



Calaveras County Sheriff's Office Hosts Boating School (Inland Operators Course)

The Calaveras County Sheriff's Marine Safety Division is staffed year-round and is tasked with patrolling the waterways of Calaveras County. They ensure boating rules and regulations are followed with an emphasis on safety and boater education. With a population of roughly 47,000 people in Calaveras County and an increasing amount of tourist boating traffic, the summer boat patrol period is busy with the enforcement of laws, investigation of accidents and rescue operations. A very important component of keeping the lakes safe and enforcing the law is boating safety education. The Sheriff's Office strongly encourages all boating enthusiasts to take a boater safety course.

This week, Captain Villegas and Sergeant Belshe are instructing the California State Parks Department of Boating and Waterway "Inland Operators Course" on Lake Melones and the Calaveras High School pool. Along with deputies from 13 other agencies, Calaveras County Lieutenant Eberhardt, Deputy Byrd and Deputy Ruiz are attending the class for the first time.

Division of Boating and Waterways training courses are designed to accommodate all levels of boating skills. The Inland Operators course is a five-day, 40-hour certified introductory course for boating enforcement officers. This course will provide vessel operators with the skills necessary to safely operate a public safety vessel on inland rivers and lakes. Participants will gain practical knowledge regarding nomenclature, vessel inspections, navigation rules, aids to navigation, charts, weather, boating law, patrol techniques, boating under the influence (BUI), and boating accident investigation (BAI) scenarios. Other topics covered include vessel operation, trailering, launching, recovery, operating, and conducting on-water enforcement stops, as well as a vigorous swim assessment where officers will learn and demonstrate skills necessary for water survival.

Please remember the following tips from the Department of Boating and Waterways when operating or enjoying water activities.

- **Take a safe boating course and get your California Boater Card**
 - Even the most experienced boaters can learn from boating safety courses.
 - As of Jan. 1, 2021, all operators of motorized vessels on California waterways who are 40 years of age and younger are required to carry a lifetime boater card. By 2025, all operators of motorized vessels will be required to carry one regardless of age.
- **Conduct a Vessel Check:**
 - Make sure you have the right safety equipment on board your boat, such as life jackets, flares, navigation lights, a horn or whistle, and a first aid kit.
 - Click [here](#) to download the virtual safety check form or to schedule a vessel safety check. File a Float Plan: Email/text a float plan to a loved one or friend with details of your trip in the event of an emergency.
- **Check the weather.**
 - Know the latest weather forecast prior to going out and check regularly for changing conditions.
- **Wear a Life Jacket:**
 - Everyone should wear a properly fitted US. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when in or near the water. You never know when an accident may happen, and a life jacket can help save you until search and rescue help can arrive.

Office of the Sheriff

1045 Jeff Tuttle Drive
San Andreas, CA 95249



Rick DiBasilio, Sheriff

209.754.6500
sheriff@co.calaveras.ca.us

- In swift water, even the strongest swimmers may be easily overwhelmed. By the time a person is struggling in the water, a rescue is extremely unlikely and places the rescuer at risk.
- **Avoid Alcohol:**
 - Do not drink and boat. Alcohol continues to be the leading known contributing factor in recreational boating deaths in the United States.
 - It is against the law in California to operate a boat or water ski with a blood concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or more. Officers may arrest boaters with a BAC of less than 0.08% if conditions are deemed unsafe.
 - BUI convictions can result in up to six months in jail and/or fines of up to \$1,000. Two convictions within seven years could add a jail term of up to one year. Boaters caught operating under the influence may also have their voyage terminated and their vessel impounded.
- **ACTIVELY Supervise Children:**
 - Actively supervise children in and around open bodies of water, giving them your undivided attention. Do not assume that someone is watching them.
 - Appoint a designated “water watcher,” taking turns with other adults.
 - Teach children that swimming in open water is not the same as swimming in a pool: they need to be aware of uneven surfaces, river currents, ocean undertow and changing weather.
- **Stow it, don’t throw it.**
 - Keep your trash on-board. Never throw garbage into waterways. Take advantage of shore-side facilities to recycle plastic, glass, metal and paper.
 - Used fishing line can be deposited at fishing-line recycling stations.
 - Download helpful boating applications on your phone. The Boat CA App is a free mobile app that shows you boating facilities, life jacket loan stations, laws, boat registration and more.

For more water safety information, including boating laws please visit
dbw.parks.ca.gov/BoatingSafety.