

The logo for the Small Craft Advisory (SCA) is displayed in large, blue, sans-serif capital letters. The letter 'A' features a green triangle as its right-hand side. The logo is set against a white rectangular background that is part of a larger image showing a blurred classroom or meeting room with people seated and a person standing at a podium in the background.

# SCA

 small craft advisory

- **Apply for Seal of Safe Boating Today**
- **Investigating Accidents on the Water**
- **Teaching Instructors to Teach**

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## ABOUT THE COVER

Boating safety education, whether it takes place in the classroom, at home or on the water, helps save lives. Agencies throughout the country continue improving the delivery of boating safety information..  
*istock.com photo*



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

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## EXECUTIVE EDITOR

John Johnson

## MANAGING EDITOR

Ron Sarver

## EDITOR

Kimberly Jenkins

## ART DIRECTOR

Michelle Huber

## CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

Sam Lynch

## EDITORIAL OFFICES

1500 Leestown Road, Suite 330

Lexington KY 40511

Phone: 859.225.9487

Fax: 859.231.6403

E-mail: [editor@nasbla.org](mailto:editor@nasbla.org)

© Small Craft Advisory (ISSN: 1066-2383) Published bimonthly by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, 1500 Leestown Rd, Suite 330, Lexington, KY 40511 (six issues). Subscription is \$12 annually. Contact NASBLA for permission to reprint articles, 859.225.9487. Send change of address to Small Craft Advisory, 1500 Leestown Road, Suite 330, Lexington KY 40511.



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## NASBLA Continues Striving to Provide a Better Boating Experience



John Fetterman  
NASBLA President



John Johnson  
NASBLA Executive Director

Another annual conference has come and gone, a new fiscal year has begun, and we find ourselves looking back on the first of these columns from last fall to see if we did what we set out to do. We think we did, but our members and our partners have the final word on that.

We began the year talking about transitions and how important it is to move seamlessly from one project or conference year to the next. It's about spiraling upward as an association on an annual basis, and the annual conference is where we measure our progress. Yet the conference is also a great venue to chart our course for the coming year. This year, we leaned the conference toward the future more than ever before by building in extra time for policy committee members to brainstorm on committee charges and agendas for the FY09 policy season.

By engaging new committee chairs early on and by challenging committee members to get started on next year's charges now, we left Clearwater Beach with a much clearer picture of our near-term policy development priorities and how we should organize the committees to achieve them. Given the significant overhaul we made in our committee structure this year, we will use the constructive feedback and insights we gained to further refine and execute a truly year-round policy development process. Look for the new fiscal year's committee work to begin in earnest by November or early December.

NASBLA committees are the policy engine of our association. In the year just ended, the collective output of our committee work was remarkable. Given nearly 65 charges to address for this rotation, our committees delivered more than 55 policy products this year that will positively influence the legislative, regulatory and policy-making actions of the state boating programs both next year, and in many cases, for years to come.

The sheer volume of policy recommendations emanating from our hard-working committees in 2008 makes it easy to overlook some very important outcomes and accomplishments. The education and outreach committee promulgated a milestone product with the adoption of new specialized paddlesports education standards that will shape the content of canoe and kayak

safety courses throughout North America. Likewise, working closely with our friends at the National Transportation Safety Board, the law enforcement and training committee brought to fruition a revamped and significantly modernized Model Act on Charter Boat Safety that will support state policy-making efforts to close the gap regarding charter boat safety issues.

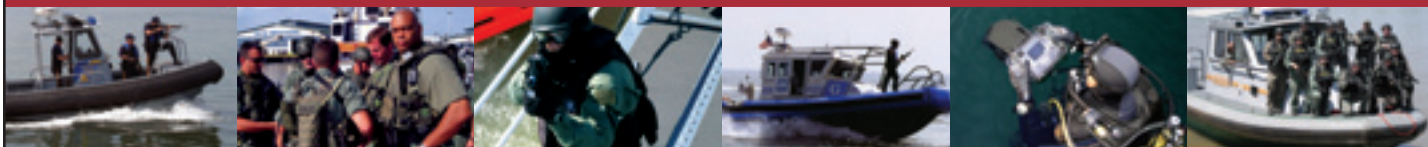
The enforcement and training committee also crafted a key policy position reaffirming NASBLA's stance on mandated life jacket wear for all marine patrol officers. The men and women of maritime law enforcement are our greatest assets both in injury prevention and emergency response, and this policy position will help us continue to champion officer safety and modeling good boating behavior for the public. The boating public will also benefit from our governmental affairs and administration committee initiatives thanks to the body's adoption of a joint statement of consensus principles on reauthorization of the Sport Fish and Boating Trust Fund between NASBLA and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA).

We tried very hard this year – at all levels of the organization – to engage as many key players as possible, and perhaps none is more important than the emerging relationship and partnership we have enjoyed with AFWA throughout the consensus development process this summer. Acting on the counsel and best wishes of the former American League of Anglers and Boaters and based on our own long-term interest in working more closely with the fish and wildlife agency directors, NASBLA's leadership team has gained a new level of appreciation for the hard work, dedication and commitment our fellow association of state officials brings to sustaining the trust fund. As we move forward together in engaging more boating and fishing coalition leaders, there is a renewed sense of unity and common purpose in working cooperatively and collaboratively to satisfy the needs of all trust fund beneficiaries, particularly in these turbulent economic times.

The new AFWA-NASBLA relationship is a visible sign of our continuing commitment to

continued on page 23





## A COMMUNITY WHERE NONE HAS EXISTED BEFORE ...

**MARINE TACTICAL** was launched in May of 2006 with the purpose of providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among marine law enforcement professionals.

Both the magazine and the website provide a wide variety of topics relevant to their shared mission and include contact information at the conclusion of each article to encourage more specific agency-to-agency exchange.

**MARINE TACTICAL** creates a community where none has existed before - bringing agencies, expertise, and ideas together - which is why our motto to every reader is very clear ...

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is Our Mission"***

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# Iowa Submerged by Flood



Iowa DNR photos







In late May severe weather moved through the Midwest, bringing tornados, torrential rains and flooding to the area. Historic floods put more than one third of Iowa under water by mid-June, resulting in what has been called the worst natural disaster in Iowa's history.

The flooding led to evacuations of thousands of homes. Flooding also forced the closure of an extensive number of bridges and roads throughout the eastern half of the state, including portions of Interstate 80 and Interstate 380. These closures affected many more people than those who directly experienced the floods by nearly completely disrupting normal traffic patterns and causing enormous detours. Rail traffic was also seriously compromised as the water washed out bridges and embankments.

Numerous water patrol officers with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources were involved with rescues and evacuations from homes, hospitals and care centers; transporting personnel and supplies to care centers, fire departments and other locations; conducting law enforcement, patrols, and traffic control; assisting road departments and utility companies with inspections of facilities via boat, dike inspections via boat, and environmental/pollution inspections and assessments via boat. Several officers pulled 16- to 18-hour shifts.

Officers also had to rescue several boaters who viewed the high water as a favorable boating environment. The strong current and heavy rains have created numerous hazards from debris washed in from the flooding. The DNR continually warned boaters to avoid flood-affected rivers and reservoirs until the water receded. "Many people do not realize how quickly and easily a boat caught on a snag can be rolled over when the water is moving this fast," said Rod Slings, recreational safety supervisor for DNR.

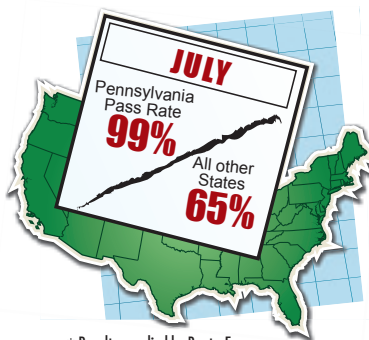
The flooding was so bad that even fish had to be rescued. Nearly 100 catfish were rescued from a tailwater area. As the water receded, the fish were trapped in a pool. The fish averaged between 30 and 40 pounds with some estimated at tipping the scales at close to 60 pounds. It took four DNR law enforcement personnel five to six hours to move the catfish to the safety of the Des Moines River. ■

# PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTS NEW GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE COURSES!

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) recently adopted new 'delivery standards' for internet courses serving Pennsylvania residents. Under the new safety course standards, the course must focus on a modular system that includes required study time, mandatory end-of-chapter quizzes and a final examination.

**3 Hours** of Required Study: Information is presented to students in 150 individual pages. Each page has a particular time limit ranging from 30 seconds to 2 minutes. The timings vary depending on the topic. All course content is narrated and students may proceed to the next page once the narration is complete. End-of-Chapter Quizzes: Once a student has completed the required study time for a particular chapter, the student may challenge the 10 question end-of-chapter quiz. A score of 7 out of 10 (70%) is needed to proceed to the next chapter.

## "34% HIGHER PASS RATE!"



\* Results supplied by BoaterExam

"Obviously, this is a much different course process than most states currently employ," explained Kerry Moher, vice president, BoaterExam.com. "But, I think it's going to catch on. Feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive and test scores are the highest I've ever seen." Only a few

course providers are offering boating safety courses under these new guidelines, including BoaterExam.com. The BoaterExam.com's course content, as approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators is presented in a narrative fashion with more than 300 detailed illustrations, and is followed by review questions and discussion points. Students also have access to BoaterExam.com's industry

## "Test scores (in Pennsylvania) are the highest I've ever seen"

Kerry Moher, BoaterExam.com

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## CHAPTERS

1. The Boat & Safe Operation  
STUDY | QUIZ
2. Boating Equipment  
STUDY | QUIZ
3. Trip Planning and Preparation  
STUDY | QUIZ
4. Emergency Preparedness  
STUDY | QUIZ
5. Navigation  
STUDY | QUIZ
6. Other Water Activities & the Marine Environment  
STUDY | QUIZ



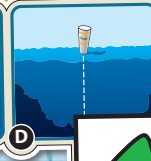


**3 HOURS REQUIRED STUDY TIME**



**10**

**QUESTION END OF CHAPTER QUIZ  
STUDENTS NEED A MINIMUM OF 70%  
TO MOVE ON**



**6**

**END OF CHAPTER  
QUIZZES**



**NARRATED COURSE  
MATERIAL**

**CHAPTER #3  
Trip Planning  
and Preparation**



**60**

**QUESTION FINAL  
EXAM, MINIMUM OF 80%  
TO RECIEVE A PASS**

CHAPTERS		
1. The Boat & Safe Operation	STUDY   QUIZ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Boating Equipment	STUDY   QUIZ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Trip Planning and Preparation	STUDY   QUIZ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Emergency Preparedness	STUDY   QUIZ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Navigation	STUDY   QUIZ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Other Water Activities & the Marine Environment	STUDY   QUIZ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**6**

**CHAPTERS**



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By Terry Rau

When can a boating accident end in something other than pain, grief and, at best, a lot of hassle? When accident investigators can come up with something that will help avoid similar accidents in the future – that's when, according to a Missouri State Water Patrol veteran.

Capt. Gary Haupt, District 3 Commander of the Missouri State Water Patrol, has been investigating and reconstructing accidents continuously

officers. His lesson plan and reference materials, however, are still utilized in the boating accident and drowning investigation course taught to new recruits.

Today Haupt is supervisor of the reconstruction team for the Missouri State Water Patrol. He also consults with other investigators regarding boating accidents nationwide. He's become the Water Patrol's "accident guru" and never misses a chance to proclaim the virtues of safe boating. He also spends a lot of time on the road working for the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), for which he teaches accident investigation courses across the country.

"People actually doing the investigations are teaching the [NASBLA] course," Haupt said. "The officers in attendance at those courses want to hear real-life scenarios. We also try to keep our course relevant and provide the most up-to-date information available."

NASBLA is a national nonprofit organization that works to develop public policy for recreational boating safety. The organization represents the recreational boating authorities of all 50 states and the U.S. territories. It offers a variety of resources, including training, model acts, education standards and publications.

In 1988 with grant monies from the U.S. Coast Guard, NASBLA worked with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) to develop a course. Now, some 20 years later, accident investigators can take part in two courses.

The Level 1 Comprehensive Course is just that, comprehensive. It is designed to provide investigating officers with all the tools they need to completely and accurately investigate a recreational boating accident.

The Level 2 Advanced Course is centered on accident reconstruction. NASBLA has six, two-boat collisions on-site for hands-on examination by the students. The advanced course also features information provided by guest instructors with



*This fire at the Lake of the Ozarks in mid-Missouri was caused by a burst fuel tank on shore.*  
Missouri State Water Patrol photos

during his 30-year career with the Water Patrol. His first 11 years were spent at mid-Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks where, unfortunately, he received a lot of firsthand, hands-on experience in investigating boating accidents. There were eight officers at Lake of the Ozarks when he was there. Now there are more than 20.

During those first years with the Water Patrol he investigated a "significant number of accidents" and "gained a lot of experience." After only two years at the Lake of the Ozarks, Haupt became an accident instructor for the Water Patrol. He developed a lesson plan and collected reference materials. He is no longer the accident instructor for his department but has turned those reins over to younger

specialized knowledge and experience in various investigative techniques.

New regulations and changes in existing regulations can come from accurate investigations, according to NASBLA.

NASBLA-trained investigators learned most boating accidents involved open motorboats under 20 feet. Investigators learned if boats stayed afloat, victims could hang on and lives would be saved. As a result of these findings, the U.S. Coast Guard required boat manufacturers to build level flotation, a buoyant material, into boats to help keep them afloat. Accident fatality numbers have decreased, according to the NASBLA website.

Boat manufacturers also review investigations, thus making safer boats. Things learned in accident investigations can also be used in boat inspections. A defect may be corrected before an accident can occur.

Haupt brings to the NASBLA courses his experience as someone who has investigated a wide range of different accidents. He specializes in boat collisions. There have been a "significant number of fatalities and drownings" in these collisions, he said.

Six years ago Haupt persuaded the Missouri State Water Patrol to have reconstruction teams "like the Missouri State Highway Patrol utilizes for serious vehicle crash investigations."



A reconstruction team of two officers can be deployed to supplement an investigating officer. The team looks for details while the investigating officer looks for witnesses, conducts interviews, etc. Then, they get back together, compare their notes and work together.

"It's another layer of thoroughness we didn't have before," Haupt said. "I think we (the Missouri State Water Patrol) are at the leading edge of this concept, but other states are also establishing reconstruction teams or assigning specialized officers to assist in the investigation of serious boating accidents.

"Boating accidents don't leave the indicators a vehicle crash can leave such as skid marks. There are many technical aspects to a car crash not found in a boating accident. There is very detailed research for road collisions that can result in critical information for investigators," Haupt explained.

"We don't have that. It's a fluid environment that doesn't leave any lasting indicators. A boat will float off, sink or be driven off. Boats behave so differently than cars in collisions. The designs of boats make them go airborne and jump out of the water so you have deflection. It's difficult to have good indicators," said Haupt.

"Boats are made of fiberglass or fiberglass composite. There's lots of crush analysis that can be done on cars that cannot be done on boats. Fiberglass is very resilient and it's difficult because there is no crush analysis we can do," he added.



*The operator of this runabout on Lake of the Ozarks was watching his skier rather than where he was headed. Fortunately, no one was injured in the collision.*



*This 26-foot cruiser ran aground on Table Rock Lake in Missouri in July 2005, resulting in one death and many injuries. The operator was convicted of boating manslaughter.*

When two boats collide, "someone is being negligent," Haupt said matter-of-factly.

"People are recreating, not paying attention, get complacent, run too fast at night. It's difficult at night. There are an increasing number of boats out at night. Almost every lake is getting more developed," he said.

Challenges of a boating accident, according to Haupt, include the fluid environment, different construction and materials used in boats, and lack of evidence such as skid marks and crash analysis. He also said many times investigators are unable to determine the speed of a boat or boats at the time of the accident.

What investigators can look for are transfer marks such as residue of gel coat, scratch evidence, prop cuts. Metal parts on a boat give investigators better indicators, Haupt said.

He noted much has been learned "purely from development of techniques in investigating accidents."

As an example, he said he teaches about lights.

"Were lights on or off at the time of the accident? That could be really pertinent. Was it a contributing factor? If the bulb was lit and broken due to the collision, we'll see a powdery residue. We can also look for a distortion of the filament. The filament actually stretches. We know now to pull lights for evidence," he said.

Officers are also more aware of new technology that may assist in their accident investigations. Data may be extracted from onboard GPS devices or from the "black boxes" (electronic control units) found on newer marine engines. These devices and methods for extraction are thoroughly discussed in the NASBLA Advanced Course.

"One of our missions," is to gather data, he said. This data is submitted to a national database and the U.S. Coast Guard collects statistics to see trends.

"We have mandatory reporting to the Coast Guard," Haupt added.

He said the Water Patrol likes to have a proactive approach in boating while intoxicated, a major contributor to boating accidents. The Missouri State Water Patrol is one of the top agencies in the U.S. in boating while intoxicated (BWI) arrests, leading the nation in five of the last seven years for BWI arrests, he noted.

"I'm sure we are on the cutting edge in Missouri, but we're not alone. I've traveled throughout the United States while instructing for NASBLA, and it is obvious that most agencies involved in marine law enforcement are becoming more proactive on enforcement and are providing more training for their officers to help them conduct more thorough accident investigations," Haupt concluded. "We are all trying to do a better job."

*Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the June 2007 issue of HeartLand Boating, mid-America's premier boating magazine. The article's text has been updated for reprint with the author's permission. ■*

# Seal of Safe Boating Practices Gets a New Look

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators recently unveiled a brand-new logo and brochure for its Seal of Safe Boating Practices.

The NASBLA Seal of Safe Boating Practices Endorsement of Boating Media was the brainchild of the late Leroy Orvis, past NASBLA education committee chair and Nebraska boating law administrator. It is intended to encourage producers to create media that helps further boating safety and promote safe boating practices without having to meet the higher standard of a NASBLA-approved boating course.

Since its inception in 1999, NASBLA has awarded the Seal of Safe Boating Practices to entities such as the Boat U.S. Foundation, Kawasaki Motors Corporation, Tread Lightly! Inc., Alan Madison Productions, and the states of Alaska, Arizona, Tennessee, Maryland, Minnesota, Utah and Washington.

"We'd really like to have more applications for the Seal," said Tim Smalley, chair of the Seal of Safe Boating subcommittee. "There must be tons of eligible productions being created by NASBLA associates, state members and others, but we need to hear about them. We would especially like some fishing TV show producers to apply," he added.

Applicants for the Seal complete a short form and submit it along with three copies of the material they would like endorsed to Gail Kulp at NASBLA headquarters. Gail forwards the materials to a subcommittee, currently comprised of Tim Smalley, Minnesota; Dan Martin, Pennsylvania; and Mark Brown, Oklahoma. Their recommendation goes to Education and Awareness Committee chair, Fred Messmann, and he sends the producer an approval letter along with the official Seal of Safe Boating Practices logo that may be displayed on the finished print or electronic media.

A brochure with an application form for the NASBLA Seal of Safe Boating Practices may be downloaded from [www.NASBLA.org](http://www.NASBLA.org) by rolling the cursor over "Boater Education" on the menu bar and then clicking on "Seal of Safe Boating."

NASBLA Education Director Gail Kulp will soon be mailing out printed copies of the brochure to each state education coordinator and NASBLA associate member. Anyone wishing more brochures may contact her via e-mail at [gail@nasbla.org](mailto:gail@nasbla.org).

"NASBLA is committed to encouraging the creation of electronic and print media that demonstrate safe boating operations," said Fred Messmann. "To ensure that only the highest quality information that portrays appropriate safety considerations is endorsed, a set of guidelines needs to be followed in order for the media to qualify for the NASBLA Seal of Safe Boating Practices," he added.

## Guidelines for the NASBLA Seal of Safe Boating:

- It may not be a boating course.
- Show everyone on board boats wearing a life jacket that is properly sized and appropriate for the activity.
- Boats and equipment used should be in optimal condition.
- Show safe body positions for operator and passengers.
- Show boats operating in a safe manner.
- Do not show alcohol consumption.
- Safe boating practices should be highlighted. All professional stunts or competitive practices should be identified as such and should be followed by a disclaimer. ■

NASBLA Seal of Safe

**Boating**  
Practices



APPLICATION FOR

**NASBLA  
ENDORSEMENT  
of BOATING MEDIA**



# Tragedy Imparts *Impetus for Improvement*

By Kimberly Jenkins

Losing a child is one of the worst tragedies a parent can endure. Parents simply aren't supposed to outlive their children. However, we all know that life is not fair.

Despite the loss, the heartbreak, the endless "what ifs," life

goes on. In some cases, some good even comes out of the tragedy. Take, for example, what the Williams family did after losing their beloved Kyle.

His parents describe Kyle Williams as "one of the kindest, most caring young men you could ever hope to meet. He was an awesome brother to his sister and brother, a great friend, and an outstanding first baseman. He had a contagious laugh and a smile that could light up a room."

Sadly, in August 2004, Kyle was killed in a boating accident just one month shy of his thirteenth birthday.

Although suffering tremendously from their loss, the Williams family was determined to do what they could to save other families from such pain.

"It's one of those things that never goes away," said Sue Williams, Kyle's mother. "We don't want to see it on the news again where it's a repeat of what happened."

At the time of Kyle's accident, Oklahoma law stated that a person had to be at least 12 years old to operate a personal watercraft, but there were no additional educational requirements. Following the loss of Kyle, the family became very active in boating safety in Oklahoma and helped push for a more stringent boating education law.

Their dedication paid off.

"Having the Williams family testify about their loss before the Senate helped put a name on boating safety," said Trooper Kurt McKean with the Oklahoma Water Patrol. "Sharing their real-life tragedy really brought it home to the lawmakers."

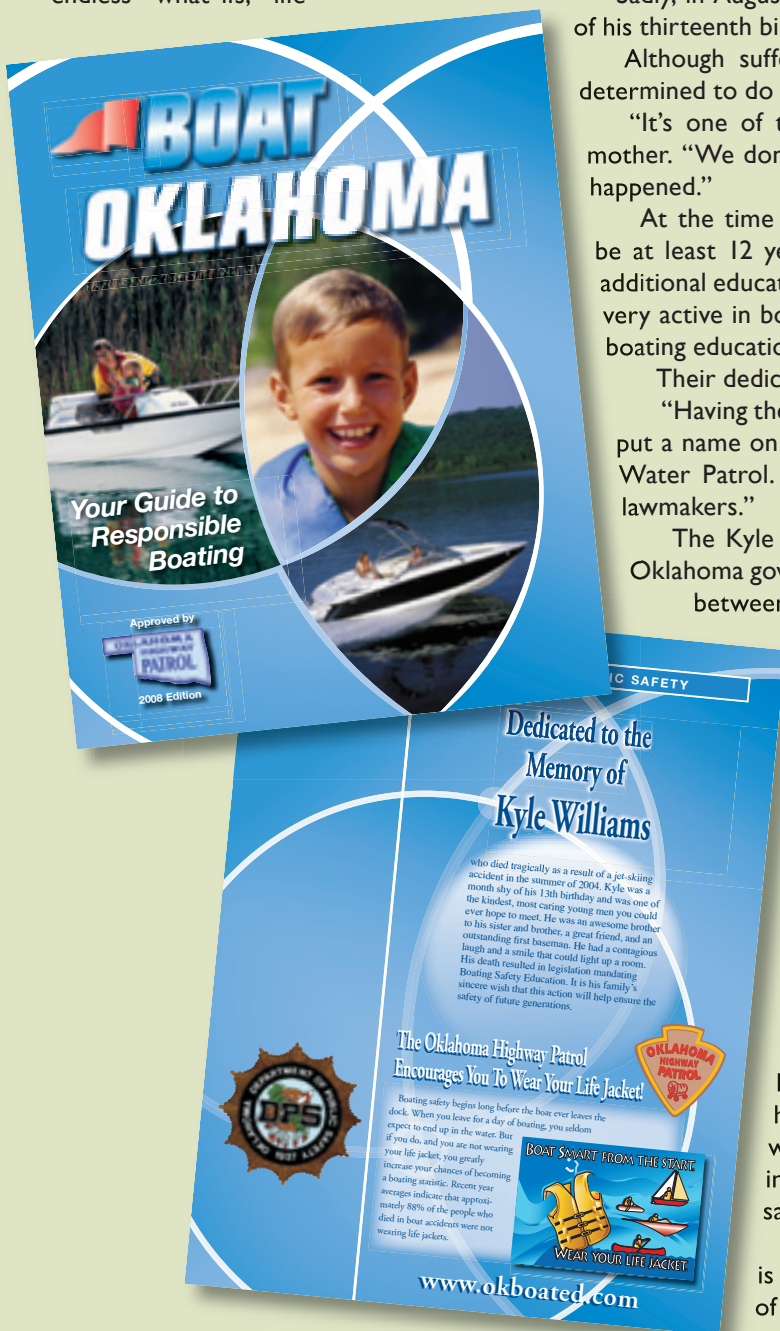
The Kyle Williams Boating Safety Education Act was signed into law by Oklahoma governor Brad Henry in June 2006. The legislation requires children between 12 and 16 years old to complete a boater safety education course before they can operate a vessel. It also requires that they be supervised by an adult while they operate a vessel.

"[The Williams'] activism was probably the single most important factor in getting the boating safety education bill passed in Oklahoma," said Capt. George Green, boating law administrator for Oklahoma.

"To further help spread their message, the Williams family graciously gave permission to use Kyle's photograph on the cover of Boat Oklahoma, the state's boating education student manual, said Capt. Green. "The message on the back of the manual was written by the Williams family. Kyle's been gone for almost four years now, and I think you can still feel their anguish when you read their message."

"I want to thank the Williams family and so many others who have come to the Capitol to share their painful stories in the hopes that we can prevent another tragedy," said Sen. Todd Lamb, who is a neighbor of the Williams family and represented them in the Senate in the months leading up to passage of the boating safety bill.

The memory of the tragedy is always with the Williams, and it is something they hope other families can avoid through the passage of the Kyle Williams Boating Safety Education Act. ■



# Training *Education Instructor Trainers*

By Gail R. Kulp, NASBLA Education Director

Imagine trying to teach everything you know about boating safety to a student who is 15 years old. She would much rather be outside enjoying the beautiful weather than sitting in your classroom all day long on a Saturday. But, if she doesn't pass a course, she won't be able to rent a boat when her family goes on vacation next month.

At the same time, another one of your students is a 75-year-old man. As he walks into the classroom, he informs you that he has been boating longer than you've been alive. In fact, he wouldn't even be here if he wasn't required to take a course in order to get a discount on his boating insurance for the new 22-foot cabin cruiser he just bought.

Just in case this sounds easy, realize that you have only eight hours to convey all of the necessary information to help keep these boaters alive and safe while enjoying our nation's waterways – all while teaching the content in a way



*During the recent train-the-trainer course for boating safety education instructors, Virgil Chambers, executive director of the National Safe Boating Council, discussed how to be an effective teacher. Staff photos*

and Emily King, education manager, both with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Watercraft, hosted the course at their training center at Alum Creek State Park.

The Instructor Training Courses were originally implemented by the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) in 1999. At that time, the National Boating Education Standards were newly adopted and the NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators) Course Approval Process had been recently established to assure that all approved boating safety courses met or exceeded the minimum standards for course content. The National Boating Education Standards dictate the content of the course and establish a number of testing requirements; however, there are no standardized national requirements for how to teach the material in a classroom setting.

Virgil Chambers, executive director of the NSBC, recognized that there needed to be some guidance as to how instructors should be presenting the material. "The instructors should be trained in understanding what the standards mean and how to consistently present them," he said. "They should also be able to take into account how people learn and what educational process is needed to be effective in the classroom. That's what this training is all about."

The NSBC Instructor Training Course focuses on the NASBLA standards and provides the proper interpretation of each standard for instructors who will be teaching the content. The course also provides

that is both exciting and relevant to their boating experiences.

Thankfully, there are dedicated boating safety instructors who are willing to take on this challenge. And, thanks to a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard, there will soon be more qualified boating safety instructors to add to those ranks.

A Train-the-Trainer Course for boating safety education instructors was recently held in Delaware, Ohio, July 15-17. Fourteen candidates from eight states were accepted from the pool of applicants to attend the course. Pamela Dillon, boating law administrator,



*During the recent NSBC Instructor Training Course, participants discussed the NASBLA standards and the proper interpretation of each.*



opportunities for growth, professional development and recognition, as well as access to sample lesson plans and other instructional resources. All of this has helped states and organizations identify and recruit qualified and capable boating education instructors.

To help make instructors more proficient at what they do, a third day has been added to the previous two-day instructor training course. This added day includes information to help instructors know how to write and use student performance objectives and goals when planning boating safety courses.

The additional day also allows for increased time and focus on the importance of the Navigation Rules. While the number of boaters receiving safety education is on the rise nationwide, the percentage of accidents caused by Navigation Rules violations has stayed roughly the same since 2000. Questions covering the Navigation Rules occupy 20 to 30 percent of the final exam in a basic boating safety course. These are also the most frequently missed questions for students due to the difficulty of understanding the topic. Therefore, specific focus has been added to the instructor training course to help instructors learn the concepts inherent in the Navigation Rules so that they can, in turn, be able to better explain the



*Instructor candidates learned innovative ways to incorporate inflatable life jackets into their lessons. Pictured from left to right, Brandi Bradford (Texas), David Windsor (Indiana), Warren Steffen (Texas), Ed Huntsman (Arizona) and Virgil Chambers (NSBC).*

information to their students. Diagrams, models, scenarios and other activities are all included in the newly updated course.

The need for additional instructor training is even more essential given that more states have enacted or are in the process of enacting legislation to require mandatory boating education and/or operator licensure for the boaters in those states. In response, NASBLA and the NSBC identified the expansion of boating instructor credentialing as one of the top priorities for advancing and standardizing boating safety education in general and elevating the level of professionalism among boating educators and instructors in particular. The resulting Train-the-Trainer course was developed to expand the Instructor Training Course and make it available to more people throughout the country.

The three-day Train-the-Trainer course focused on presenting the best practices in teaching methodologies, lesson planning techniques and the basics of effective test writing to the instructor candidates. The course also provided the candidates with an understanding of the principles and qualities of an effective instructor.

Emily King, one of the Train-the-Trainer course instructors, observed that, "The energy and enthusiasm of the instructor candidates was remarkable. Each person brought a number of unique and innovative methods for teaching boating safety to this course and everyone had the opportunity to learn from each other."

Graduates of the Train-the-Trainer Course have agreed to host at least one NSBC Instructor Training Course over the next two years as well as teach at least one additional course during the same two years. As of press time, New York, Idaho, Arizona, Texas, Indiana and Florida were all considering possible dates and locations for the NSBC Instructor Training Course in 2009. ■



*Doug Golding, retired Ohio Watercraft Officer and sailing entrepreneur, created a set of magnetic cutout boats that can be used to demonstrate the Navigation Rules or correct docking procedures.*

# Agencies Team Up to *Improve Safety*

Across the nation this summer, boating officers and highway patrol officers joined forces to conduct safety patrols and checkpoints.

The Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP) worked with officers from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPd) this July Fourth holiday weekend to crack down on impaired drivers on the road, as well as the water.

"All too often, alcohol is part of the celebration, but a designated driver is not," stated THP Colonel Mike Walker during a news conference announcing the partnership. "Our message is simple – drunk driving is against the law. It's a crime, whether you are driving your car or driving your boat."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), every 39 minutes and nearly 40 times a day, someone in the United States dies in an impaired driving-related crash. The Fourth

of July is the second most deadly holiday period—just behind New Year's. During the 2007 Independence Day holiday, seven people were killed on Tennessee roadways. Four (57%) of those fatalities occurred in alcohol-related crashes.

Alcohol and/or drug use is a leading factor in many boating accidents, as well. Last year, it was a contributing factor in 10.6 percent of Tennessee's boating crashes. That is up from 6.3 percent in 2006.

"Boating accidents on Tennessee waterways dropped in 2007 from the previous year, but it's disturbing to know that the number of alcohol-related crashes increased," said TWRA's Chief of Boating, Ed Carter. "Operating a boat impaired, like driving a car impaired, is illegal. If you are going to drink, make sure you have a designated driver, and that includes one to get you home safe from the lake or river."

Alcohol-related boating accidents are also a prime concern for Tennessee's northern neighbor Kentucky. Although state law prohibits boat operators and passengers from drinking alcohol while on the water, Kentucky has more than double the national average of alcohol-related boating fatalities. The state ranks only 28th in the nation for number of registered boats, but ranks eighth for alcohol-related boating deaths.

"Nationally, alcohol-related boating fatalities have decreased from one in four to one in five," said Sgt. John Anderson, boating education coordinator for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. "Meanwhile, alcohol continues to be a contributing factor in one out of every two boating fatalities in Kentucky."

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' Law Enforcement Division and the Kentucky State Police joined forces to keep the waters and highways of Kentucky safe.



*This summer, highway patrol and police department officers teamed up with officers with wildlife and boating to step up enforcement efforts.*  
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency photos/Betsy Woods





*In addition to keeping an eye out for unsafe boaters, officers made routine stops to conduct vessel safety checks as well as to provide boaters with some face-to-face interaction.*

"We are proud to team up with Kentucky State Police again this Fourth of July holiday to step up our enforcement efforts and keep the weekend safe for boaters, drivers and all Kentuckians," said Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Jonathan Gassett during a press conference prior to the holiday weekend. "By working together, our officers have a greater presence on the waters and roads of Kentucky."

Three people died in boating accidents during 2007's Fourth of July holiday, and alcohol was suspected in two of those deaths. Unfortunately, those who operate a boat under the influence often end up behind the wheel of a vehicle. In Kentucky last year, police made 41,026 arrests for driving under the influence and reported that 179 people died in alcohol-related wrecks.

As part of the stepped-up Fourth of July holiday enforcement, officers in both Tennessee and Kentucky conducted dozens of sobriety and driver license checkpoints. The goal of the checkpoints was to maintain high visibility and either deter motorists from driving impaired or get drunk drivers off the roadways.

The Tennessee Highway Patrol also participated in the Combined Accident Reduction Effort (C.A.R.E.), running throughout the holiday weekend. The initiative, conducted during major summer

holiday periods, focused on aggressive drivers, impaired drivers and drivers who did not use their safety belt. In addition, on July 5, Troopers teamed up with law enforcement agencies from across the country for "C.A.R.E. Across America." Beginning at 8 a.m. that day, a Trooper or law enforcement officer was stationed every 15 miles along Interstate 40. The campaigns were funded by grants provided through the Governor's Highway Safety Office.

Kentucky Fish & Wildlife and the Kentucky State Police have teamed for the past two summers in the Keep it a Safe Summer (K.I.S.S.) campaign, which combats boating under the influence and driving under the influence. In addition to keeping impaired boaters and drivers off Kentucky's waters and roads, officers with both agencies enforced life jacket and seatbelt laws. They were also on the lookout for reckless boat operation and speeding violations.

"We know that drunk boaters on the water often become drunk drivers on the highway," said Col. Robert Milligan, director of Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's Law Enforcement Division. "By joining forces with Kentucky State Police, we are more likely to stop impaired boaters and drivers before they become a danger to others." ■

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## Alaska's Kids Don't Float Saves Two More Lives

Kids Don't Float, a statewide injury prevention program in Alaska, had its sixteenth and seventeenth saves on Aug. 15, 2008.

Two boys capsized a canoe on chilly ocean waters near Angoon. Both boys were wearing life jackets provided through the Kids Don't Float life jacket loaner board. However, one of the boys was panicking because he did not know how to swim. Two local men swam out to the boys and helped them back to shore.

Now in its 10th year, the Kids Don't Float (KDF) program has spent over \$300,000 on life jackets at more than 466 locations around the state. The program was developed to address Alaska's high child and youth drowning rate. A collaborative effort between several state and federal agencies, organizations, and local grass-roots sponsors, KDF includes both a life jacket loaner station component and an educational component.

For more information about the program, visit the Alaska Office of Boating Safety website at <http://www.alaskaboatingsafety.org/>.



*Celebrating its 10th year, the Kids Don't Float program has saved nearly 20 lives.*

Alaska Department of Natural Resources photo

## Kentucky Boating Fatalities Lowest in Five Years

As of August 26, five people have lost their lives so far in 2008 on the state's waters, making boating fatalities for 2008 the lowest at this point of the season in the last five years.

"These lower statistics are what we love to see," said Sgt. John Anderson, boating education coordinator for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. "This trending toward a historically low accident and injury fatality rate is the kind of information that makes law enforcement professionals happy."

Through nearly the first eight months of 2008, Kentucky boaters have reported 41 accidents with 26 injuries. These accidents cost five lives.

By comparison, 71 accidents occurred on Kentucky waters in 2007 with 13 fatalities.

"Reports from our officers indicate a good boating season so far," Anderson said. "The change is that 2008 is a much safer season than in years past."

The Keep It a Safe Summer boating safety campaign combined with intensive patrol efforts have contributed to these positive changes, Anderson said. "We are putting this word out for people to continue to be safe," he said. "We want people out enjoying our waterways and having good stories to tell when they get home, not tragedies."

## Indiana Promotes Life Jacket Wear

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources launched a campaign earlier this year to encourage boaters to wear their life jackets.

"We started a Wear It Indiana campaign this year and plan to carry it through next year as well," said Major Felix Hensley, boating law administrator for Indiana. "We have partnered with the U.S. Coast Guard, Mustang Survival Gear, National Safe Boating Council and Bass Pro to carry the program."

As part of the campaign, the department posted conservation officers who serve as public information officers at some of the busiest boats ramps on weekends to meet and greet boaters to answer questions and discuss safe boating practices. The department also had their Wear It Indiana on display at the state fair and ran a series of public service announcements on cable television across the state.

"So far the program has gained a lot of very positive comments from recreational boaters," added Major Hensley.



*A team of Indiana Department of Natural Resources conservation officers were stationed at some of the state's busiest boat ramps this summer as part of an educational campaign. They made contact with about 200 boaters during their first appearance at a public boat ramp. Indiana DNR photo*

## Colorado Lowers Legal Limit for BUI

Changes to Colorado's law on boating under the influence recently went into effect, decreasing the legal limit for blood alcohol content and expanding the reach of the law to operators of any waterborne vessel.

Previously, the BUI law applied only to operators of motorboats or sailboats whose BAC was .10 or above. Senate Bill (SB) 08-159 reduces the BAC to .08, making it consistent with the legal limit for motor vehicle operators on Colorado roadways.





The new BUI law applies to any water vessel powered by motor, paddle or oar, including jet skis, kayaks, canoes, sailboats and rafts.

"Drinking alcohol on the water can be just as dangerous as on land," said Rick Storm, chief of law enforcement for Colorado State Parks and boating law administrator for the state. "The impacts of alcohol are naturally accelerated by marine factors, such as sun, wind, motion and spray, increasing the risk of accidents, capsizing or falling overboard," he added.

"Safe operation of watercraft is a personal responsibility with legal implications for unsafe behavior. This new BUI regulation creates accountability for all recreational users on Colorado waterways," said Sen. Ron Tupa, D-Boulder, lead sponsor of SB 159.

Senator Tupa is also a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and is well aware of the need for this stronger, consistent legislation.

Penalties for a BUI conviction have not changed. A vessel operator found to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or controlled substances faces a misdemeanor charge with penalties of five days to one year in prison, fines between \$200 and \$1,000, loss of privilege to operate a vessel for three months and up to 96 hours of community service.

Colorado is among 41 states and territories that have adopted a BAC limit of .08 for boating.

## Applications Available for Boating Safety Grants

Applications are now available for the BoatU.S. Foundation's Boating Safety Grants Program. A total of \$50,000 is available to small, nonprofit organizations and groups around the country to fund projects that promote safe boating practices. The deadline to apply is November 1, 2008.

For 20 years, the Foundation has been awarding boating safety grants to fund projects that promote safe boating on local waterways. Grantees can receive up to \$4000 each to fund innovative projects addressing boating safety issues specific to their local waterways. Past projects have included traditional methods such as boating safety literature and signage as well as less common projects including life jacket exchanges, blimps containing safety messages and radio, TV and movie theater public service announcements.

The focus topic for 2009 is educating boaters on the dangers of alcohol and boating. According to the U.S. Coast Guard's 2007 Accident Statistics, alcohol use was the leading contributing factor in 21 percent of fatal boating accidents. The Foundation seeks grant proposals that use innovative ways of educating boaters. The emphasis for this focus topic is the use of positive messaging to reach boaters. Projects on any topic will be accepted but projects based on the focus topic will be given additional consideration.

Grant guidelines, information and applications are available by visiting [www.BoatUS.com/foundation](http://www.BoatUS.com/foundation) or calling 703.461.2878, ext. 8354. Grants will be awarded in late January 2009.



## Delaware Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Meets CALEA Requirements for Re-Accreditation

After an intensive three-day onsite review, assessors from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies determined that the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife's Enforcement Section meets CALEA's requirements for re-accreditation, with final approval pending review by the CALEA Agency Review Committee.

"The CALEA accreditation on-site assessment process provides the public and DNREC administrators with immediate feedback on how our agency is performing, enabling this agency to excel at the highest level when serving and protecting the public while they are enjoying Delaware's natural resources," said Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Chief James H. Graybeal.

Though rewarding, the process can be exhausting, Chief Graybeal added. "For three long days, the assessors are looking at every aspect and function of our organization to determine whether we are in compliance to their national standards," he said.

The preliminary assessors report shows the Enforcement Section is in compliance with 361 CALEA standards, with 99 standards not applicable because they are not functions of the agency. The report will be reviewed in hearings at the CALEA Conference in December.

Nationwide, nearly 600 law enforcement agencies are CALEA-accredited. In addition to Fish and Wildlife Enforcement, eight other Delaware law enforcement agencies are accredited: the Delaware State Police, New Castle County Police, the Delaware River and Bay Authority Police, the University of Delaware Department of Public Safety and municipal police in Dover, Bethany Beach, Newark and Wilmington.

Delaware's Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Section is currently the only fish and wildlife law enforcement agency in the country to earn this distinction. The small, 28-agent agency was first accredited through CALEA in 1994, and will go through the re-accreditation process every three years.

For further information, contact Sgt. Gregory Rhodes, Fish and Wildlife Enforcement, at 302.739.9913.

#### About CALEA

Created in 1979 through a partnership of police organizations including the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the National Sheriff's Association, CALEA developed its Law Enforcement Accreditation Program to maintain a body of standards developed by public safety practitioners, and to recognize professional excellence. CALEA's goals include: strengthening crime prevention and control; formalizing management procedures; improving public service, interagency coordination and cooperation; and increasing community and staff confidence in police agencies.

To earn accreditation, a law enforcement agency must meet CALEA's established professional standards, such as having in place comprehensive written directives, preparedness programs for critical incidents and clearly defined standards of authority, performance and responsibility. Benefits include greater accountability, reduced risk and liability exposure, stronger defense against civil lawsuits and increased support from the community and government officials.

#### Coast Guard Celebrates 218 Years

The U.S. Coast Guard celebrated 218 years of service in August as America's maritime guardians.

The Coast Guard is one of America's five armed forces and traces its founding to Aug. 4, 1790, when the first Congress authorized the construction of 10 vessels to enforce tariff and trade laws, prevent smuggling, and protect the collection of the federal revenue.

The service received its present name in 1915 when the Revenue Cutter Service merged with the U.S. Life-Saving Service

to form a single maritime service dedicated to safety of life at sea and enforcing the nation's maritime laws.

#### Brunswick Commercial & Government Products Redesigns Website

Brunswick Commercial and Government Products Inc. has launched its newly redesigned website, [www.BrunswickCGP.com](http://www.BrunswickCGP.com). The updated website allows commercial and government agencies to customize their boats based on mission requirements with a Build-A-Boat option providing quick and easy access to Brunswick's full line of boats, technical information and step-by-step customization.

"Our consumers have very specific and important needs.

Our website is an extension of our customer service and delivers another way to better serve our clients and communicate the many options we have available for them," said Betsi Dmitrenko, marketing manager, Brunswick Commercial and Government Products.

Jeremy Davis, sales manager, Brunswick Commercial and Government Products, commented, "In the ever-evolving world of e-business, we want to provide our customers with an easy-to-use, hassle-free way to customize a boat that meets their mission and their budget. With this site, clients can create a mission-specific boat, find information on government grants, download boat specifications and access success stories from other Brunswick Commercial and Government Products clients," said Davis.

Visit [www.BrunswickCGP.com](http://www.BrunswickCGP.com) for more information regarding Brunswick Commercial and Government Products or contact Betsi Dmitrenko at 386.423.2900.



#### Hundreds Celebrate National Marina Day

Despite low water levels on Georgia's Lake Lanier, Aquamarina Lazy Days organizers said a good time was had by the several hundred who attended this year's National Marina Day event.

National Marina Day, which took place Aug. 9, is a celebration of the important role marinas play in waterfront communities all across America. Aquamarina Lazy Days in Buford, Ga., was the site of this year's official headquarters.

Attendees were treated to a day of games, rides, food and fun. Guests of the event included National Marina Day chairman Mike Shanley and Hall County Commissioner Bobby Banks. The celebration's highlights included safe boating tips from the Coast Guard Auxiliary, live music and the construction of a boat that was later auctioned off for charity. The boat project was organized by the Sea Quest Kids program, which offers kids hand-on learning experiences.

"Despite some challenges we've faced regarding the lake's water levels, everyone had a great day on the water, and we're happy that so many people came out to enjoy the event," said Andy Sturner, CEO and founder of Aqua Marine Partners, the Hollywood, Fla.-based firm that acquired Lazy Days in 2007.

Funds raised during the day were presented to Flotilla 29, the Coast Guard Auxiliary organization. ■



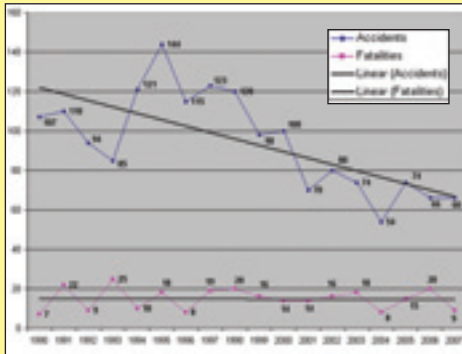


## Oregon's Mandatory Education – Seeing a Trend?

By Ashley Massey, Public Affairs Specialist for the Oregon State Marine Board

To make boating safer, the Oregon State Marine Board started looking back to see where we've been and where we are going. Looking at the accident data on a chart, the peaks and valleys fluctuate, but the trend line is very encouraging.

### Oregon Accident and Fatality Trends 1990-2007



When looking at the accident data, there were two new laws that helped shape the trend: in 2001 the amount required for reporting property damage jumped from \$500 to \$2000, and in 2003, the mandatory boater education law went into effect. There was a sharp decline from 100 reported accidents in 2001 to 70 in 2002 with a notable downward trend leading up to 2007.

In June 2008, the Marine Board hit a new milestone and issued its 200,000th boater education card. "We are right where we hoped we would be," says Marty Law, Education and Information manager for the Marine Board. "It's gratifying to see how the public has responded to the program. To think that we've gone from only a few thousand people having taken a boating safety course a decade ago to over 200,000. It's great to see how far we've come since the law was enacted."

In 1999, the Oregon Legislature approved the mandatory education law and gave the Marine Board 10 years to fully implement the program. "We have one year left until the phase in is complete, and so far compliance has been outstanding," Law adds. The Marine Board estimated 250,000 boaters would need a boater education card after the seven year phase-in is complete.

For more information about Oregon's mandatory education program, visit [www.boatoregon.com](http://www.boatoregon.com). ■

## PEOPLE

### Admiral Thad W. Allen Receives Garner Award

On Aug. 14, 2008, Admiral Thad W. Allen, commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, received the 2007 William B. Garner National Boating Safety Leadership Award.

Admiral Allen had been selected to receive the award last fall; however, due to the extremely busy schedules of Admiral Allen and NASBLA President John Fetterman, the award could not be presented earlier.

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators developed the Garner Award to recognize those men and women whose outstanding effort and achievement have elevated state or federal policy interventions to heights not previously attained.

Allen assumed the duties as the 23rd commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard in May 2006. In the spirit of the Garner Award criteria, Admiral Allen has exhibited extraordinary leadership in strengthening state/Coast Guard relations from the local CG station level to the highest ranks of the agency. He has been actively engaged in the run-up to the reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, working with the leadership of the Department of Interior and directing his flag staff to engage their counterparts in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to work toward achieving greater program parity between the USFWS and the USCG in the administration of the trust fund.

From his leadership in the Atlantic Area Command through his ascension to the top post in the Coast Guard, Admiral Allen has been a steady and stalwart friend of the states and the National Recreational Boating Safety Program. He is presently leading his agency in the pursuit of federal legislative remedies for enacting mandatory boater education.



On Aug. 14, NASBLA President John Fetterman presented Admiral Thad W. Allen, commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, with the 2007 William B. Garner National Boating Safety Leadership Award. Staff photo

### New Leaders at the Helm of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

In August, during the annual U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary's National Conference, Commodore Nickolas Kerigan was selected as the new National Commodore (NACO). His term will last two years.

Commodore Kerigan graduated from Saint John's University in New York, in 1977 with a bachelor of science degree. Since joining the Coast Guard Auxiliary in 1992, he has served in all elected positions through National Area Commodore, Atlantic Area (East) as well as several staff positions at various levels of the Auxiliary.

Commodore Kerigan has received several personal awards and commendations, including the Auxiliary Meritorious Service Award, Auxiliary Award of Operational Merit, Auxiliary Commendation Award, Transportation 9-11 Medal, Auxiliary Achievement Award, Auxiliary Commandant's Letter of Commendation, and Sustained Auxiliary Service Award.

Commodore James Vass was selected to serve as the National Vice Commodore for the next two years. Commodore Vass began his career in the Coast Guard Auxiliary in 1991. He has served in numerous staff positions and elected positions at all levels of the Auxiliary. Most recently he served as the District Commodore Eight Coastal Region.

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed civilian component of the United States Coast Guard. Created by an Act of Congress in 1939, the Auxiliary directly supports the Coast Guard in all missions, except military and direct law enforcement actions. ■

## State Legislatures Forging Ahead on Boater Education Legislation

By Maureen Healey, Executive Director, Personal Watercraft Industry Association

As the peak season for recreational watersports comes to a close, the personal watercraft (PWC) industry has much to celebrate as it relates to a slew of boater safety initiatives supported and advanced by the industry. Mandatory boater education is a key pillar of the personal watercraft industry's efforts to promote and advocate boater safety. Education is critical as U.S. Coast Guard statistics consistently show that three-fourths of all boating fatalities occur on boats where the operator has not received boating safety instruction. Fortunately, there is good news to report and future bills in state legislatures will help improve safety on our waters.

The Personal Watercraft Industry Association (PWIA) actively promotes and advocates for state legislatures to adopt the industry's model legislation that enacts several PWC-specific regulations aimed at improving safety. Many states have already adopted all or parts of this legislation, which include, among other provisions, that all PWC operators be required to pass a boater safety course, be at least 16 years of age to operate a PWC (18 to rent) and operate only during daylight hours. Regulations like these go a long way in reducing the number of incidents that occur on the water.

Over the last year PWIA has worked with local allies in several states to enact all or parts of its model legislation, including Maine, Oklahoma, Virginia, Wisconsin and, most recently, Michigan. Despite the latest legislative victories in some of the nation's largest boating states, there are still pending legislative efforts we will revisit in 2009 that need a drum beat of support, for instance Massachusetts, Maine, Florida, California and North Carolina.

### Michigan

The most recent success story for the mandatory boater education initiatives was in the Great Lakes state of Michigan. The Michigan state legislature passed a bill raising the minimum operator age to 16

for personal watercraft usage with conditional operation for 14- and 15-year-olds. Following the passage of this bill in mid-June, it was signed into law by Gov. Jennifer Granholm and officially establishes 16 as the minimum unsupervised age for PWC operation as of October 1, 2011.

### Maine

In April 2006, Maine passed legislation requiring PWC operators 16 and 17 years of age to carry proof of course completion as of January 1, 2007.

### Oklahoma

In 2007, Oklahoma passed legislation requiring all persons 12 to 15 years of age who wish to operate a vessel exceeding 10 horsepower or sail a powered vessel that is 16 feet or greater in length to successfully complete a NASBLA-approved course. This law applies to all persons regardless of their state of residence, and Oklahoma recognizes certificates from any state that shows they have successfully completed a NASBLA-approved course.

### Wisconsin

Wisconsin passed boater safety legislation that allows children ages 12-15 to operate a boat or vessel only if accompanied by a parent or guardian or a person at least 18 years of age. If the 12- to 15-year-old is in possession of a boating safety course certificate issued by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources or another state-run agency, the person may operate a boat or vessel alone.

### Virginia

Virginia also passed legislation requiring mandatory boater education, which became effective by law in July 2008. The Virginia phased-in law requires all motorboat and PWC operators in the commonwealth, regardless of age, to pass a NASBLA-approved course. Beginning in 2009, the first phase of younger operators will be required to pass a course. By 2012, every PWC operator will have to meet the requirement, and by 2016, every motor boater in the state will be required to be in compliance with the law.

From Michigan to Oklahoma, recreational boaters and the industry are seeing a safety trend in state legislatures across the nation, and PWIA is optimistic that this trend will continue to spread. In our future advocacy efforts for mandatory boater education, PWIA will continue to monitor the following states that came close to passing this legislation:

- Maine – LD-2067 – Comprehensive Boating Safety Education Bill – Fell short on the House floor and will be revived in 2009
- Massachusetts – H.B. 2400 – Boating Safety Education Bill – Passed Joint Public Safety Committee, Remains in House Ways and Means
- Florida – S.B. 1192 / H.B. 703 – Companion Minimum Operator Age Legislation – Cleared committees of referral, yet unable to get floor consideration
- California – A.B. 2110 – Comprehensive Boating Safety Education Bill – Cleared Assembly Transportation Committee, Stalled in Assembly Appropriations
- North Carolina – H.B. 2139 – Boating Safety Education Study Legislation – Awaiting House consideration

PWIA remains committed to dispelling the myths around safety and operation of PWCs. There is strong evidence that education and reasonable regulations are vital to ensuring a safe and enjoyable day on the water. No matter what vessel you command, it is important that everyone takes responsibility for keeping our waterways safe for all to enjoy. ■



# Education: A Critical Tool in Preventing Boating Tragedies



Commodore Ed Sweeney  
National Directorate  
Commodore for Recreational  
Boating Safety  
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Given that there are more than 12 million registered boats, the 2007 statistics from the Boating Safety Division of the United States Coast Guard show that the boating fatality rate is relatively low, and that boating is becoming a safer pastime. This year's statistic of 685 deaths compares favorably to the number of fatalities recorded in 1971, when the Federal Boating Safety Act was first enacted, when over 1,700 deaths were reported.

The number of fatalities in 2007 represents the approximate amount of people that could be carried on five 737 aircraft. Viewing the death toll in that context lends new perspective. Imagine the media coverage and public outcry there'd be if five 737s crashed in 2007. Yet because boating fatalities occur in small numbers per incident, they may barely get a mention on the evening news or local newspapers. So each death often does not serve as a "lesson learned" for other boaters.

There would be far more accidents, deaths and injuries if it weren't for one factor – education.

Imagine the number of people who might have perished in boating-related accidents if they had not completed a boating safety course. In 2007, only 14 percent of the operators involved in fatal accidents had invested time in a boating safety course. This statistic holds steady year after year, demonstrating that education saves lives.

## **They Don't Know What They Don't Know**

The disturbing news about the 2007 statistics is that seven out of the top 10 factors causing the accidents are due to human error, including operator inattention, careless/reckless operation, passenger/skier behavior, excessive speed, using alcohol or drugs, failure to maintain a proper lookout, and operator inexperience.

How do we get boaters to boat safely? The answer is easy – through EDUCATION. Without education, they don't know what they don't know. But as the old saying goes, ignorance is no excuse. And when it comes to boating safety, a lack of education may cost you your life or the lives of others.

## **Good News, Bad News, Same Old Sad Story**

While the total number of boating deaths decreased in 2007 (good news), the numbers of accidents, injuries and property damage have all increased (bad news).

As in previous years, there seem to be recurring themes (the same old sad story) that cry out for increased emphasis. For instance, drowning continued to be a primary cause of death in 2007. About two thirds of all fatal boating accident victims drowned, and 90 percent of those victims weren't wearing a life jacket. Same old story, just a different year.

Many of these deaths could have been prevented if people were actually educated about the benefits of wearing a life jacket. Our efforts to educate the public on the need to wear a life jacket at all times requires more effort and innovative approaches. Efforts such as the Wear It California program, which helped increase the observed adult wear rate in the Sacramento Delta, need to be duplicated all over the country.

Another area that needs more educational emphasis is that the use of alcohol and boating do not mix. Alcohol played a part in 421 accidents, 157 deaths and 373 injuries in 2007. These figures show a slight increase compared to the previous year, and that is especially disturbing given the amount of effort our recreational boating safety partners have been exerting to educate the public about the dangers associated with boating under the influence (BUI). Even more disturbing is that alcohol was the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents, accounting for 21 percent of the deaths.

We have made great strides in reducing the number of boating fatalities, and for that we should be proud. Yet we cannot stop now, as there is still much work to be done and so many more people who need to learn the basics of boating safety. History tends to repeat itself, especially when we do not learn from it. I urge all our boating safety partners to step up their outreach efforts. The life you save may be your own or that of a friend or loved one. ■

## Education – An Essential Key to Safety



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

While we note that there is no single correct answer to most questions, we are especially aware that that no one strategy can be implemented to eliminate all boating accidents. The same holds true for motor vehicle accidents, homeland security and most things that come to mind.

What this means is that a layered approach needs to be considered. This is where you develop multiple strategies to resolve a problem. If all goes well, these multiple strategies work collectively to result in the desired resolution of the issue.

Such is the case with boating safety. We gather the statistics, work to identify the multiple problems that are resulting in the various accidents, and then develop and implement strategies to address each of the identified problems. With some good planning (and perhaps a little luck), we're successful and the accident and casualty numbers come tumbling down.

We've had impressive success in reducing deaths resulting from boating accidents over the past 37 years. This success has stemmed from a number of strategies that have been implemented: manufacturing standards, vessel numbering requirements, regulatory and law enforcement efforts, aids to navigation, and efforts to educate the boating public about the hazards of boating and how to boat more safely.

We know that getting boaters to wear their life jackets will greatly reduce the current number of boating-related deaths. However,

wearing life jackets will probably not significantly reduce the number of injuries resulting from boating accidents, and it won't reduce the number of accidents that occur.

So, we have to ask ourselves, how can we significantly reduce the number of accidents that take place? Considering a layered approach, some strategies that we utilize include awareness campaigns, aids to navigation, law enforcement, and particularly public education.

Some people will say that educating the public hasn't eliminated all automobile accidents, and they're right. But, can you imagine what it would be like on the roads today if drivers weren't educated about driving a car? Even the thought of that gives me chills as I think of my daily commute on Route 95, riding alongside the other one million commuters each day.

We know that public education is effective in a large number of cases. Thus, it behooves us to emphasize the importance of making the public more knowledgeable about the safety aspects of one of the most enjoyable activities that America has to offer – boating.

Education has many aspects to it that need to be addressed (uniformity, reciprocity, long-distance learning, how fast to phase in a requirement, etc.), and we will be looking into each of these more and more as we further define the problem. But for now, let's be sure that we get the basics done right. Wayne Stacey's article below will help with that. So please read on, and then you too can better help us to work together on the layered approach for making boating even more safe and fun.

## Boating Education Courses – Which One to Take?

Individuals like choices. And when it comes to boating education courses, boaters will find there is a wide variety to choose from. These choices present potential students with the opportunity to select a course that will meet their schedule, their wallet, and their particular learning style. They can choose to attend a course that is taught in a traditional classroom setting with an instructor, or, if they prefer, they can opt for an online version over the Internet.

An individual can choose from a wide variety of state, public and private boating education course providers throughout the United States. Many states offer their courses free of charge since they receive federal grant funds to assist in maintaining and promoting boating safety education programs. Volunteer organizations such as the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the United States Power Squadrons charge a nominal fee, while some commercial companies provide boating education for a set fee.

By Wayne Stacey  
Boating Safety Division  
Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety  
U.S. Coast Guard



With a wide variety of options to choose from, how do you know what course is right for you? What should you expect from a basic boating course? Is one course better than the other? Will an eight-hour boating safety course teach you all that you need to know, or should you take a more in-depth boating course?

These are all good questions to ask prior to choosing the course that meets your needs. The first thing to consider when choosing a course is to find out whether your state recognizes the course, and is the course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard. It is also important to know that while a course may have NASBLA approval in another state, it may not be recognized in your state. It is highly recommended that you contact the agency in your state that is responsible for boating safety education for a list of courses that they accept.

Are you new to recreational boating or do you consider yourself a more experienced boater? Regardless of your experience, all NASBLA-approved courses meet strict national standards of

basic boating safety fundamentals. NASBLA course approval is granted to the provider for a three-year period, and then the course must be reviewed for any updated content or changes to laws, rules and regulations. The course provider is also responsible for teaching you the specific rules, laws and regulations that are applicable to the state where you will be boating, as not all states have the exact same boating laws. Therefore, if you plan to boat outside of your state, it's best to check with the state(s) that you plan to visit to see which, if any, of their boating laws differ from your own state.

NASBLA-approved courses are designed to teach the minimum knowledge needed to more safely operate a recreational boat. If an individual wants to further their boating knowledge, organizations such as the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the United States Power Squadrons offer a variety of advanced specialty courses from Coastal Navigation and Piloting, Weather, Global Positioning and the list goes on. Please keep in mind that many of these advanced courses, which are not subject to NASBLA approval, are designed for those individuals who have more than a basic knowledge in seamanship and navigation. Before choosing to take an advanced course, it is always good to have successfully completed the basic course first.

Knowing what to expect prior to choosing a boating course that is right for you is important. Ask questions and shop around on the Internet to see what is available near your home. Whether you choose a classroom setting or an online course, the choice is up to you. Just remember to verify what your state accepts prior to enrolling.

No matter what your ability, be it beginner, intermediate or expert mariner, the Coast Guard highly recommends that you take a boating safety course. You will be surprised what you will learn. You can search the Web for private providers or contact your boating law administrator, local Coast Guard Auxiliary flotilla, or the United States Power Squadrons for information where a boating safety course is being held near you. ■

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from the HELM continued from page 2

building and strengthening partnerships to support the breadth of mission challenges facing our member agencies. At this fall's annual conference NASBLA has drawn closer to two other high-profile partners with the signing and initiation of separate memoranda of agreements (MOAs) with the National Center for Maritime and Port Security and the Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons. Although we have been allied with both groups for many years, the MOAs usher in a more engaged level of partnership intended to advance the overlapping missions between NASBLA and these respective organizations.

The emphasis we place on partnership development is founded in the objectives of our strategic plan and is central to our culture of consensus-based decision making. Since its earliest days as an association, NASBLA has been a product of the recreational boating safety (RBS) community it serves. While it is indeed an organization driven by the needs and demands of its core members – state boating law administrators – we believe it is also the nexus for boating safety stakeholders nationwide and beyond our borders.

The major challenges facing recreational boating safety are not isolated within state, regional or national boundaries, nor are they the purview of government and industry alone. Our challenges are shared among the entire spectrum of stakeholders from the individual boater to corporate board rooms to federal, state and local agencies and non-governmental organizations spread across an entire continent. As we rapidly near the end of our first semicentennial, over the next two years NASBLA will emphasize

time and again the value of partnering and coalition-building as one of the most critical paths to achieving our shared goal of delivering safe and enjoyable outdoor experiences to a varied and growing world of recreational boaters.

Whether your interest in boating safety is broad or specific, personal or professional, individual or organizational, we invite you to join us in shaping the future of our programs, our association, our community and our avocation. Recreational boating is more than a pastime. For many, it is a way of life that transcends generations, providing a gateway to diverse activities on our waterways and enriching the lives of millions along the way. When it comes down to it, we're all in the business of providing a better boating experience and that's a worthwhile goal. ■

What an exciting time to be part of boater education! Boat Ed salutes NASBLA's new initiatives in technology, such as the redesigned website and updates via a blog. Boat Ed anticipates the researchers' review of online boating education practices along with the dialogue and ideas that will be generated. And, never content to "drift" along, Boat Ed is hard at work innovating to improve the quality and integrity of online education.

### **Coming in 2009: Videos for the YouTube Generation**

Static text and graphics aren't enough to hold the attention of today's Internet students. Using digital footage from the latest release of the Boat America video, Boat Ed is developing brief video instructional segments to be incorporated in new online courses. Produced over a 10-month period, Boat America was filmed with more than 40 actors. A 10-member crew captured many exciting on-the-water segments using jib arm cameras and specialized camera boats.

Why simply read? With today's technology, online learning can be reinforced with live-action, real world examples of the "dos and don'ts" of boating.

### **Leading the Way in July 2008: State-Customized Managed Courses**

Concerned about a trend toward acceptance of online exams with no consequences for failure, in 2007 Boat Ed began software development of a new course delivery method. Discussions with boating law administrators Richard Moore (Florida), Dan Martin (Pennsylvania) and Charlie Sledd (Virginia) helped fine-tune the requirements. Boat Ed's new "managed course" model requires students to progress sequentially through the state's course material and allows students to access exams only after state-determined study requirements have been met.

What types of criteria can be set by individual states? The possibilities are limitless, allowing for a totally customized course designed for each state's unique needs. Here are a few of the customizable features: minimum study time; number of course pages; required study time for each page that is unique to that page; unit quizzes (number of questions, passing score, consequence for failure); certification exam (number of questions, passing score, consequence for failure).

Pennsylvania, the first state to formally adopt this Boat Ed-originated model, set a July 1, 2008 launch date, which coincided with the absolute peak of the online education season. Naturally, there were concerns that there would be backlash from students wondering why tougher educational standards were kicking in right when they needed to get on the water. These worries were unfounded – students registered for courses and began their timed study with no qualms, no questions.

As more states pass or strengthen mandatory education laws, the spotlight will increasingly focus on the thoroughness and integrity of online courses. The solution is ready and waiting.

### **At the Forefront in February 2008: Court-Mandated Violator Courses**

For some boaters, education is not enough. States are partnering with Boat Ed to develop high-impact courses that influence boater attitudes and behaviors.

In February, Boat Ed launched the nation's first defensive boating course, delivered on Boat Ed's managed course model. The course is similar to online defensive driving courses in that students are required to spend a minimum amount of study time, and progress is monitored throughout the course. But, the course has an emotional impact and persuasiveness that is compelling and sobering. More than 20 videos were filmed with on-the-water officers, with accident survivors, with family members who lost loved ones, and with attorneys – all of which highlight the devastating consequences of reckless operation or mixing alcohol and boating.

### **Ongoing Enhancements: Interactive Animations**

Over and over, students say interactive animations are a huge aid to learning. "The animations are a great help to better understand what you are trying to learn." "By a long shot, this is the best and most comprehensive course I have ever taken. The visuals and animations accompanying the course were fabulous." Listening to customers, Boat Ed continuously adds new topics and new study aids to its extensive library of Flash animations. The latest additions are fully interactive Chapter Review exercises. Visit any of the chapter summary pages of your state's online course, and check out this challenging and fun review format. ■








## NASBLA Innovations Partner

innovating to put “education”  
back into online boater education!



Boat Ed developed a **NEW** online course delivery model (the “managed course”), which requires that online students:

-  **Satisfy** the required course material study time
-  **Demonstrate** proficiency in a study unit before advancing
-  **Access** the certification exam *only after* all study requirements are met

## Boat Ed leads the way in online education!

**First online course for boating violators using the managed course:**  
*Florida Safe Boating Course for Violators* launched February 28, 2008  
[www.Boat-Ed.com/flv](http://www.Boat-Ed.com/flv)

**First to launch online boater education using the managed course:**  
*Boat Pennsylvania* launched July 1, 2008  
[www.Boat-Ed.com/Pennsylvania](http://www.Boat-Ed.com/Pennsylvania)

For more information, contact Boat Ed at 1-800-830-2268; [kurt@boat-ed.com](mailto:kurt@boat-ed.com)



## OCTOBER 2008

- 20-24 **NASBLA**  
National Boating Accident Investigation  
& Analysis – Level 2 Training  
Ashburn, Virginia  
859.225.9487  
chris@nasbla.org
- 22-25 **Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons**  
Annual General Meeting and  
National Conference  
Windsor, Ontario  
888.277.2628 x.26  
www.cps-ecp.ca
- 30-Nov 3 **Ft. Lauderdale International Boat Show**  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida  
www.showmanagement.com/  
fort\_f Lauderdale\_international\_boat\_show/  
event

## NOVEMBER 2008

- 1-3 **National Boating Safety Advisory Council**  
Fall Meeting  
Arlington, Virginia  
202.372.1062  
jeffrey.a.ludwig@uscg.mil
- 4-6 **NASBLA**  
Executive Board Meeting  
Lexington, Kentucky  
859.225.9487  
info@nasbla.org
- 9-12 **Paddlesports Industry Association**  
Paddlesports Pro 2008  
Panama City Beach, Florida  
www.paddlesportsindustry.org
- 17-19 **Marine Retailers Association of America**  
Annual Conference  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
http://mraa.com

## JANUARY 2009

- 7-10 **US Sailing**  
National Sailing Programs Symposium  
San Diego, California  
401.683.0800  
www.ussailing.org

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

## FEBRUARY 2009

- 5-7 **NASBLA**  
Executive Board Meeting  
Tampa, Florida  
859.225.9487  
info@nasbla.org
- 9-13 **NASBLA**  
National Boating Accident Investigation  
& Analysis – Level 1 Training  
Portland, Oregon  
859.225.9487  
chris@nasbla.org

- 12-16 **Miami International Boat Show**  
Miami, Florida  
www.miamiboatshow.com

- 17-22 **United States Power Squadrons**  
Annual Meeting  
Anaheim, California  
888.367.8777  
www.usps.org

## MARCH 2009

- 4-5 **NASBLA**  
Boating Law Administrators Workshop  
Lexington, Kentucky  
859.225.9487  
info@nasbla.org
- 9-13 **NASBLA**  
National Boating Accident Investigation  
& Analysis – Level 1 Training  
Springfield, Missouri  
859.225.9487  
chris@nasbla.org
- 13-14 **NASBLA**  
Vessel Identification, Registration & Titling  
Committee Meeting  
Portland, Oregon  
859.225.9487  
ron@nasbla.org

- 13-15 **Harrisburg River Rescue  
& Emergency Services**  
Water Rescue and Emergency  
Response Conference  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
717.236.5999  
www.harrisburgriverrescue.org  
ketterersrsq@verizon.net

- 15-18 **International Association of Marine  
Investigators**  
Annual Training Conference  
Portland, Oregon  
www.iammarine.org

## APRIL 2009

- 4-6 **National Boating Safety Advisory Council**  
Spring Meeting  
Orlando, Florida  
202.372.1062  
jeffrey.a.ludwig@uscg.mil
- 18-19 **NASBLA**  
Education & Outreach Committee Meeting  
Panama City, Florida  
859.225.9487  
gail@nasbla.org
- 19 **NASBLA**  
Waterways Management  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Panama City, Florida  
859.225.9487  
matt@nasbla.org
- 19-22 **National Safe Boating Council and  
National Water Safety Congress**  
International Boating & Water  
Safety Summit  
Panama City Beach, Florida  
www.safeboatingcouncil.org  
www.watersafetycongress.org
- 20-24 **NASBLA**  
National Boating Accident Investigation  
& Analysis – Level 1 Training  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
859.225.9487  
chris@nasbla.org