



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## NEWS RELEASE

### LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Contact: Mark McKinnon, Public Affairs Officer  
Office: (706) 557-3106 Cell: (404) 387-7780  
[mark.mckinnon@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:mark.mckinnon@dnr.ga.gov)



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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## BOAT SOBER, BOAT SAFE, THIS LABOR DAY WEEKEND

*DNR Game Wardens urge caution on state waterways*

**SOCIAL CIRCLE, GA** - The upcoming Labor Day holiday weekend will likely be busy on waterways across the state - busy with boaters getting that last, long, warm weekend on their favorite lake or river. It will also be busy for DNR Law Enforcement Division Game Wardens as they make sure those boaters follow the rules and boat sober and safe.

“The Labor Day weekend is not usually as busy as Memorial Day or July 4<sup>th</sup>, but there is still a need for increased safety awareness from all boaters,” says Lt. Col. Jeff Weaver, assistant director of DNR’s Law Enforcement Division. “As always, our Game Wardens will be out in force and will strictly enforce all boating laws, particularly those related to BUI and reckless conduct, and our goal is for everyone to have fun and go home safely at the end of the weekend.”

So far this year there have been 98 boating incidents, three boating incident-related fatalities and 43 total drownings on Georgia waters. Game Wardens also have issued a total of 171 boating under the influence citations. In all of last year, there were 135 boating incidents, 15 boating incident-related fatalities, 63 drownings and 189 BUI citations on state waters.

DNR Law Enforcement encourages all boaters to take personal responsibility for safety by doing the following:

- *Designate an operator.* Do not drink and operate a boat. A blood alcohol content over .08 is legally drunk.
- *Take a boating safety course.* Visit <https://gadnrle.org/boating-education> for course listings. The boater education law states that anyone born on or after January 1, 1998 must successfully complete a DNR-approved boater education course in order to operate a vessel on state waters. EVERYONE is encouraged to take one.
- *Wear a life jacket.* Children under 13 years of age are required by law to wear a life jacket while onboard a moving vessel, but it’s recommended for EVERYONE to wear a life jacket.
- *Don’t overload your boat with people or equipment.* Check on the capacity plate for the maximum weight or the maximum number of people the boat can safely carry.
- *Use navigation lights at ALL times when on the water at night.* Check lights *before* it gets dark.
- *Watch your speed.* The 100-foot law applies to ALL size vessels and prohibits operation at speeds greater than idle speed within 100 feet of any vessel, unless overtaking or meeting another vessel in compliance with the rules of the road.

For more information, visit [www.gadnrle.org/boating-rules-regulations](http://www.gadnrle.org/boating-rules-regulations) .

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*Law Enforcement Off the Pavement*