Rosenker commended the MRAA for issuing a public policy statement in September 2007 in support of boating safety education in every state. Rosenker said, “In 2008, we are looking for safety legislative initiatives in California, Maine, Massachusetts, Utah, North Carolina and Minnesota.”

Finally, Rosenker summarized the results of the October 2006 forum on the topic of sole state passenger vessels that covered issues such as vessel certification and safety inspection, passenger and crew safety, and marine accident reporting. Chairman Rosenker said the Board will “continue to follow this issue closely” and will encourage all states to improve and strengthen their oversight guidelines for this class of vessels.

The full text of Chairman Rosenker’s speech is available at [www.nts.gov/speeches/rosenker/mvr071127.html](http://www.nts.gov/speeches/rosenker/mvr071127.html).

## **Several States Join Initiative to Increase Fishing License Sales**

Twenty states have signed on to participate in a direct-mail marketing initiative, a program designed by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) to increase participation in the sport and generate awareness of the connection between fishing license sales and conservation efforts. Only 10 open spots remain for states to participate.

The product includes direct-mail templates, instructions to implement a direct-mail campaign and marketing assistance from RBFF. A workshop for states that will implement the program was held Jan. 16-17, 2008, in Dallas, Texas.

## About RBFF

RBFF is a nonprofit organization established in 1998 to increase participation in recreational angling and boating. RBFF helps people discover, share and protect the legacy of boating and fishing through national outreach programs including the Take Me Fishing campaign and Anglers' Legacy.

## California Passes Emissions-based Registration Law

from *Trade Only Today*

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger recently approved a new emissions-based registration law for recreational boats.

The law, which goes into effect July 1, 2008, applies to buyers or retail sellers of new boats equipped with up to a 500-hp gasoline powered sterndrive or inboard engine. Under the legislation, A.B. 695, buyers or sellers must provide the California Division of Motor Vehicles with documentation that the engine meets the appropriate emission requirements.

Engines larger than 500-hp will be required to comply starting Jan. 1, 2009.

"The NMMA worked closely with the Southern California Marine Association to lobby for passage of this new law," said Thom Dammrich, president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association, in a statement. "This demonstrates a commitment by businesses and boaters to promote clean emission technology that will offer substantial air quality benefits to boaters and the public at large."

The new law is designed to prevent Californians from buying a recreational boat outside the state with a non-compliant engine to circumvent the new emissions requirement. It is similar to the state's vehicle registration requirements.

The law has specific requirements for submitting initial applications to the California DMV. The DMV form will be revised to include instructions for the boat dealer and purchaser to check off certain boxes to self-certify that the engine complies with California emission requirements.

"The retail seller and/or purchaser will be required to submit the engine emission hang tag with the application," said John McKnight, NMMA's director of safety and environmental compliance, in a statement. "These hang tags are required by California law to be on new engines at the time of sale."

The law excludes vessels originally purchased in another state by a resident of that state who moves to California and can provide satisfactory evidence of previously having an out-of-state residence. The penalties for non-compliance under the new law are the same as the penalties for operating an unregistered vessel, which are set at a \$250 fine.

For more information, visit [www.nmma.org/government/environmental](http://www.nmma.org/government/environmental) or contact John McKnight at 202.737.9757 or [jmcknight@nmma.org](mailto:jmcknight@nmma.org).



## Discover Boating Reaching Potential Boaters

A review of the Discover Boating campaign since its inception 18 months ago indicates growth in overall brand and message awareness.

"In a short amount of time we've reached a considerable amount of potential boat buyers with our Discover Boating message and are excited to see the campaign resonating among our target audience," said Carl Blackwell, vice president of marketing and communications for the National Marine

Manufacturers Association and Grow Boating Inc.

Here are some of the findings from an advertising awareness study conducted in July by Russell Research Inc.:

- After just 18 months of the campaign, 36 percent of the target audience is aware of Discover Boating advertising. In comparison, 46 percent are aware of Go RVing after that 10-year campaign and 28 percent are aware of Take Me Fishing after three years;
- DiscoverBoating.com had 3 million visits in 2007, an increase of more than 500,000 over 2006;
- Visitors to DiscoverBoating.com spent an average of 11 minutes on the site, compared to nine minutes in 2006;
- DiscoverBoating.com generated 250,000 referrals to manufacturers' websites in 2007;
- There are now more than 20,000 links to DiscoverBoating.com from other websites;
- Discover Boating has distributed more than 95,000 Get Started in Boating DVDs since its launch 18 months ago;
- In 2007 alone, 20,000 visitors to DiscoverBoating.com requested to be contacted by manufacturers or dealers – this equates to 6,200 more potential boat buyers than in 2006;
- Of the first 34,000 people who registered for a free DVD on DiscoverBoating.com, 14 percent had already purchased a boat by July 1, 2007. ■

## Helping Boaters Prevent a Chilling Experience



Jeff Hoedt  
Chief, Boating Safety Division  
Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety  
U.S. Coast Guard

For years, boating safety professionals have been aware of the threat of hypothermia. When a boater goes into cold water, which generally includes water less than 70 degrees, the person runs the risk of significantly lowering his or her body temperature. The amount of time depends upon many variables, the temperature of the water, the clothing that the person is wearing, the person's weight and body structure, his or her position in the water, etc.

We know that if a person is suddenly immersed in cold water, the body reacts adversely. The person begins to shake; he or she loses muscle control; the thought process is slowed; the person may become unconscious; and the loss of other body functions may cause death when the body temperature lowers too much.

We've reached out to the boating community to make boaters aware of the threat of hypothermia and what they do to prevent it. They can do what it takes to stay out of the water; they can wear a life jacket to stay afloat and retain warmth should they go into the water; they can position their body a certain way to reduce heat loss if stranded in the water; and much more.

What we haven't done as much is to focus on the other effects of going into cold water – the effects that are more likely to do significant physical damage to the boating public or even kill them. Cold water can have many life-threatening effects on people prior to hypothermia setting in. Read below to learn more about this. Then, as we all become more educated on these threats, we can effectively strategize on how to prevent the potentially deadly effects of cold water immersion.

## Explaining Cold Water Immersion

By Mike Folkerts  
District Recreational Boating  
Safety Specialist  
Seventeenth Coast Guard District  
U.S. Coast Guard

Hypothermia or cold water immersion? What's the difference? Is there a difference?

Most everyone has heard about hypothermia and how deadly it can be. In the past few years, experts have separated hypothermia from cold water immersion, and for good reason. Strictly speaking, the definition of hypothermia is "...an abnormally low body temperature, often caused by prolonged exposure to cold." Cold water immersion is characterized as the event that often precedes actual hypothermia.

Dr. Gordon Giesbrecht, a professor of Thermophysiology at the University of Manitoba, when referring to a cold water immersion event said, "You should be lucky to live long enough to die of hypothermia." Dr. Giesbrecht has found that the body core temperature (as measured with an esophageal thermometer) can take an hour or more to drop below 95°F (the approximate temperature at which hypothermia begins) during a cold water immersion event.

What does this mean to the average recreational boater? In the real world, there are a huge number of variables that can determine when/if a boater will become hypothermic. Physiology, type of clothing worn, water temperature, air temperature, state of mind and even movement while in the water can accelerate hypothermia.

So, why should we be lucky to live long enough to die of hypothermia?

Because the effects of a cold water immersion event can contribute to your death well in advance of any drop of body core temperature.

Cold water (below 70° F) exists in all the contiguous states (and Alaska) at least during the winter months. Even in Hawaii, the water is barely over 70° at times, according to the National Oceanographic Data Center. To think that you are protected from the effects of cold water immersion simply because it's a warm day can be fatal. Why? Because cold water has

several immediate effects – any one of which can kill you.

You just experienced an unexpected fall overboard and experience **Initial Immersion Cold Shock**. The involuntary gasp reflex causes you to take a deep breath. If you are lucky enough to have your head above water, you might not drown immediately. You start hyperventilating as your blood pressure spikes and your heart rate jumps. If you cannot control your breathing within 60 seconds, you could suffer numbness, muscle weakness or even fainting, leading to drowning. If you have underlying cardiac disease, you may experience sudden death due to cardiac arrest or ventricular fibrillation

If you survive the initial immersion cold shock, you will progress to the second stage. This stage is called **Cold Incapacitation**. The smaller blood vessels will constrict (vasoconstriction) and keep the warmer blood closer to the body's core and organs. Rapid cooling of limb tissue causes muscular failure and you will no longer be able to swim or maintain position in the water. Most people have about 10 minutes to get out of the water. Cold incapacitation is extremely painful prior to numbness setting in.

**Hypothermia** is the third stage and usually takes about an hour, depending on the circumstances. Continued heat loss will result in the lowering of your core temperature. Violent shivering occurs during mild hypothermia and decreases as you enter moderate hypothermia. You will lose consciousness when your body's core temperature drops below 86°F. Death is imminent when your core temperature drops below 82°F in severe hypothermia.

The fourth stage is **Circum-Rescue Collapse**. Trained rescuers understand the dangers of this stage and can take preventative measures. Again, survival to stage four only means you were lucky enough to get this far, but you aren't out of the woods yet. When the rescuers



*Cold water can have many life-threatening effects long before hypothermia sets in. It's important to educate boaters about the effects of cold water immersion and urge them to wear a life jacket when boating.*  
Photo courtesy Alaska Office of Boating Safety

arrive, victims can experience a mental relaxation and decreased output of stress hormones that could result in a drop of blood pressure causing fainting and subsequent drowning. Pulling a victim out of the water in a vertical position removes the hydrostatic squeeze (water pressure) around the lower limbs and may cause blood pooling in these extremities and subsequent decreased blood pressure. There is also the danger of cooled blood hitting the heart causing a reflex cardiac arrest. Gentle handling of the victim is critical.

We already know that falls overboard and capsizing account for 57 percent of all recreational fatalities. What can be done to prevent a cold water immersion event? It's really quite simple, yet recreational boaters still struggle to factor in water temperature with their risk assessments. Recognize and avoid the bad habits that lead to falls overboard and capsizing. Minimize the risk.

The smart boater is wearing a personal flotation device. There is no time to don a life jacket prior to an unexpected fall overboard/capsizing and without the flotation provided by the life jacket, a boater may not be able to keep his or her head above water. A life jacket is invaluable to help avoid drowning with the initial immersion cold shock.

Few boaters truly understand the risks involved with a cold water immersion event. Those who've survived a dunking in cold water have respect for cold water and seldom allow themselves the opportunity for a fall overboard or capsizing. Boat Safe! Boat Responsibly! ■

Sources: United States Coast Guard Addendum to the IAMSAR Manual – COMDINST MI6130.2D  
State of Alaska Cold Injuries Guidelines – 2003 version

## Education On and Surviving Cold Water Immersion



Commodore Jesse L. Harrup Jr.  
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary  
National Recreational Boating  
Safety Directorate

In all boating safety education, including that of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the focus for many years has been on the dangers of hypothermia and what to do when in cold water and protection from hypothermia. Recent scientific research on individuals exposed to immersion in cold water shows that the first problem is surviving long enough to even worry about hypothermia.

Depending upon an individual's physiology the real risks of cold water immersion occur when falling into water below 15°C (59°F) and most generally for everyone exposed to water below 10°C (50°F).

Four generally recognized steps in the process of potentially dying from cold water immersion include: 1. Cold Shock, 2. Swimming Failure, 3. Hypothermia, and 4. Post-Rescue Collapse.

As you can see, hypothermia is the third problem encountered in cold water immersion, and our Auxiliary education focuses on having a boater survive long enough for that to be a problem.

Let's look at each of these elements further.

**1. COLD SHOCK** – When someone falls into cold water their first unconscious response is to take a large breath of air...if their face is in the water when that gasp occurs, then their chances of survival immediately diminish.

**2. SWIMMING FAILURE** – After one has been in cold water for 3-30 minutes there's a continued inability to hold one's breath, loss of coordination in the arms and legs results in a body-angle incompatible with swimming.

**3. HYPOTHERMIA** – Here is the subject on which we have historically focused and about which we are fairly familiar. It usually takes about 30 minutes in the water for real hypothermia effects to set in.

**4. POST-RESCUE COLLAPSE** – The hypothermic boater is not out of the woods after rescue. Blood pressure can drop to a

dangerously low level, inhaled water can damage tissues in the lungs, and heart problems may develop as colder blood from the extremities is released into the core of the body.

So, what is the answer to all of this? The answer is to do everything possible to prevent early death from Cold Shock and Swimming Failure and then hope that rescue takes place before hypothermia becomes irreversible. The key then, is for anyone who is on board a boat, when the water temperature is below 60°F, to wear a PFD at all times (versus having it nearby).

If a boater simply has the PFD in-hand, he or she most likely will not be able to put it on in an emergency. But if they end up in the water and are wearing a PFD, they remain upright and their head is maintained in a position so that they don't inhale water during Cold Shock. In a PFD, even if they experience swimming failure, they will continue to remain upright and can be rescued.

We also need to teach boaters that if they're ever called on to rescue someone who has fallen into cold water that the individual in the water may not even be able to grab onto anything that is thrown to them and, as a result, the use of a boat hook to get the victim to the rescuer's boat is a real likelihood.

The key to all of this is the wearing of a PFD and ideally an anti-exposure garment. It is pretty evident that if someone falls into very cold water they will drown from a combination of cold shock and swimming failure unless they are very, very lucky. No matter how fit they are, no matter how good they are at swimming, these things happen to anyone who goes into cold water, and the life-saving device that will keep them alive long enough to be rescued is a PFD. If we teach recreational boating safety anywhere where water temperatures get below 60°F, or to people who boat in such waters, it's critical that we "hammer home" the mandatory use of a PFD for everyone on board in our boating education classes and PA events. ■

# BE A LIFESAVER!



## WEAR IT!

ALWAYS WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET!



Produced under a grant from the Aquatic Resources (Wetland/Breeds)  
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[www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com](http://www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com)



## FEBRUARY 2008

19-24 **United States Power Squadrons**  
Annual Meeting  
Dallas, Texas  
888.367.8777  
www.usps.org

25-26 **Southern States Boating Law Administrators Association**  
Annual Conference  
Charleston, South Carolina  
info@nasbla.org

## MARCH 2008

10-11 **NASBLA**  
Enforcement & Training  
Committee Meeting  
Lexington, Kentucky  
859.225.9487  
chris@nasbla.org

10-14 **NASBLA**  
National Boating Accident Investigation  
& Analysis – Level 1 Training  
Springfield, Illinois  
859.225.9487  
chris@nasbla.org

12-13 **NASBLA**  
Spring BLA Workshop  
Lexington, Kentucky  
859.225.9487  
info@nasbla.org

13-16 **US Sailing**  
Spring Meeting  
Newport, Rhode Island  
401.683.0800  
www.ussailing.org

14-15 **NASBLA**  
Engineering, Reporting & Analysis  
Committee Meeting  
Lexington, Kentucky  
859.225.9487  
deb@nasbla.org

23-26 **National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs**  
Annual Meeting  
Phoenix, Arizona  
850.922.8063  
julie.jones@myfwc.com

## APRIL 2008

7-11 **NASBLA**  
National Boating Accident Investigation  
& Analysis – Level 1 Training  
Cleveland, Ohio  
859.225.9487  
chris@nasbla.org

12 **National Boating Federation**  
Spring Meeting  
Hyannis, Massachusetts  
508.394.5670

15-16 **NASBLA**  
Education & Awareness Committee Meeting  
San Diego, California  
859.225.9487  
gail@nasbla.org

16 **NASBLA**  
Waterways Management  
Subcommittee Meeting  
San Diego, California  
859.225.9487

16-18 **National Safe Boating Council & National Water Safety Congress**  
International Boating and  
Water Safety Summit  
San Diego, California  
703.361.4294 or 440.209.9805

25-27 **National Boating Safety Advisory Council**  
Spring Meeting  
Rockland, Maine  
202.372.1061  
jeffrey.a.ludwig@uscg.mil

27-29 **American Boating Congress**  
Washington, D.C.  
www.nmma.org/abc

## MAY 2008

12-16 **NASBLA**  
Spring Executive Board Meeting  
Washington, D.C.  
859.225.9487  
info@nasbla.org

12-16 **NASBLA**  
National Boating Accident Investigation  
& Analysis – Level 1 Training  
Helena, Montana  
859.225.9487  
chris@nasbla.org

13 **National Safe Boating Week**  
Congressional Reception  
Washington, D.C.

17-23 **North American Safe Boating Week**

## JUNE 2008

3-6 **Western States Boating Administrators Association**  
Annual Conference  
Juneau, Alaska  
info@nasbla.org

27-July 2 **National Sheriffs' Association**  
Annual Conference  
Indianapolis, Indiana

## JULY 2008

14-18 **NASBLA**  
Summer Executive Board Meeting  
Location TBA  
859.225.9487  
info@nasbla.org

## AUGUST 2008

16-19 **American Society of Association Executives**  
Annual Meeting  
San Diego, California  
www.asaecenter.org

## SEPTEMBER 2008

2-7 **United States Power Squadrons**  
Governing Board Meeting  
Detroit, Michigan  
888.367.8777  
www.usps.org

6-10 **NASBLA**  
Annual Conference  
Clearwater Beach, Florida  
859.225.9487  
info@nasbla.org

## OCTOBER 2008

16-19 **US Sailing**  
Fall Meeting  
St. Petersburg, Florida  
401.683.0800  
www.ussailing.org