

## **COMMUNICATING BOATING SAFETY: LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PIOS**

The [Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Safety Program](#) describes the U.S. Coast Guard's goals and strategies to ensure the public has a safe, secure, and enjoyable recreational boating experience by implementing programs that minimize the loss of life, personal injury, and property damage while cooperating with environmental and national security efforts.

One strategy to ensure the public has a safe, secure, and enjoyable recreational boating safety experience is support from law enforcement officers and public information officers in communicating boating safety messages.

Each interaction between recreational boaters and law enforcement personnel – or between media reporters and public information officers – offers the possibility for educational outreach to the public.

The intent of this strategy is to enlist the support of law enforcement personnel and PIOs, provide them with applicable information, and capture statistically the number of interactions and possible effects. One of the first steps included as part of this strategy is to define valid and easy to measure statistics (e.g., percentage of boardings free of citations, contacts made, number of stickers/brochures distributed to boaters, and number of presentations/ participants).

Law enforcement officers or public information officers responding to the media relative to boating accidents should be trained to always answer three questions, whether they are "asked" or not.

1. Were life jackets available and/or worn and would it or did it make a difference regarding this accident?
2. Were alcohol or drugs a possible contributing factor regarding the investigated accident?
3. Were there possible violations of the rules of the road that are being investigated regarding this accident?

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