



**LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

*Law Enforcement Off The Pavement*

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**DNR LAW ENFORCEMENT’S SUMMER BOATING RECAP: BOATING FATALITIES DOWN BUT WATER SAFETY EFFORTS CONTINUE**

SOCIAL CIRCLE, GA – Cool weather has arrived and boating season, which unofficially runs from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, has ended for 2017. Throughout the spring and summer, DNR Law Enforcement was very active on Georgia’s waterways, enforcing boating laws and encouraging boaters to safely enjoy their time on the lakes and rivers. Off the water, Division staff, in partnership with other government and private stakeholders, developed and implemented water safety initiatives to reduce the number of water-related deaths in the state. The recap of boating season stats and other activities carried out by DNR Law Enforcement shows that boating fatalities were down for 2017, but the Division knows there is clearly much more work to do to promote water safety.

In March of 2017, the Division began a partnership with First Lady Sandra Deal and a number of federal, state and private partners in an anti-drowning campaign, titled “SPLASH,” with the goal of reducing all water-related deaths in Georgia. In just eight months, the campaign has resulted in stenciling over 200 boat ramps with a safety message; identified locations statewide for the placement of life jacket loaner boards; developed printed materials, a web site, Facebook page, and an Information & Education program for use by schools and other organizations. The campaign’s current focus is to secure donations for building materials and life jackets for the loaner boards. Plans are to continue the SPLASH initiative indefinitely. The acronym highlights positive actions for water safety.

Supervision - always watch children.

Prevention – properly secure swimming areas and make safety equipment easily accessible.

Life jackets – wear them.

Arms-length - keep small children close.

Swim lessons – take them.

Have a water safety plan.

The week before the Memorial Day weekend, DNR Law Enforcement teamed up with the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety and the Department of Public Safety for the “Summer ’17 Safety Tour.” The tour, a series of media events at waterways across the state, is a joint effort of the agencies to promote life jacket and seat belt wear, safe boat operation and highway driving, and to discourage distracted driving (cell phones use) and driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs. This year’s stops included lakes Lanier, Hartwell, West Point, and Blackshear.

The weekend before the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, Georgia Game Wardens joined with boating officers across the nation in heightened awareness and enforcement of boating under the influence (BUI) laws as part of the national [Operation Dry Water](#) (ODW) campaign. In partnership with the [National Association of State Boating Law Administrators](#) (NASBLA), ODW is designed to increase boater awareness of the hazards of BUI, and decrease the number of accidents and deaths attributed to impaired boating. During the weekend, 177 Georgia Game Wardens patrolled 47 different waterways and contacted almost 4,800 boaters. They issued 249 boating citations and 437 warnings, and removed 34 drunk boaters from the state’s waterways. They also worked one drowning and nine boating incidents that resulted in five injuries. Across the nation, statistics for ODW included 518 BUI arrests, and 33,243 citations and safety warnings issued. Over 600 agencies with 7,150 officers participated and nationally they made 243,853 boater contacts.

Final 2017 Georgia statistics for the summer include 187 BUI arrests, 53 drownings, 147 boating incidents that resulted in five fatalities. For comparison, in 2016 there were 182 BUIs, 44 drownings, 116 boating incidents resulting in 19 fatalities.

Visit [gadnrle.org](http://gadnrle.org) or [operationdrywater.org](http://operationdrywater.org) for more information about boating under the influence, and the SPLASH Facebook page for water safety info at [www.facebook.com/SPLASHga/](http://www.facebook.com/SPLASHga/)

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