

SCA

small craft advisory

MAY-JUNE 2012 | VOL. 27 NO. 3

National Association of State Boating Law Administrators

**Saved by
the jacket!**

***Wear It!
around
the world***

***Simpler
life jacket
standards***



SCA

small craft advisory

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

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About the Cover

Simply put, life jackets save lives – if they are worn. Boating safety advocates across the nation continue examining ways to encourage boaters of all ages to wear their life jackets. Strategies involving persuasive campaigns, logical regulations, updated standards and innovative designs are being employed to navigate toward increased safety.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources photo

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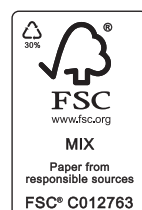
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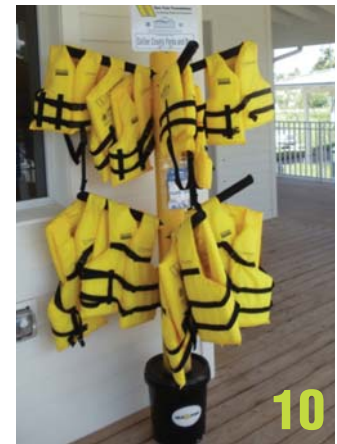
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from the Helm



Mike Fields
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Working to meet a long-standing challenge

Regardless of subtle shifts in the national boating accident statistics from year to year, one thing remains clear: roughly 75 percent of all fatal boating accident victims drown and, of those, more than 85 percent are reported as not wearing a life jacket. Perhaps the single greatest challenge facing the recreational boating safety community today, increasing life jacket wear rates among adult boaters remains elusive.

This issue of *Small Craft Advisory* takes a closer look at life jackets – new designs and new performance standards, innovative methods states are trying to encourage greater use, new mandates to require personal flotation device (PFD) wear in cold-weather months, stories of marine law enforcement officers “saved by the jacket,” and other unique perspectives on why some wear them, but many others do not. Despite decades of well designed and widespread outreach and awareness campaigns, boaters still don't seem to appreciate the inherent risks that life jackets so easily mitigate. We hope the examples included here spark renewed interest, debate and commitment to solving this long-standing challenge.

Motown recording artist Marvin Gaye would be proud of the Connecticut Boating Division's provocatively titled new campaign, *Get it on! We'll take it off!* In this issue of SCA, Division Boating Education Specialist Mark Chanski relates the state's experience in an innovative approach to getting boaters to buy – and presumably wear – new inflatable life jackets. This unique twist on the classic Wear It! campaign finds boaters in Connecticut facing an offer that's hard to refuse. See how the agency's use of economic incentives and a catchy one-liner are bringing boaters into the 21st century technology of inflatable life jackets.

During this spring's International Boating and Water Safety Summit we were impressed to learn about the magnitude and reach of life jacket loaner programs across the country. Gail Kulp, CAE, executive director of the Sea Tow Foundation, mirrors her Summit presentation in a great article on the growth and diversity of life jacket loaner programs. Follow the progress and expansion of these “honor system” kiosks and display boards as Gail chronicles the development of this life-saving outreach program through a targeted national survey just completed by the Sea Tow Foundation.

We think you're going to enjoy the article from Aniceto Ogunmoro, boating law administrator from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, on the life jacket culture of fishermen in the Western Pacific. A native fisherman himself, Aniceto paints a beautiful and poignant picture of both his passion for spear-fishing and the social norms that lead young men to spurn the life jacket. Although raised to be fearless of “his” ocean environment, the writer weaves an excellent narrative of the resource-rich reef he calls home and the inherent perils that have led him to champion life jacket wear among his fellow fishermen.

Last year, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission led the commonwealth in becoming only the fourth jurisdiction to require boaters on unpowered vessels and motorboats less than 21 feet in length to wear life jackets during colder months. (The others are Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York.) These cold-weather provisions adopted by Pennsylvania are based on an analysis of a decade of boating accident statistics. Although most accidents in the commonwealth occur during more

traditional boating months, a significantly disproportionate number of fatalities occur during the fall and winter months. You will understand more of the rationale behind the Commission's decision and the agency's outreach and awareness efforts when you delve into the full-length article inside.

Finally, in preparation for a life jacket initiative under development by our Enforcement & Training Committee for this year's annual conference, we hope you will spend a few minutes reading the captivating stories of marine law enforcement officers whose lives have been saved as the result of wearing their own life jackets. Through three powerful vignettes, set in three completely different boating scenarios, you will see how seasoned law enforcement officers came to appreciate the need for wearing life jackets in a very up-close and personal way.

NASBLA believes we have a responsibility to practice what we preach, and we encourage you to prepare yourselves for the discussions regarding mandated wear of life jackets for marine law enforcement officers at the annual conference in September.

Our friends in the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources are making plans for another unforgettable NASBLA Annual Conference in Mobile on September 8-12, 2012. There is no better way to wrap up your boating season than by spending a few days with the nation's foremost gathering of marine law enforcement and boating safety professionals than the NASBLA 52nd Annual Conference. On behalf of the NASBLA Board and staff, we invite – and strongly encourage – you to attend this worthwhile event. *

Real fishermen don't wear life vests...or do they

By Aniceto Ogumoro
Boating Law Administrator
CNMI Department of Public Safety

I was born and raised on the island of Saipan, the capital island of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The CNMI comprises 14 islands of the Mariana Islands Archipelago located in the Western Pacific Ocean, approximately 1,500 miles southeast from Tokyo and nearly 6,000 miles from California. Saipan, Tinian and Rota are the three developed islands where nearly all residents live.

Growing up on an island in the middle of the Pacific makes the ocean a major part of every islander's life. As a young boy, I made my own speargun and – with a mask, snorkel, fins and fish stringer – I would swim about half a mile out to the reef's edge and just spearfish to my own delight. In my teens, I would spearfish at night when the sleeping fish and lobsters made it easier to harvest a good catch. A stringer full of speared fish also invited sharks, causing stress and fear for any swimmer at the reef's edge.

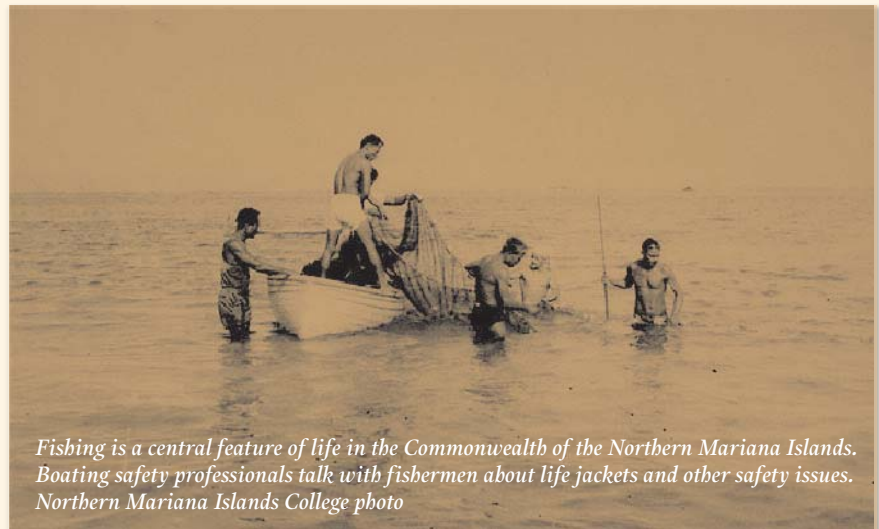
I was introduced to using boats for spearfishing in my late teens. I learned that boats were more practical and efficient for spearfishing. Boats offered protection from sharks and other sea creatures that hunger for your catch. Boats also serve as a floating rest station for shelter. As I grew older, I found that rod and reel fishing from boats to be far more convenient and less tiring than spearfishing. Like every other native fisherman on Saipan and in the Marianas Island chain, I graduated from spearfishing while swimming to fishing from a boat.

Every local fisherman grew up with the mentality that it's "my" ocean and I do not fear it. As boaters we carry that mental

thought and refuse to wear life vests or personal flotation devices (PFDs) because we believe that "real fishermen" don't wear life vests.

When I was a young police officer assigned to boating safety, I continued to see the pride in our local anglers through their choice not to wear life vests. As a local fisherman, I understood why they refused

During these meetings, our discussion begins with required equipment, life vests, island fishing stories about the big catch or the big one that got away. I wrap up each conversation by talking about all our brother island fishermen who our ocean has taken away from us. We talk about the good ole days of spearfishing and about our youth and stamina to swim and fish anywhere. I bring the conversation back to



Fishing is a central feature of life in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Boating safety professionals talk with fishermen about life jackets and other safety issues. Northern Mariana Islands College photo

to wear life vests, and as a police officer I didn't really press the issue because I felt what their pride was saying and didn't want to ruffle any feathers.

In my years of working in boating safety, I have responded to calls of boating distress, overturned boats and, sadly, boating-related drownings. When I came back to boating safety, I initiated a program within our boating inspection program to meet with our island fishermen and personally talk to them about wearing life vests.

boating and how we all have ended up getting boats because we are getting older but smarter in fishing.

As our conversation comes to an end, I emphasize that we can all grow old as fishermen and boaters by being smarter as we boat and fish. I remind my brother fishermen that being a smart boater and fisherman means that we carry and wear our life vests when we boat because **"real island fishermen do wear life vests."**✴

NASBLA News

NASBLA welcomes new staffer

Hannah Ockerman joined NASBLA's staff on April 16 as our project/research associate. In this new position, she will be working in a number of areas, including the Reference Guide, Education Standards Panel, Strategic Planning, Operation Dry Water, the conference and member inquiries.



Hannah is a graduate of the University of Kentucky with a degree in Broadcast Journalism with a minor in leadership studies. She most recently worked with Resources in Healthcare

Management, LLC, focusing on marketing and community/public relations. She has also worked with WKYT News, WUKY and the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games Foundation.

You can reach Hannah via email at hannah@nasbla.org or at 859.225.9487.

BLAs benefit from informative spring workshop

NASBLA hosted its annual Spring Boating Law Administrators (BLA) Workshop in Lexington, Ky., Feb. 29-March 1. This yearly two-day meeting provides boating authorities an opportunity to meet with their peers in an open exchange on current and emerging issues affecting boating program management. Topics discussed included the recreational boating safety state grant program, the 2012 elections and their impact on state agencies, dealing with high-profile events, the national Wear It! campaign, the National Boating Education Standards Panel, upcoming changes in life jacket standards, and improving boating accident reporting data. Links to the



presentations are available on NABLA's SlideShare site, www.slideshare.net/NASBLA. The meeting also featured a graduation ceremony for the first class of BLA Academy graduates.

Oregon names new BLA

At the beginning of 2012, Marty Law was named the boating safety program manager for the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB), becoming the state's BLA. He oversees law enforcement, education and environmental programs.

A longtime veteran with the OSMB, Marty previously served as manager of the agency's education program. Involved in promoting boating and water safety for over 30 years, Marty has a long history with NASBLA, serving for numerous years



on NASBLA's Education Committee. He recently chaired NASBLA's Education Standards and Best Practices Subcommittee and was involved in the development of the current national boating education course standards. He also served as chair of the National Safe Boating Council in 1996-98.

In Oregon, user conflicts on the state's waterways are a chief concern. Marty said the Marine Board is working with various stakeholder groups to resolve their issues. Another area of concern is safety among non-motorized vessels. "With kayaking, canoeing and other non-motorized sports growing in popularity, we're seeing a greater number of accidents and fatalities," said Law.

In his free time, Marty enjoys getting out on the water to do some fishing and crabbing.

Malatak retires from USCG

John M. Malatak, chief of the Program Operations for the United States Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division, has retired after more than 20 years of service to the Coast Guard. As the Program Operations chief, John was responsible for ensuring total coordination and collaboration of all organizations, states, territories and federal agencies relating to all matters pertaining to recreational boating safety, small vessel security measures, education, funding, implementation, communications and awareness programs. He was also responsible for all technical, educational, systematic and fiscal matters. Prior to his assignment with the U.S. Coast Guard, he



held various educational, technical and management positions within the American Red Cross.

John holds Bachelor of Science and advanced degrees in business administration

and has received various honors and awards from several organizations, including NASBLA's Lifetime

Achievement Award. During a retirement ceremony held at USCG Headquarters in Washington, D.C., the NASBLA Executive Board presented John with a commendation in recognition of his longtime collaboration with the Board. John will be missed as a partner and good friend of NASBLA. Good luck in the future, John!

S.C. BLA becomes agency director

Col. Alvin Taylor, longtime South Carolina boating law administrator, was named director of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources on Jan. 26. Taylor replaces John Frampton, who retired.

A 1976 graduate of Clemson University, Alvin completed training at the U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Training Center in Yorktown, Va., in 1976 and graduated from the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy in 1977. In 1977, he joined the state Wildlife and Marine Resources Department, predecessor of the DNR, as a private first class, teaching boating education classes and investigating recreational boating accidents statewide.



Alvin has served as a sergeant, lieutenant, captain and major, supervising the DNR boating safety and hunter education programs, various law enforcement regions of the

state and the agency's coastal marine law enforcement operations. In 2004 he replaced Col. J. Alvin Wright as deputy director of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Law Enforcement Division.

In addition to his supervisory duties, Alvin has been an active member of NASBLA, serving as the organization's president in 2003. He is also past president of the S.C. Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers Association. Alvin instituted the Joint Enforcement Agreement between DNR and the National Marine Fisheries Service. His proposed Joint Enforcement Agreement presentation to the Senate Commerce Committee of the U.S. Congress led to funding for the program in 1998. Working with the U.S. Coast Guard, Alvin has been heavily involved in port security along South Carolina's coast and coordinated state security for the raising of the H.L. Hunley in Charleston. ✨

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LIVES SAVED + COUNTING...

Between 1960 and 2010, recreational boating fatalities decreased by 83%. That equals 93,000 lives saved.*

We need to take the time to acknowledge boating safety educators and those who have pushed for more boating education and regulation. Your hard work led to these dramatic improvements. You have helped make our families safer. Thank you.

*Recreational Boating Accident Statistics and Trends, USCG Proceedings, Fall 2010

BOATING FATALITIES



1960 >>> 2010

Per 100,000 registered boats

New ways to reach boaters



This year, we are partnering with the FLW Foundation, leaders in tournament fishing, conservation and education, to create an online boating safety challenge with a great prize and an incentive to share on social media. Let's use new technology to raise boating safety awareness.

Find out more and help us spread the word at BOATERexam.com/challenge



The NASBLA Boating Safety Educator of the year award

The NASBLA Boating Safety Educator of the Year Award

In 2011, BOATERexam.com and NASBLA partnered to create the Boating Safety Educator of the Year Award. We created the award to honor the outstanding efforts of boating professionals and volunteers. And to say thank you.

Nominations for the 2012 Boating Safety Educator of the Year are now open. Go to Nasbla.org to nominate an educator who has made a difference in your state.

This year's award will be presented at the annual NASBLA conference in Mobile, Alabama.



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WEAR IT!

Slogan becoming a household name, wherever your house is

By Rachel Johnson
Communications Director
National Safe Boating Council

The North American Safe Boating Campaign has gone through many growing pains in its efforts to promote life jacket wear since it began as a committee in 1958. Different slogans, logos and mascots have been used to get boaters to wear life jackets while boating. While the campaign grew in popularity for over 50 years, there came a point when the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC), its partners and stakeholders began to consider whether there was a benefit to using just one simple message with one simple image.

In 2006 the NSBC decided to use just “Wear It!” as the campaign’s new slogan, rather than some of its previous messages, like “Boat Responsibly, Wear It!” and “Boat Smart. Boat Safe. Wear It!” While these messages were effective, just honing in on the “Wear It!” message proved that using “one voice – one message” could have a lasting impression on getting boaters to choose to wear life jackets.

In 2010, the NSBC surveyed each state agency and received truly enlightening



Soon after Australia adopted the WearIt! campaign, the New South Wales Maritime Transport developed this safety-minded website, <http://www.lifejacketwearit.com.au>.



Former Puerto Rico Boating Law Administrator Saul Zapata (far left) and officers in the Office of the Commissioner of Navigation pose with newly wrapped vehicles sporting the Wear It! logo.

results. Each state had reported that, at some point in their recent education efforts, they had used the “Wear It!” campaign message and the resources that were available to help promote the message. Not only that, but other non-profit organizations, for-profit groups and volunteers around North America were using the message on a grassroots level. They were able to easily adapt the message to meet the needs of their boaters and reach them on a one-on-one level.

It was becoming apparent that “Wear It!” is more versatile than perhaps anyone had imagined. One Google search of “Wear It!” in 2008 came up with a tiny boat-building group in the Philippines that had placed the “Wear It!” message on their website. Not only that, but the Strategic Plan of the Recreational Boating Safety Program was specifically identifying the importance of offering outreach

messages and resources to reach boaters with limited English proficiency.



プレスリリース (今年度の活動の報道資料です) [Ver.1 \(5/5\)](#) [Ver.2\(5/5\)](#)



「子どもたちにライフジャケットを！」では賛同者と、リンクしていただけるところを募集しています！
賛同いただける方は、連絡を下さい。趣旨に賛同するかどうかだけ...です。それ以上何もありません。
賛同いただければ、下の賛同者リストに名前を掲載させていただきます。
都道府県名（または国名）とお名前を書いて送って下さい。
リンク大歓迎ですが、リンクしていただける場合はメールをお願いします。

連絡は「子どもたちにライフジャケットを！」モリシゲまで
メールはこちらへ！→ life-jacket@dancing-monkey.net
(*を@に変えて下さいね)

Boaters in Japan are encouraged to Wear It! through this website, which features videos, facts and even a cartoon.

The North American Safe Boating Campaign decided to get on board with this mission and offered its first translation of “Wear It!” “Uselo!” was created to reach out to North America’s Spanish-speaking population. Immediately following, the NSBC recognized that its partnership with the Canadian Safe Boating Council meant that any resources provided in Canada must be available in both English and French. With that, “Portez-Le!” was created and posted to the campaign website.



A sign in a Brazilian mall encourages shoppers to “Use Isto!”, which is Portuguese for “Wear It!”

For a few months, these logos were being pulled off the site periodically, but there was no real movement with the “Wear It!” message on an international level. Sometimes, when things seem a little too quiet, that’s when something major happens!

A contact in Japan was found using the “Wear It!” logo on their website. The site, written entirely in Japanese, also showed cartoon images of people in life jackets. We immediately reached out to this contact and quickly learned that we had a shared mission – getting people into life jackets – whether we’re in North America or on the other side of the world in Japan. The campaign offered its services, as well as a custom “Wear It Japan!” logo, and a new partnership was formed.

Just afterwards, Puerto Rico took the Spanish “Uselo!” logo and wrapped two of their agency trucks with the logos. A contact in Brazil didn’t want to be left out; he had the NSBC translate “Wear It!” into Portuguese. Through contacts made in Australia and New Zealand, custom logos were created and even used on the government’s New South Wales Maritime website. One of our partners in Australia has adopted the logo in its entirety, creating an entire website around “Wear It Australia!” (www.wearitaustralia.com.au).

In 2011, for the second year of the “Ready, Set, Inflate!” World Record Day, North America was joined by Australia, Brazil, Japan and the UK to truly break a world record of 1,685 life jackets worn

and inflated to kick off the 2011 boating season.

Just recently, the National Safe Boating Council has been approached by Suriname, Nigeria and Mexico for custom “Wear It!” logos. Do you know where Suriname is on a map? We’ll be honest – we had no idea!

The “Wear It!” campaign has seen its success because it has created one solid, strong message that can be used on a truly universal level. Life jacket wear is a worldwide issue – it doesn’t stop in North America, but instead

can be completely adopted by any other group around the world. It’s the partnerships that have been created through the International Boating and Water Safety Summit, other conferences, and informal conversations that have led to this international success.

The internet presence of “Wear It!” is staggering – to be contacted by a boating safety professional in the UK one day and Nigeria the next day is remarkable, but achievable with new ways for the campaign to expand around the world.

It doesn’t matter where you are – “Wear It!” will translate and help to make a difference in recreational boaters’ lives.✴

Always willing to lend a *life jacket*

By Gail R. Kulp, CAE
Executive Director
Sea Tow Foundation

Statistics show us year after year that life jackets save lives. The challenge is to get people to wear these life-saving devices when boating.

One way to encourage boaters to wear life jackets is to provide personal flotation devices for them to use through a life jacket loaner program. There are hundreds of life jacket loaner stations across the country – conveniently located at launch ramps, marinas and waterfront businesses – to provide a simple way for boaters to borrow properly sized life jackets.

In 2011, the Sea Tow Foundation was awarded a grant through the Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund to identify and evaluate the life jacket loaner programs throughout the U.S. The Foundation also began developing a centralized database to keep track of the number and locations of life jacket loaner programs. A life jacket loaner program is defined as any organized activity that provides life jackets to members of the public. The nature of how the life jackets are provided may differ from organization to organization, but the end result is that someone is able to borrow a life jacket. Locations for the life jacket loaner programs include boat ramps, swimming areas, marinas, campgrounds, parks, businesses and libraries.

A bright idea

The earliest identified life jacket loaner program started in 1992 in Seattle. At that time, the Seattle Children's Hospital

developed a drowning prevention campaign called "Stay on Top of It" to increase life jacket use. They piloted the first two life jacket loaner stands at beaches in the Seattle area. While the program was developed by Seattle Children's Hospital, it was administered by city, county and state parks and funded through mini grants as well as with assistance from Mustang Survival.

In 1995, the Washington State Drowning Prevention Network was created and funded through a federal grant that helped move the program into more locations. There are now over 120 life jacket loaner stations in the state of Washington.



Kids Don't Float was started in Homer, Alaska, in 1996. Resulting from collaboration between Safe Kids USA, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Homer School District, and the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, the program established 15 life jacket loaner stations around Kachemak Bay. In 2000, the newly formed Alaska Office of Boating Safety joined the partnership, and there are now over 600 life jacket loaner stations in the state of Alaska.

In 1998, the BoatU.S. Foundation for Boating Safety & Clean Water began distributing life jacket loaner kits to sites across the nation. Each kit contains 12 life jackets ranging in size from infant to youth as well as all the information for setting up a loaner stand. A partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers allowed for even more life jacket loaner sites, which now number over 540.

The Sea Tow Foundation entered the life jacket loaner program arena in 2009. They already have over 100 loaner stands throughout the country that provide life jackets ranging from infant to the adult extra-large size.

Numerous state boating agencies, nonprofit organizations and other entities have since followed suit, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Although there was not a nationwide loaner program in effect for the Corps until recently, a number of the Corps sites have been involved in life jacket loaner programs since the late 1990s.

Providing jackets to the public

Life jacket loaner stations come in three designs. The first is the tree or stand design, which has a center post like a trunk and extending limbs to hold the life jackets. The display can be permanently anchored into the ground, or it can be mobile by placing the center post in a bucket of concrete. The stand can be made of wood, metal, PVC (plastic) or other materials.

The second life jacket loaner design is the display board – a large sign with hooks at the bottom where life jackets can be hung. This design offers a great way to provide educational content to people borrowing the life jackets. Although signs or brochure holders can be mounted and hung from the tree stand design, the display board provides permanent space for information about the importance of life jackets as well as about the organization providing the life jackets. A roof and walls and sides can be added for more protection from the elements.

The third life jacket loaner design is a box or shed. The larger the box or shed, the more likely that it won't be moved, but it can be secured overnight with a lock. The life jackets can be kept out of the elements, but they may not have a chance to dry completely before being stored, depending on the size and design of the box or shed. Signage can be placed on the box lid or on a poster mounted to a nearby wall. If a shed or larger box is used, the signage can be on the doors of the shed or box lid.

Station study

As part of its grant project to identify and evaluate life jacket loaner programs, the Sea Tow Foundation sent in mid-November 2011 a survey to all of the education coordinators in the 56 states/territories, all boating safety organizations and water safety groups that could be identified, and life jacket manufacturers, retailers, marinas, yacht clubs and boat dealers. The Foundation requested respondents to provide names of others and to forward the survey to others. As a result, the Foundation does not know exactly how many people were ultimately invited to participate in the survey.

By press time, the Foundation had received 210 responses representing 53 different agencies/organizations in 43 states. So far, 2,067 life jacket loaner stations have been identified nationwide. This number includes tree stands, display boards, and boxes/sheds. In 2011, 38,143 life jackets were available to be borrowed (Editor's note: The Sea Tow Foundation continues to gather data, so this number will likely change.)

Roughly 43 percent of the life jacket loaner stations provided 10-15 life jackets, and one-third had less than 10. The survey also asked how the overall

number of life jackets that each site had compared to the previous year (2010). At just over half (53%) of the locations, the number of life jackets stayed the same; one-third of the locations reported an increase in the number of life jackets. Seven percent noted that 2011 was their first year and had no data to compare.

Life jacket sizing

The most popular type of life jacket distributed at life jacket loaner programs is the standard yoke, horse collar or an inherently buoyant foam style. Some groups provide sports vests or paddling style jackets, and a handful provide inflatable life jackets.

A large number of infant through youth sizes are available nationwide; however, adult sizes are not that plentiful.

Infant	7750
Child	10536
Youth	10632
Adult	6466
XL	2467
Other (i.e. universal)	292

Providing PFDs

Most life jackets are donated or purchased by the organization/agency providing them. A small number of groups receive monetary donations or grant funds to purchase the life jackets.

Distribution

Most life jacket loaner programs employ an honor system when distributing the life jackets. However, a number of organizations/agencies loan life jackets to camps or boating-related events. In other cases, life jackets are loaned out only by special request or after identification is taken or a release/waiver is signed.

Damaged or lost

Only two percent of life jackets are damaged each year – not shocking considering the number of people using the devices. Nationwide, about 30 percent of the life jackets are not returned by the users by the end of the year. While it is frustrating to lose life jackets, the hope is that they are being used by someone who needs them. The survey did indicate that those agencies and organizations with a more involved approach to distributing the life jackets usually incur the least amount of loss. Interestingly, a number of survey respondents noted mysteriously receiving more life jackets than they started with as people returned life

jackets that no longer fit or had been found in the park/marina.

Marketing

The most popular options for advertising life jacket loaner programs include word of mouth, location, and posters and signage about the program. Other methods include websites, advertising, press releases, social media, mailings, and through boating safety courses.

Education

Educational content provided by life jacket loaner programs varies and may include information about proper sizing and fit or the different types of life jackets for various water activities. Also, the methods of getting the educational materials to the people borrowing the life jackets vary and may include brochure holders, signage or posters near or on the stands. Some agencies are including QR codes to be scanned with mobile phones. Regardless of the content or method of delivery, in 2011, 82 percent of the life jacket loaner programs provided educational materials of some type.

Effective?

Most agencies that provide loaner life jackets have no data to support whether their program has saved lives, although the general consensus is in the affirmative. There was data to prove that in at least 26 cases the loaner life jackets had saved the life of the wearer.

Grant goods

The final products from this grant will include a database and, hopefully, a map of all of the life jacket loaner locations in the U.S. The Sea Tow Foundation will also create a best practices document that can be used by other organizations and agencies interested in launching a life jacket loaner program. Another deliverable is a rubric that will be used to evaluate the existing life jacket loaner programs. The final grant report, due at the end of 2012, will be made available to the entire recreational boating safety community on the Sea Tow Foundation's website, www.boatingsafety.com. ✨

The Sea Tow Foundation was started in 2007 as a national, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization by Sea Tow Services International founder, Capt. Joe Frohnhofer. The mission of the Sea Tow Foundation is to promote safe boating practices and education initiatives that directly reduce accidents, fatalities and property damage related to recreational boating.

New designs *encouraged with* new standards



By Brandi Baldwin, P.E.
Lifesaving & Fire Safety Division
Office of Design & Engineering Standards
U.S. Coast Guard

While boaters know that life jackets save lives and every recreational boat and commercial vessel must carry at least one wearable personal flotation device – commonly referred to as a life jacket – for every person on board, we all know that most life jackets are stashed in lockers or used as pillows because they are bulky, uncomfortable for extended periods and often ill-fitted to the intended wearer. In an effort to increase proper usage of life jackets, the Coast Guard is making changes

to life jacket requirements that will ultimately make it easier to find a comfortable, properly sized and fitted life jacket.

In the early years of Coast Guard approval of life jackets, federal regulations required that all life jackets be constructed to a specified set of plans. Every approved life jacket looked, and presumably performed, the same. In the 1960s, the Coast Guard recognized the value of design innovation and produced regulations that allowed for

the approval of “non-standard” life jackets, provided they demonstrated the same performance as “standard” life jackets. Although those regulations are still on the books, the majority of today’s approved life jackets are subjected to a different approval standard.

Today, federal agencies are required to use technical standards developed by voluntary consensus standards bodies wherever practicable. Modern life jackets approved for use on recreational vessels

today are constructed and tested to industry consensus standards developed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL), through their Standards Technical Panel (STP). UL product safety standards are developed and maintained by an STP, a voting body made up of representation from manufacturers, test labs, regulators, industry groups and members of the public.

The Coast Guard is an active member of the STP responsible for developing and maintaining the industry consensus standards relating to personal flotation devices and has been working with its Canadian counterpart to develop a Harmonized North American Standard for Wearable Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs). By cooperating with Canada on this effort, life jackets approved in Canada would be acceptable for use on recreational boats in the United States and vice versa. At the urging of the PFD industry, the new standard will be based on the international standards – currently being used in Europe – with certain deviations applicable to U.S. and Canadian approvals. This format would allow life jackets designed and tested for use in North America to be approved in Europe with minimal additional testing.

The new standard is in the final stages of review and voting and should be adopted by the end of 2012.

For the most part, the transition to the new standard should be invisible to the public. The Coast Guard has determined that the new standard will result in devices with an equivalent level of safety to those constructed and tested to the current standard. As such, all of the Coast Guard approved life jackets currently on the market will still be approved and those designs may continue to be manufactured. However, there are two clues that may prompt the public to notice that something has changed.

The first indication that the users may see will be new labels or markings on the life jacket itself. The Coast Guard has long recognized that the labels on currently approved life jackets could use some improvement. Although the current label format, which is prescribed in the approval standard, contains a lot of important information, it is not presented in a format that helps the user,

or enforcement officers, determine whether that life jacket is approved or appropriate for a given activity.

The new labels will be arranged in a much more user-friendly format, with similar information grouped together. One section will include the user-focused information, which the user needs to select the right life jacket and use it appropriately. This is where sizing information, the recommended and/or prohibited activities, and any safety warnings will be found. Another section will contain all of the non-immediate use and care information, such as washing instructions and any routine maintenance information. A third section will contain certification information, where the user or enforcement officer can verify that the life jacket is Coast Guard-approved.

The revamped labels will also use a new classification system based on the international standard, so users will notice that the well-established type code system has gone away. All personal flotation devices are currently approved as Type I, II, III, IV or V. The new standard does not use this classification system, and there is no one-to-one correlation between the two systems.

The second indication that something has changed will be the appearance of new and innovative designs on the market. The current standard has prescriptive construction requirements, specifically stating how the life jacket must be constructed. The new standard will be more performance-based, reducing overall testing costs and allowing virtually any design that can meet the relevant performance requirements to be eligible for approval.

The new standard also allows for more innovation in life jacket design and will lead to the approval of life jackets that are more comfortable and ultimately worn more. One new type of design that users may see is the “Level 50 buoyancy aid,” which is a PFD designed for swimmers only and may have as little as 50 Newtons, or 11.2 pounds, of buoyancy. Currently, all Coast Guard-approved life jackets have at least 15.5 pounds of buoyant force. While a decrease in minimum required buoyancy may seem like a reduction in safety, these devices

are more likely to be worn; and a PFD that you wear has a much greater chance of saving your life than one stashed in a sail locker or laying on the deck.

The adoption of the “Level 50” concept allows manufacturers to design devices with less bulk, which would be more comfortable to wear and addresses a long-standing concern about “competition vests,” the extremely low buoyancy vests worn by watersports enthusiasts, which are currently not approved to any standard.

Another new type of device that consumers may see on the market is inflatable life jackets for a wider variety of users. Currently, all inflatable life jackets approved by the Coast Guard are marked as approved for wearers ages 16 and up. This age restriction is in the current UL standard. It is based on regulatory language stating that inflatable PFDs are approved for adults only. However, the Coast Guard recently published a change to the regulations that would remove this limitation and is working with the industry and other stakeholders to develop an appropriate standard to address inflatable life jackets for youths. The new standard would contain any additional design, construction, testing or marking requirements that are necessary to permit inflatable life jackets to be used by wearers under age 16.

These new types of devices may not immediately be eligible for Coast Guard approval, however. The new standard will first need to be incorporated into regulations, which can take several years. In the meantime, the Coast Guard has the authority to approve devices that provide an equivalent or higher level of safety than what is required by the current regulations.

The Coast Guard continues to work in partnership with the relevant stakeholders, both in the U.S. and Canada, to further the goal of increasing life jacket wear, thereby enhancing overall safety of recreational boaters and commercial mariners.

For more information on how a life jacket gets approved by the Coast Guard, visit the USCG Headquarters Lifesaving and Fire Safety Division website: www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg5214/. ✨

Wearing your life jacket: *priceless*

Compiled by Kimberly Jenkins



In 2008, an unused life jacket from the doomed Titanic sold for \$68,500 in New York. While this purchase price seems exceedingly high for an uncomfortable and outdated personal flotation device, the life it would have saved had it been worn would certainly be viewed as priceless. Take it from boaters who've had near-drowning experiences of their own – they are very thankful to have been wearing their life jackets at the time.

Formidable floodwaters

Late one October night, Sgt. Ben Sisk with the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission was called to help rescue two dozen campers who'd become stranded due to flooding in a local campground. During the rescue attempt, the officer suddenly found himself having to fight for his life in raging floodwaters.

After launching his patrol boat into the raging water, Sgt. Sisk and two local search and rescue members, Leon Hall and Jerrod Blankenship, headed to the bathrooms where the campers were trapped. Although

Hall and Blankenship had donned wetsuits, helmets and life jackets and he was wearing his full uniform and a float coat, the officer was filled with trepidation about the situation.

Sgt. Sisk was attempting to navigate through some trees and an electric pole when the boat's lower unit struck something. This caused the motor to die, leaving the boat at the mercy of the current. He managed to restart the motor and get it in gear but it was too late. The starboard side of the boat struck a large tree and the port side was immediately pulled down by the current, causing the boat to capsize. Both SAR members were ejected from the boat.

"I rolled with the boat. I was able to pull myself out and climb onto the top of the upside-down vessel," said Sgt. Sisk. He recalled that he was "certainly excited" at that point but not panicked. The boat and Sgt. Sisk were carried downstream until the vessel struck another tree, knocking the officer into the water.

"When I tried to resurface, I found the boat over me. I couldn't get any air and sucked water into my lungs. This is when I started to panic. After a short struggle, I managed to make it to the surface," said Sgt. Sisk.

He continued to drift downstream and ended up pinned around a tree.

"I was unable to hold my head up high enough to get a breath of air and could not push myself off the tree. I believed I was going to die there and started praying for the last time," said Sgt. Sisk.

The current forced his head down, bringing his legs across the tree. Then he began drifting downriver again. He gasped for air and finally grabbed a small limb that held him.

"At times, the current forced me under and I tried to touch bottom but I never did. Finally, the water dropped enough for me to touch. Many thoughts went through my mind – mostly thinking of my family, and I was afraid that I had killed the other people in my boat because I hadn't seen them since my boat rolled. I spent quite a bit of time praying," added Sgt. Sisk.

Eventually his body started shaking uncontrollably for a period of time and then stopped. "I knew I was too cold, and I tried to urinate on myself for warmth, but I couldn't," he said.

Finally Sisk saw lights from the team of rescuers. "As the water dropped to waist level, I attempted to maneuver to another tree. I had a hard time getting my legs to move in the current. I started going toward the road by grabbing from one tree to another. Once I got onto an area where the water was just below my knees, I could see some people coming and I continued toward them," said Sgt. Sisk.

"Once I reached the rescuers, I learned that the other men from my boat had been rescued. I had an overwhelming sense of relief – I don't know if it was due to the others' safety or my own," said Sgt. Sisk.

In the ambulance, the EMTs covered him with a blanket and took his temperature. It was a chilly 91 degrees.

"The EMT explained the reason I'd been unable to urinate earlier was that my body was shutting down functions I didn't need. I'd been suffering more from hypothermia than I'd realized," said Officer Sisk.

This harrowing event could have had a tragic ending. In addition to God, his training and knowing that people would be coming to help, Sgt. Sisk credits his float coat for his survival.

Test drive turns to turmoil

Even in the normal course of work, an officer may find himself unexpectedly in the water. Take, for example, the close call had by Capt. Richard Moore, longtime boating law administrator for the state of Florida.

A few years ago Moore, who works for the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, met with a boat

manufacturer to test a vessel to see how it might work as a law enforcement patrol boat. After he took the wheel and got under way, the salesman talked about how well the boat handled and went on about how well it could turn. He told Moore to get up to speed and put it into a fairly hard turn, so that's just what Moore did.

"[The boat] really did grab and turn well, but it also turned a little out of the ordinary because it didn't lean to one side in the turn. The bad news was that when we hit a small wave from the side, it was almost as if the boat had hit a brick wall going sideways," recalled Moore.

"It was instant turmoil for me at that point. Now I was in the cold water, and I had no idea which way was up or even what exactly had happened to me. You've probably heard about how the mind plays things in slow motion when involved in a traumatic event. Well, that's how I remember the event," said Moore.

He was in uniform with about 15 pounds of extra weight around his waist and in deep water, so he would have to swim vigorously to stay afloat. Suddenly he heard a burst of air and realized that his automatic inflatable life jacket was inflating and would quickly take him to the surface.

"What stuck in my mind at this point was that I was going to get hit by the circling boat. I had read too many boating accident reports where a person had been thrown overboard and the boat went into what has been called the circle of death. I remember thinking over and over, 'I'm about to get hit by the boat.' Fortunately, when I came to the surface, the boat was dead in the water about 40 feet away," said Moore.

Capt. Moore said he learned a couple valuable lessons that day. First, having that inflatable life jacket on ensured that he would find his way to the surface and stay afloat without having to struggle.

"The life jacket wouldn't have done me a bit of good if it had been stored in the boat as most people do," he added.

The second lesson was about the importance of using the engine cutoff lanyard.

(Continued on page 16)



Capt. Richard Moore makes sure to wear his life jacket whenever he's on any type of vessel. This practice certainly played an important role in saving his life during a seemingly routine test drive a few years ago. FWC photo



Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries photo

"I had developed a habit of connecting the lanyard to my life jacket when the boat was under way and hadn't even realized that I had done it," said Moore. "I'm convinced that those two simple precautions saved my life that day. You won't catch me operating a boat without my life jacket on and the lanyard connected from now on!"

Wardens overboard

The importance of wearing a life jacket is certainly not a new idea. Following a narrow escape while on patrol in the early 1990s, three conservation wardens with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources credit their life jackets for their survival.

The officers had been working the walleye spawning flats for some known poachers. Following an uneventful evening on patrol one winter night, the officers decided to call it a night. Recent rains and runoff had

raised the river level and deadheads poked out of the water around every corner. While Carl Mesman operated the spotlight on the front bench, Byron Goetsch drove the boat with Bob Goerlinger sitting on the bench next to him.

As the boat approached a sweeping right corner, Mesman shined the light on the inside of the corner and saw no deadhead. Then he quickly shined the rest of the corner – all clear. Goetsch started his turn through the corner. The boat banked over entering the turn.

"BANG! It sounded like a rifle shot. Suddenly water was all around me. Finally I got to the surface. Once on top there was no sound. I looked left and saw the boat overturned and floating with the current. Bob was floating by it but no sign of Byron," said Warden Mesman.

After a moment there were sudden splashes on the far side of the boat and then Goetsch surfaced at the bow. The impact had caused Goetsch's knee to become wedged into the boat console's opening, trapping him under the boat. Mesman and Goerlinger grabbed Goetsch's hands and helped him up onto the boat. All three officers were able to sit on the overturned boat while it floated downstream.

"When I was in the water there was no sensation of the cold. That changed as we all started to shake from the cold and the events that had just happened," said Mesman. They were thankful for their float coats and suits that helped keep them warm. However, the air temperature was below freezing and hypothermia was a very real possibility.

Fortunately, there was another boater out on the water who ferried the officers to the landing.

It's called a life preserver for a reason

"Things like this are inevitable in our jobs," wrote Warden Carl Mesman with the Wisconsin Department of Natural

Resources, when recounting his close encounter. "No one expects they'll be the one in the water."

As these events illustrate, wearing your life jacket will save your life.

Law enforcement officers are equipped with a variety of gear for their safety – uniforms, shoes, duty belts, handcuffs, body armor and firearms. Officers tasked with on-water duties are also equipped with a life jacket, yet not all are required to wear it while on patrol. At the time of writing, 45 of the 56 member agencies of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators require their officers to wear life jackets while on duty.

The bottom line is that you need to be wearing your life jacket when on the water. As Warden Goetsch said, "In a crash or similar situation, your life jacket will do you absolutely no good if you're not wearing it." ✨



Currently, 46 states and territories require marine patrol officers (and usually other employees as well) to wear Coast Guard-approved life jackets when onboard a boat. In the remaining 10 states and territories, most agencies charged with water patrol do encourage their officers to wear life jackets for added safety. Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources photo.

Your life jacket's got your back

Last year the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) joined forces with some of the world's most acclaimed swimmers to encourage recreational boaters to wear their life jackets. The resulting pro-lifejacket radio campaign captured two prestigious awards – an ADDY award from the American Advertising Federation and First Place at the 2012 International Boating and Water Safety Summit.

Charlie Baglan, with the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, recalled what prompted him to develop the campaign and reach out to the world's greatest swimmers. "It started when I went boating one weekend with my next-door neighbor. I'm a canoe/kayaker and always wear a life jacket. On his fishing boat, I wore one as well out of habit. I asked Tommy, 'Do you not wear a life jacket?' He said, 'I don't fool with those things. I know how to swim.' Apparently, the whole idea of what life jackets do was lost on him," said Baglan.

Baglan's neighbor is just one of thousands of boaters who think they don't need to wear a life jacket. While these people might be good swimmers, they fail to realize that in a time of calamity, being good might not be good enough.

To produce a collection of 30-second announcements, KDFWR teamed up with an Olympic gold medalist, a Navy SEAL, a search and rescue swimmer, a nationally ranked junior swimmer and a world champion swim coach. Whether



Charlie Baglan (left), producer, and Zac Campbell, boating education coordinator, attend the American Advertising Federation banquet to accept an award for the pro-lifejacket PSAs they developed for the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources. KDFWR photo



these individuals are noted for their bravery in adverse water and weather conditions or for their unmatched speed, they all enjoy water recreation in their spare time. Despite being incredibly gifted swimmers, they still wear life jackets at work or at play. The campaign's catchphrase, "Your life jacket's got your back", supplemented by "and the backing of the best swimmers everywhere", sends a clear message about the importance of wearing a life jacket.

Kentucky's boating law administrator, Capt. Mike Fields, said the department uses radio public service announcements to reach boaters on the water or on their way to the boat ramp. "In summers past, we've used this theme that good

swimmers still need life jackets; but we've turned it up about a hundred notches," he noted. "Instead of hearing it from everyday people, they hear it from some of the most notable swimmers on earth."

"The radio announcements turned heads," said Capt. Fields, after returning from the Summit. "Unlike other sports, swimming has few superheroes. What Charlie did in writing and producing this series was seek persons known not for their names, but for positions and achievements set aside for only the best. As a result, this is the finest assemblage of spokespersons the industry has seen for boating safety."

"It's truly an honor to be recognized by a professional association such as this," said Scott Moore, who heads KDFWR's broadcast branch. "Many state offices hire outside agencies to produce their promotional

spots. We do it from within. I'm proud of this accomplishment, and it's extra special to know that Fish & Wildlife won while competing against private sector production facilities."

Listen to the award-winning PSAs at fw.ky.gov/boatingsafety.asp.

"We'd love to share our PSAs with any other state or group," said producer Charlie Baglan. "The tagline 'Your life jacket's got your back' fits in nearly all situations. We can remove the Kentucky tag at the end so that states can add their own. Or we'll be glad to add the tag for any other state or group free of charge to keep consistency in the voices," he added. ✨

Get it on! We'll take it off!

By Mark Chanski

Boating Education Specialist, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Boating Division

Does this grab your attention? If someone said to you, "I can give you \$35!" would that get you thinking? You wouldn't be alone – 577 other people listened! "Get it on! We'll take it off!" is a part of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Boating Division's "Get it on Connecticut, WEAR IT!" campaign that promotes the use of modern life jackets.

By design, "Get it on! We'll take it off!" raises some eyebrows while describing precisely what the campaign does. A boater purchases a new inflatable life jacket and pledges to wear it, and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection takes \$35 off the purchase price of the life jacket!

As in other states that have life jacket awareness campaigns, the goal of Connecticut's program is to increase the number of boaters wearing life jackets. California started the "Wear It" campaign in which they distributed free inflatable life jackets to boaters. The Boating Division took its inspiration from this campaign. However, given Connecticut's budget for this program, it became clear that the number of life jackets that could be purchased would not make a statistical difference in the wear rate. Considerable thought was given to how to do this in a cost-efficient and effective manner. Many ideas were discussed and the one that emerged was the use of a subsidy to promote the purchase of a new inflatable life jacket.

Using a subsidy to encourage the use of life jackets has multiple benefits. Although the boaters receive a significant financial incentive to purchase an inflatable life jacket, it is not enough to cover the entire cost. The boater needs to invest the remaining monetary balance and take the time to purchase a life jacket. The Boating Division believes that this investment adds value to the life jacket and that the boater who makes this investment is more likely to actually wear it. Using subsidies allows the Boating Division to reach more boaters and heightens – within its budget constraints –

the potential to increase the number of boaters wearing life jackets.

The "Get it on! We'll take it off!" campaign started in June of 2009 and ran through September of 2011. The primary rebate distribution method relied on the use of the Boating Division's Public Education and Outreach vessel PRUDENCE.

PRUDENCE pulls alongside a boat and the crew talks to boaters about varying safety topics, often tailoring to the activities currently being engaged in by the boaters. The importance of wearing life jackets and the changes in life jacket technology is a frequent topic. During this conversation, the crew offers the boaters a \$35 rebate form to use when they purchase a new inflatable life jacket and pledge to wear it.

During the promotional period, PRUDENCE spent 77 days on the water and three days at an in-water boat show distributing rebate forms. While on the water, PRUDENCE made contact with 9,183 individuals on 1,891 boats and distributed 441 rebate forms. During the boat show, the crew distributed 67 rebate forms. Two boaters also called the Boating Division regarding the program. These individuals received a rebate form by mail. In total, 510 rebate forms were distributed.

This campaign works because it grabs the boaters' attention. The boaters' interest peaks when they learn about a \$35 rebate and they become actively engaged in a constructive conversation about inflatable life jackets. Ultimately, 67 boaters (13%) redeemed the rebates.

However, the most important fact about this campaign is that all of the 510 boaters spoke enthusiastically with the PRUDENCE crew members about the use and benefits of wearing an inflatable life jacket. Many of these conversations lasted more than 15 minutes. At no time during these conversations did any of the boaters feel pressured or that their time had been wasted. These boaters spoke to the crew because they wanted to. In fact, in most

instances this led to a broader and longer discussion about boating safety. The intention of the rebate is to attract the boaters' attention, inform them of the new life jacket technology, get them to wear life jackets – all in an economical manner. When looked at in this perspective, this program has exceeded expectations.

Using PRUDENCE to educate boaters about the benefits of wearing life jackets and boating safely on the water is a tremendous advantage. It proved easier to "sell" the benefits of wearing life jackets when referencing a boater's personal equipment and location on the water as examples of real-life scenarios. Being on the water made it easy to point out the benefits of wearing a life jacket and harder for the boater to deny them. The PRUDENCE crew also received an overwhelming positive response from the boaters. Many of these conversations ended with the public stating, "You guys are doing a great job, keep it up" or simply, "Keep up the good work."

Using the rebate as a catalyst to strike up a conversation, the Boating Division was able to talk to boaters who otherwise might not be interested in life jackets. Even if a boater refused to take a rebate, the boater heard the "Wear it!" message delivered in a positive manner. Moreover, even if the boaters did not redeem the rebate during the promotional period, they allowed us the time to educate them and a seed was planted that may not have been otherwise. The program allowed the Boating Division to educate boaters about the benefits of wearing life jackets in a constructive and economical manner. The Boating Division was able to collect useful data to improve its programs and receive positive public exposure. The campaign has run smoothly and always finished under budget. Finally, and most importantly, it may have saved a boater's life and prevented a needless tragedy.

Follow "Get it on! We'll take it off!", PRUDENCE and our other boating campaigns on the "Boating in Connecticut" Facebook page. Send questions you may have regarding these programs to Mark.Chanski@ct.gov. *

GET IT ON!



WE'LL TAKE IT OFF AGAIN!

THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WILL SEND YOU A

\$35 REBATE

**WHEN YOU PURCHASE ANY NEW INFLATABLE LIFE JACKET AND
PLEDGE TO WEAR IT WHILE BOATING.**

“Get it on, Connecticut!” is the DEEP’s campaign to promote the use of modern life jackets. By encouraging the use of the latest life jacket technology, the DEEP hopes to save lives and prevent needless tragedies.



American Canoe Association photo

Cold water calls for *added safety*

By Laurel Anders
Boating Law Administrator
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

When compared to other states, Pennsylvania has historically had a low number of recreational boating accidents and fatalities. Still, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) strives to further reduce the number of recreational boating accidents and fatalities on the state's waterways, particularly those attributed to cold-water boating.

For the period of 2002-2011, Pennsylvania's average number of fatalities per 100,000 registered boats was 3.7. Boating accident records revealed a total of 117 fatalities, of which 28 percent occurred between November 1 and April 30. More than 80 percent of these deaths occurred in unpowered boats and motorboats less than 16 feet in length, including canoes, rowboats, kayaks and small open

motorboats. While fatalities during this time of year represented approximately one-third of the total, the percent of these incidents that resulted in death was disproportionately high (67% average) versus the remainder of the year (17% average).

This high fatality rate for the colder months is attributed to the effects of cold-water immersion. When water

temperatures are less than 70 degrees F, cold-water shock is a major factor in boating fatalities. Cold-water shock causes an involuntary gasp (often resulting in aspiration of water), hyperventilation, breathlessness and a reduced ability to control breathing and swim.

Victims who wear a life jacket when exposed to cold water may have potentially life-saving advantages. Life jackets increase insulation from the cold water and add buoyancy for victims who panic, lose coordination or otherwise cannot tread water. Life jackets also reduce the risk of aspiration of water by reducing or eliminating the amount of time the victim's mouth is underwater. Additionally, time is of the essence in cold-water incidents, and life jackets may help increase the success of self-rescue or assisted rescue.

After a careful analysis of its accident data, PFBC staff determined the most significant impact to reducing fatalities in Pennsylvania would be to focus on small and unstable boats during the period most noted for cold water temperatures – November 1 through April 30. PFBC staff discussed various life jacket proposals and consulted with the Boating Advisory Board. They then drafted a regulatory amendment for the Commission's consideration. The Commission's 10-member board approved a regulatory amendment that requires boaters to wear an approved life jacket on canoes, kayaks and boats less than 16 feet in length from Nov. 1 through April 30. The new rule goes into effect on Nov. 1, 2012.

Announcing the new rule

PFBC began utilizing a variety of outreach strategies to reach its primary target audiences – waterfowl hunters, cold-water anglers and avid paddlers – about the new life jacket rule. The first step was to update all existing publications, such as the Pennsylvania Boating Handbook and Summary of Fishing Regulations, to reflect this new requirement. The Commission used a feature wrapper on its bimonthly magazine, Pennsylvania Angler and Boater, to immediately highlight the new requirement and explain why life jacket wear is so important, especially during cold weather months. A special fact sheet detailing the requirement was posted on the Commission's website and distributed through face-to-face visits with various exhibitors at sports and outdoor trade shows throughout late winter and early spring.

Pennsylvania's boating law administrator (BLA) also communicated the regulation change to neighboring states' BLAs so the information could be shared with non-resident boaters and law enforcement efforts on shared waters could be coordinated. The Commission actively engaged its sister agency, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, to assist with communication to hunters through its website, magazine, Summary of Hunting and Trapping Regulations, waterfowl and wildfowl expos and specialty publications for waterfowl hunters.

The Commission will highlight the new life jacket requirement to the Pennsylvania General Assembly at its "Ready, Set, Wear It!" event at the state capitol building during National Safe Boating Week. Camouflage float coats, angling vests, paddling jackets and inflatable PFDs will be the attire of

choice as special guests speak about the importance of their commitment to wearing life jackets at all times on the water, and especially during the timeframe of the new requirement.

Throughout the coming months, PFBC will be working to get the message out to hunters, anglers and boaters in the field. Production is currently under way for waterproof posters and corrugated vinyl signs to be posted in boat dealerships, bait and tackle shops, outfitters/liveries and at all state-owned access areas (e.g., boat launches). These posters and signs will be in place mid-year to give users advance notice of the new requirement.

Partner organizations and individuals, such as fishing clubs, outdoor writers and paddling groups, have a very effective communication network incorporating newsletters, e-alerts, list-serves, tweets and good, old-fashioned word-of-mouth. For this reason, the Commission developed a media resources page with web banners, logos, audio public service announcements, QR codes and a photo gallery that organizations can easily integrate into their own communication tools. Nearly all of the Commission's outreach tools also include a redirect to www.WearItPennsylvania.com where visitors can view a video clip, FAQs and sign the "Wear It Pennsylvania!" pledge.

Continued communication about the importance of life jacket wear will be crucial to the success of Pennsylvania's recreational boating safety program throughout 2012 and beyond. Ideally, success will be measured as reduced fatalities during the months of November through April. However, the greater, but often unmeasured, success will be lives saved year-round. ✱

BOATING

Briefs

Project seeks to validate powerboat skills standards

For the first time in U.S. maritime history, a diverse group of subject matter experts (SMEs) have agreed to an initial set of 37 on-water, skill-based standards that recreational powerboat operators should be able to demonstrate at the entry level. With support from a U.S. Coast Guard grant, US Sailing/US Powerboating has engaged a professional facilitator to assist the SMEs in achieving national consensus on the development of these standards.

The grant oversight committee is now seeking public validation of this initial version of powerboat standards through a national survey targeting recreational boating educators across the U.S. Individuals involved in the recreational boating education community – especially those with experience in on-water or experientially based teaching or training – are urged to participate in a short online survey designed to collect feedback on the content of the power standards. You can access the survey by visiting www.surveymonkey.com/s/On-Water_Power_Skills-Standards_v1.

After validating the content, the SME Team will test the applicability of the powerboat skills standards on the water in a national field test. Long term, the USCG anticipates that these consensus-built, skill-based standards will be recognized as components to be incorporated in any recreational powerboating education program.

For more information on this national on-water standards project, visit bit.ly/uss_national_on_water_standards.

Pennsylvania agency gives away youth life jackets

At the 2012 Allegheny Sport, Travel & Outdoor Show, held Feb. 13-17 in Monroeville, Penn., the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) gave away 50 youth life jackets. During the life jacket demonstration, Dennis Tubbs, PFBC's Southwest Regional Outreach and



Through a collaborative effort, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission conducted a helpful life jacket program earlier this year. Bobber, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' life jacket safety dog, poses with volunteers from the Allegheny County Sheriff's Department, the Ohio Division of Watercraft, the U.S. Army Corps Engineers and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. PFBC photo

Education Coordinator, educated children and their families on the laws regarding life jackets, life jacket options and proper use of life jackets. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' life jacket safety dog, Bobber, also made an appearance. Volunteers from the Allegheny County Sheriff's Department, the Ohio Division of Watercraft, the U.S. Army Corps Engineers and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources properly fitted each participating child with a free Type III life jacket. Children were thrilled to have their life jackets fitted by an officer in full

uniform. The youth life jacket giveaway was sponsored by the Port of Pittsburgh, which donated 30 life jackets, and Cabela's, which donated 20 life jackets.

Teens Afloat program provides low-cost life vests

The BoatUS Foundation's Teens Afloat Program helps keep teens safe on the water by offering discounted vest-style life jackets – at just \$5 – to nonprofit summer camps, schools or any local nonprofit organization providing on-the-water educational programming for teens.

Made possible through a donation from the National Marine Bankers Association, the goal of the program is to provide an affordable way to keep teens safe while they participate in educational programs on local waters.

"We've received many requests over the years from groups providing these kinds of on-the-water educational programs to teens that desperately need life jackets," said BoatUS Foundation Program Manager Alanna Keating. "These programs are great ways to give teens a chance to experience being on the water and at the same time



The BoatUS Foundation Teens Afloat Program in action on Washington's Anacostia River. BoatUS photo

educate them on the importance of life jacket wear.

The life jackets offered are Type III vests – the most comfortable non-inflating type available that normally retail for about \$30 each. Applicants are allowed to request from 10 to 50 life jackets in increments of 10. For more information, visit www.BoatUS.com/Foundation/TeensAfloat.

National Law Enforcement Museum director hired

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) hired Joe Urschel as the first executive director of the National Law Enforcement Museum, which is scheduled to open in 2014 in Washington, D.C.'s, historic Judiciary Square.

Urschel, the former longtime executive director of the new museum, officially assumed the office on March 5 and oversees the development, construction, opening and operation of the new museum. Authorized by Congress in 2000, this will be the first museum to tell the story of American law enforcement. It will be built by the NLEOMF across the street from the National Law

Enforcement Officers Memorial, which bears the names of more than 19,000 federal, state and local law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.

"During his remarkable career, Joe has developed and launched two highly successful national museums in the Washington, D.C., area, and we could not be any prouder or more fortunate to add him to our leadership team," said NLEOMF Chairman and CEO Craig W. Floyd. "As a museum leader with a journalism background, Joe knows how to tell a story in an experiential, educational and entertaining way. He also knows how to turn a great vision into reality."

After serving as a journalist with the *Detroit Free Press* and *USA Today* for nearly 20 years, Mr. Urschel became the Executive Director of the Newseum – an interactive museum of news and journalism – in 1996. Under Mr. Urschel's leadership, the first Newseum opened in Rosslyn, Virginia, in April 1997. Over the next five years, the Newseum attracted more than two million visitors.

National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund launches audio tribute program

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund has launched its Audio Tribute Program, designed to share the stories of law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. The new program is a special way to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Each audio tribute, approximately five minutes long, is created by a team of professionals, including audio engineers, researchers, scriptwriters and voice actors. The tributes contain many defining accomplishments and memorable quotes about an officer – bringing to life each captivating story. Once finished, these audio tributes will be housed in the National Law Enforcement Museum, accessible to museum visitors online and in person when the museum's doors open in 2014. There, listeners will gain a greater understanding of the lives lived and sacrifices made by America's fallen heroes. To learn more about the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund or to donate to the *Audio Tribute Program*, visit www.LawMemorial/AudioTribute.✴

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Exploring the Evolution of Recreational Boating Safety

By Rachel Johnson
Communications Director
National Safe Boating Council

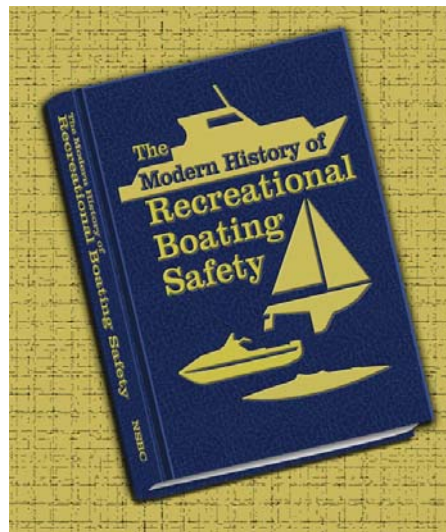
“Over the past fifty years, boating safety organizations like the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) have constructed a flexible, national network in which many separate groups have learned to move together, like the variegated patchwork on a single quilt, to make boating safer. Despite the large and sometimes confusing number of such groups, the major development in the past half-century has not been the growth of organizations but their consolidation; not their divergence in aims and purpose, but their increasing consensus regarding safety policies and practices. The main event has been the creation of the quilt itself, as a unity, and not the increasing number of patches that comprise it.”

If you've had the opportunity to open the cover of *The Modern History of Recreational Boating Safety*, you would be met with the words above in the first page of the introduction. Boating, as a recreational activity, is instilled into our very being as Americans. Many of us who define ourselves as boating professionals in the field only take this more personally and more to heart by living recreational boating, not just participating in recreational boating.

As part of a nearly three-year project with support from the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), the NASBLA regions as well as other vital organizations, and the National Safe Boating Council recognized that, while boating professionals understand the nature of recreational boating, including the successes as well as obstacles and hurdles they must overcome, many were unsure of how boating had gotten to that point. It was with that the NSBC set out to outline the history of recreational boating, helping

to further define a culture so important in our nation's history.

In 2010, the NSBC sent *The Modern History of Recreational Boating Safety* to print. The hardbound book explores the 50-year history by not only covering recreational boating safety but also focusing on some of the professional and volunteer organizations that were involved in defining, promoting and enforcing safe boating.



The primary focus of this publication is modern day recreational boating safety and how it has developed through legislative action, education, engineering and enforcement, all contributing to reducing injuries, preserving the environment and saving lives, to become the safe and enjoyable activity that it is today. The numbers of people that boat, the types of boats and even the waters on which we boat have changed over the past 50 years. *The Modern History of Recreational Boating Safety* helps explain this turn of events. This book explores the ability of

the key organizations to form and expand an effective coalition of public and private entities, including marine and safety equipment manufacturers. The story relies heavily on the archives and records of many different organizations and on oral history interviews with key personnel. It also highlights the major events in the history of boating safety such as the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971, the Biaggi Act and Wallop-Breaux Trust Fund.

In 2011, as the book continued to reach the hands of boating professionals, many brought up an interesting question: "When will this be available for my Kindle?" We are in the midst of a transitional boating world that is changing alongside technology! The NSBC went through the steps to offer the book as a digital resource for e-readers and tablets.

This book is part of a legacy much bigger than we are. This book allows us to learn, understand, and reflect upon recreational boating and the lasting impact it has on our nation. The NSBC offers this valuable resource as part of a bigger mission in conjunction with its partners to validate the hard work and dedication that all professionals and volunteers have put into recreational boating.

To order your copy of *The Modern History of Recreational Boating Safety* (\$49 plus shipping and handling), visit the "Products" tab at www.SafeBoatingCouncil.org. To purchase the book for your e-reader or tablet (\$9.99), visit www.amazon.com and search for the title. If you have any questions regarding *The Modern History of Recreational Boating Safety*, contact the National Safe Boating Council at 703.361.4294 or outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org. ✨



PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

*Robin Freeman
Vice President – Education
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Association*

In my collection of stuff used for displays, booths and other boating safety activities lies a very old, very bulky and historic piece of gear: a cork life jacket. I've used it extensively for "life jacket fashion shows," where it always gets attention (and a huge laugh). In fact, the best fashion show we had was in front of the tall ship HMS Endeavour (replica), with some of the sailors in their period costumes helping us out as models. I'm not sure which was funnier, the young man in the kilt with the cork jacket on or the lowly seaman in his striped uniform popping an inflatable. The crowd loved it, and as an awareness event, it was great.

I bonded with my life jacket (a modern fishing type, not the cork one!) the first day we got our 10' inflatable boat. I'm not a strong swimmer in spite of (or perhaps because of) the annual summer swimming lessons my folks insisted I take. So even before I became an Auxiliarist and boating safety educator, I knew I didn't want to have to depend on myself if the worst should happen and I found myself in the water a long way from shore.

Even then, I'm not sure I really "got it." I had never tried out the jacket in the water, and deep down I was unsure if it really would float me. Eventually I did find out it worked fine – I floated great after being taken tubing at a nearby lake. However, I needed that awareness back on "day one" of boating.

MORE IMPORTANT *Than* A FLOATING KEY CHAIN

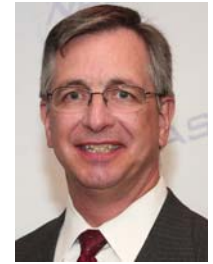
Often, people think of life jackets a lot as they do life rafts: they're there in case of an "abandon ship." Changing that perception to the jacket being part of boating and water sports gear is the enormous awareness challenge.

I had another "a-ha" moment a few years ago when I participated in the BoatU.S. Foundation's Foundation Findings regarding boarding ladders. For this demonstration, held during the International Boating & Water Safety Summit, they had a johnboat in a pool with 8 or 10 different boarding ladders attached. I tried to board the boat using one of the ladders, and I couldn't. After two attempts, I was thoroughly whipped,

and as I floated there in the nice calm pool, I realized that without a life jacket on, I would be unable to go on much longer. Even hanging on to the side of the boat became exhausting. That event gave me firsthand experience to share in classes and other venues.

Events such as that, the Wear It! campaign, Saved By the Jacket and others are doing much to raise awareness of life jackets as an essential part of the gear. I hope more and more people continue to get involved in these types of outreach efforts in your hometowns. Also, by always wearing a life jacket ourselves while in classes, doing vessel safety checks or in booths, we get people's attention and show that a jacket IS just part of what you wear when boating or participating in other water sports. I mean, really....people consider a floating key chain an essential piece of equipment; we need to help them get the awareness that a float for themselves should be at least as important as a float for their keys!

So, we should continue to Wear It! ourselves, any opportunity we can, and demonstrate that life jackets are unobtrusive, comfy, good looking and are "just part of the gear." Keep up the fun events that showcase life jackets in creative ways that will make people smile and – mostly importantly – remember. We have a long way to go, but our example and our efforts are making a difference, one person at a time. ✨



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

Life jackets – a life saver when worn

The concept of life jackets has gone through a tremendous evolution for over a century, and that evolution will continue for years to come. This marks the 100-year anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. The ship tragically sank on April 15, 1912, in the North Atlantic after colliding with an iceberg. Over 1,500 people perished from drowning and from hypothermia. Yet, hundreds survived that day. Some were fortunate enough to get into life boats when departing the sinking ship. Others donned life jackets, floated in the sea, and were picked up by the life boats and stayed alive.

No, life jackets will not save everyone from dying in the water – just as some people still perish in automobile accidents when wearing seat belts. However, wearing seat belts in your car and life jackets on your boat can substantially increase your odds of survival. I would venture to say that hundreds of thousands of lives (or more) have been saved by the use of seat belts and life jackets. I attest to that because I'm one of that fortunate group. Perhaps you are, too.

When you see the types of life jackets that were available on that day in April, 1912, and compare them to the life jackets that are available today, it's amazing to see firsthand the evolution of life jackets. The large, bulky devices have evolved into stylish jackets, suspenders, belt packs and other smaller, more attractive and even more effective life-saving devices.

The effort to enhance the design and marketing of life jackets continues today. The Coast Guard is working on multiple projects with the Personal Flotation Device Manufacturers Association (PFDMA) and other groups to make this happen. For example, there is a rapidly progressing effort to create a North American standard for the design of life jackets. When successful, that will increase the market between the North American countries. A similar effort is being discussed at the international level. Further, the Coast Guard published a final rule on April 3,

2012, that may allow for the future use of inflatable life jackets by certain youth under the age of 16. Such use would have to be established through an industry standard, but this regulatory change has now opened the door to that possibility.

A great deal of thanks goes to the life jacket industry and other organizations that have supported efforts to enhance the design of life jackets to make them ever more comfortable, stylish and desirable to wear. New designs have been created continually. This has resulted in an incredible selection of life jackets for boaters to choose from.

The Coast Guard and the industry have also worked together to enhance the testing and approval of life jackets. Endorsed by such groups as the National Boating Safety Advisory Council, PFDMA and others, the effort has resulted in multiple entities being able to approve life jackets or their components. Hopefully, this will enhance competition, reduce costs, and speed up the approval process. If all goes as desired, this will lead to even more creative and affordable life jackets.

With newly designed life jackets, the hope is always that more people will voluntarily wear them while boating. This hasn't been the case to date, though. A couple of decades ago, many people and organizations were convinced that when the Coast Guard approved inflatable life jackets, the percentage of the boating population who would voluntarily wear life jackets would soar. Regretfully, it has not. Will that be the case with the other new designs, too?

Thirteen years ago, the Coast Guard began measuring life jacket wear in our country. A nonprofit organization, JSI, began receiving a grant from us to conduct an annual observation study that provides national numbers on the wear rate. Even with all the effort to promote life jacket wear and the new designs that have been created, the wear rate continues to be unchanged and unacceptably low. When including all of the state wear

requirements for personal watercraft and youth with the rest of the boating community, the overall wear rate for all boaters on all boats in 2011 was 21.8%. That rate has remained between 21% and 23% for the entire 13 years of the study.

What's even more concerning is the wear rate by those boaters most likely to drown – adults in open motorboats (those exempt from the wear mandates mentioned above). In 2011, the wear rate for this group was only 4.8%. That's alarmingly low, especially when you compare that to the seat belt wear rate in our country of over 80%.

Many people feel that additional mandates for the wear of life jackets are essential. In fact, most states have headed in that direction. Recently, seven states enacted mandates that boaters wear life jackets during the colder months of the year. Nearly all states require the wearing of life jackets by everyone on board a personal watercraft and youth whenever on a boat and outside of a cabin. Many states also require the wearing of life jackets by those being towed behind a boat; and the list goes on.

Even the National Boating Safety Advisory Council has advised the Coast Guard to mandate the wearing of life jackets by everyone on board a boat less than 18' in length and on board any size personal watercraft or paddlecraft. A decision is yet to be made on this recommendation, but it's one that we take to heart, knowing that there is no other alternative that could save so many lives so quickly. However, there is the concern to help keep boating enjoyable, too. That's the challenge before us now, saving more lives vs. limiting mandates.

Whatever the future holds, rest assured that the Coast Guard, the life jacket industry and the many other partners in the boating community will continue to work together to enhance the boating opportunities in our nation. We want to help you to have a fun experience and return home safely at the end of each boating day.

Life Jackets

By Joe Carro
Program Operations Branch
Boating Safety Division
Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety
U.S. Coast Guard

What can we say about life jackets? Well, let's strap one on and find out!

As with many of the things I speak of or am asked about, I always start with the regulations. Then we can continue with any detailed questions about stowage, inspection, use philosophy and anything new.

Carriage requirements

What are the carriage requirements for life jackets? Federal requirements for recreational vessels can be found in 33 CFR 175.11. Other requirements, generally associated with commercial vessels, can be found in 46 CFR 25.

In short, all recreational vessels that are propelled or controlled by machinery, sails, oars, paddles, poles or another vessel are required to have on board at least one wearable Type I, II or III life jacket for each person aboard. These must be Coast Guard approved, in good and serviceable condition, the appropriate size for the intended wearer and properly stowed. A wearable Type V device may be carried as a substitute as indicated on the device's label. Vessels 16' or more in length are also required to carry a Type IV (throwable) device. Additional exemptions allow for some vessels (racing shells, rowing sculls, racing canoes, racing kayaks, sailboards) to not carry any life jackets or throwable devices.

Check that inflatable life jackets are in good and serviceable condition, including a properly armed inflator mechanism, air chambers capable of holding air, working oral inflation tubes, lanyard and inflator status indicators. For these Coast Guard-approved devices, the owner's manual has details for inflation system tests, re-arming and proper use.

Regulations for children (on waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States):

No person may operate a recreational vessel under way with any child under 13 years old aboard unless each child is either wearing a Coast Guard approved life jacket or is below decks or in an enclosed cabin.

I mentioned commercial vessels above because, while the requirements for these life jackets may not apply to recreational vessels, they enhance safety; you may want to consider following their example on your recreational vessel. Some of their requirements include marking the life jacket with the vessel name, number or owner's name; adding retro-reflective material; and a life jacket light. To have a fully "tricked out" life jacket, you can also add a whistle. These are all great ideas for your personal life jacket, regardless of use.

Remember that the above are the Coast Guard requirements. Individual state requirements can and do vary, significantly in some cases.

For life jackets, state laws can modify federal requirements under certain conditions under 46 U.S.C. 4306 and an Exemption from Preemption clause in 33 CFR 175.5. This regulatory clause allows for states to have additional requirements regarding the wearing and carriage of life jackets for children, canoes or kayaks, sailboards and personal watercraft. Two common examples are that child ages for life jacket wear vary from state to state. Another is life jacket wear while operating a personal watercraft. The Coast Guard recognizes the state child life jacket wear differences and will enforce the specific state requirements within those state waters.

Stowing your life jacket

Wearable life jackets – Types I, II and III – must be stowed so as to be "readily accessible." This includes Type V if substituted as the approved wearable life jacket. Throwable devices must be "immediately available." Readily accessible means "reached in a reasonable amount of

time." Immediately available means "instant access to the device to respond to an emergency." An important part of the readily accessible stowage requirement is that it is unrelated to the proximity of individuals on the boat to the device or if the device is still in its original factory plastic bag.

Here is the deal. It is the actual stowage location of the life jackets that matters. For example, if the life jackets are stowed in a deck box on the stern of the vessel and everyone is up on the bow sunning or whatever, the jackets are still properly stowed even though the individuals aboard are not right next to them. Regarding the plastic bags, these are usually only found on Types I and II, and some inflatables. Having the life jacket in the plastic bag in and of itself does NOT make it inaccessible. Here's the really important part of the aforementioned: to inspect the device and verify that it is Coast Guard approved and the correct size and to remove all the tags, etc., the life jacket needs to come out of the bag. Note: This does not apply to those commercially produced life jacket bags that have the big words "LIFE JACKETS INSIDE" on the bag.

What's new

The U.S. Coast Guard's Office of Design and Engineering Standards is well under way working on future life jackets that may have one approval being accepted on both sides of the U.S./Canadian border. A new North American standard incorporating the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 12402 standards is being considered. These performance-based standards will focus on life-saving potential, improved wearability, comfort and choices for USCG-approved life jackets.

In the meantime, our work continues. We have life jacket loaner programs; we've targeted dads, moms, kids, hunters, anglers and paddlers with one message: WEAR IT! Keep up this good work, my friends. ★



Matthew Long
NASBLA
Government Affairs Director

Study highlights **benefits** of **Excise Taxes**

The Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund has evolved over time to include several different income streams. The largest is the excise tax on motorboat fuels, which accounts for around two-thirds of the Fund. But there are several other taxes that are vital to the continued funding of the Trust Fund. One of these, excise tax on certain types of fishing equipment, has actually been the source of some controversy over the years. The difficulty lies in the fact that no one had really looked at the return on investment on contributing to the Trust Fund, until now.

To be more accurate, the acclaimed outdoor recreation statistician Rob Southwick took a look at the shooting sports industry in order to answer the same question for that industry. While no such survey has been done specifically for the sportfish industry, I think that it's safe to say that the results will be very similar. So, what did the Southwick study discover? An incredible return on investment, for one.

The report, *Excise Tax Programs: A Cycle of Success*, discovered that for more than 60

years the shooting sports industry has enjoyed a more than 1,000 percent return on their excise tax investment – an incredible number. But how does it happen?

Quarterly, manufacturers of hunting, shooting and fishing equipment transfer excise tax payments to the federal government. The payment is between 10 and 11 percent on most products and, according to Southwick, the result is “abundant, sustainable wildlife and fish populations and diverse hunting and fishing opportunities.” In a great example of build it and they shall come, these opportunities in turn motivate even more anglers and sportsmen to participate in the activity, buying even more equipment. This cycle has been repeated and embellished for decades, creating the massive return on investment we see today.

From the Southwick study: Between 1970 and 2006, hunting and shooting sports manufacturers saw a 1,000 percent annual return on their excise tax investments. Between 1955 and 2006, sport fishing manufacturers saw a 2,157 percent annual return on excise taxes paid.

The North American model of wildlife management and conservation has led to phenomenal success, like these highlighted in the Southwick report:

- By 1950, pollution and siltation had reduced or even eliminated fish in many waters that once were highly productive. Sport Fish Restoration investments turned many fisheries around and sparked a 200 percent increase in tackle sales (in constant dollars) since 1955.
- In 1937, states on average allowed 30 days of waterfowl hunting. In 2010, 11 states provided 150 or more waterfowl hunting days, 23 states provided 120 days, and 13 states provided more than 90.
- By the 1950s, the oily and inedible alewife littered the beaches of the Great Lakes and sport fishing was nearly nonexistent.

Now, thanks in part to Sport Fish Restoration funds, world-class sport fisheries in the Great Lakes for salmon, trout, walleye and yellow perch annually generate more than \$2 billion in retail sales and support more than 58,000 jobs.

- In 1937, Wyoming elk hunters had only limited local seasons. Today, 170 days of elk hunting are available for various specialty hunts. More than 53,000 hunters put in more than 412,000 hunter-days devoted to elk hunting, harvesting approximately 23,000 elk.

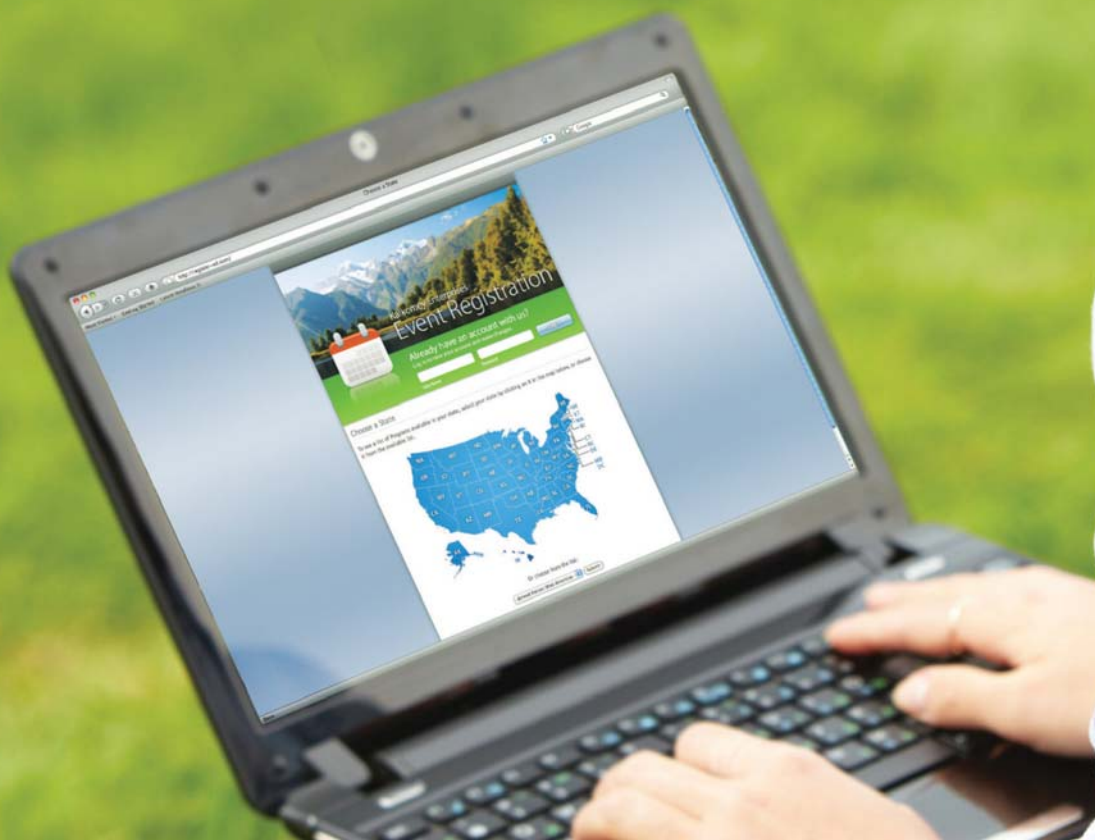
We in the boating safety community have also seen great successes because of the excise taxes paid into the Trust Fund. Because of the 50/50 match, for every dollar contributed by the user through excise taxes, another dollar is automatically matched and spent along with it. These monies have accounted for the establishment of boating safety divisions in every state and territory and more importantly, countless lives saved.

Along with grant dollars available through other Trust Fund programs, thousands of access sites have been created, pump out stations built and new recreation opportunities for boaters and anglers in every state and territory in the country. Without the infusion of excise taxes into the states, along with local matches, none of this would be possible. In the great American spirit of conservation and resource management, these dollars have multiplied into a robust, multi-billion dollar investment in the outdoors and keeping people safe as they recreate.

The Southwick study does more than just identify the return on investment of contributing to the Trust Fund; I think most of us have realized that for a long time. No, the study itself is a great affirmation that the American model of resource management and conservation is not only unique, but the most participatory and successful in the world. ✨

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2012-13 Recreational Boating Safety Calendar

**May
1-31**

National Drowning Prevention Month
www.ndpa.org

**15
National Safe Boating Week
Congressional Reception**

Washington, D.C.
outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org

**18
Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day**
www.safeboatingcampaign.org
outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org

**19
Ready! Set! Wear It!**
www.safeboatingcampaign.org
outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org

**19-25
National Safe Boating Week**
www.safeboatingcampaign.org
outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org

**June
2-10
National Fishing & Boating Week**
www.takemefishing.org
rbff@rbff.org

**9
National Marina Day**
www.nationalmarinaday.org

**10-13
Western States Boating
Administrators Association
Annual Conference**
Breckenridge, Colorado
pfiffner@ndow.gov

**10-13
Personal Flotation Device
Manufacturers Association
Annual Conference**
St. Pete Beach, Florida
www.pfdma.org

**13-15
NASBLA**

Executive Board Meeting
Breckenridge, Colorado
www.nasbla.org
ron@nasbla.org
859.225.94

**22-24
Operation Dry Water**
www.OperationDryWater.org
ron@nasbla.org

**26-27
Sailing Industry Conference**
Newport, Rhode Island
www.sailamerica.com
info@sailamerica.com
401.289.2540

**July
16-20
NASBLA**
BLA Academy
Lexington, Kentucky
www.nasbla.org
ron@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

**August
22-26
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
National Conference**
San Antonio, Texas
<http://www.cgaua.org>

**September
2-9
United States Power Squadrons
Governing Board Meeting**
Detroit, Michigan
www.usps.org

**8-12
NASBLA**
Annual Conference
Mobile, Alabama
www.nasbla.org
info@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

**October
9-11
National Boating Safety
Advisory Council**
Washington, D.C.

**November
2-4
American Canoe Association
National Paddlesports
Conference**
Charleston, South Carolina
www.americancanoe.org
cstec@americancanoe.org
540.907.4460

**2013
January
13-20
United States Power Squadrons
Annual Meeting**
Jacksonville, Florida
www.usps.org

Mark Your Calendar!



**September 8-12, 2012
NASBLA's 53rd Annual Conference**
Mobile, Alabama
www.nasbla.org