THE ROLE OF BOATING SAFETY AS RELATED TO ROUTINE LAW ENFORCEMENT DUTIES

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Where there are fish and game, there is usually water; where there is water, there is usually recreational boating; and, where there is baoting in these United States, there is the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-75).

The Act, an example of dynamic legislation, specifically cites three essential elements that comprise what we believe is an effective boating safety program. The three elements are: numbering, education, and enforcement.

By numbering, we are able to keep track of the millions of recreational craft that ply our nation's waters; by education, we are able to make the American boating public a *knowledgeable* boating public; and, by enforcement, we have the authority to insure the overall effectiveness of the Federal Boat Safety Act.

However, to make Public Law 92-75 a tool that would benefit the entire boating public, the three basic elements mentioned earlier require a conscientious effort on the part of many groups. In the law itself, Congress assigned responsibility for boating safety programs to the U. S. Coast Guard, to the states, to the boating industry, and to the volunteer organizations. Thus, the implementation of the law, by Congressional mandate, requires uniformity as well as reciprocity and cooperation, particularly between the federal and state governments.

Note that it is *not* the intention of the federal government to usurp or deny the authority of the state in matters relating to boating safety. It *was* the intention of Congress, however, to initiate a broad program, national in scope, that could have some measure of control over the ever-increasing accident rates associated with recreational boating.

Boating accidents, however, are by no means limited to those persons who go out to cruise or to sail! Coast Guard statistics indicate that many fatalities occur among those who go out to hunt and to fish. In 1972, for example, 213 accidents involving hunters and fishermen were reported to the Coast Guard. As a result of those 213 accidents, there were 261 drowning victims. The accidents involved many types of craft: open motorboats, rowboats, canoes, and sailboats. 155 of the accidents occurred on inland waters, eight on the oceans and the Gulf of Mexico, forty-one on tidal waters of rivers and bays, and nine on the Great Lakes. The types of casualties ran the gamut; but, 117 were the result of capsizings, and 58 were reported as falls overboard. In terms of operator age and training, we broke down the statistics as follows:

AGE	NUMBER OF OPERATORS	NUMBER HAVING TRAINING
15-30	36	1
30-45	59	4
45-60	73	4
60-70	36	1
over 70	9	0

The causes of the accidents, all too familiar, included: improper loading, uneven loading and overloading; standing in the boat; reckless operation; disregard for the weather; and, poor boat maintenance.

In most cases, we were able to pinpoint contributing factors to fatalities. 45 of the people could not swim; 31 were in extremely bad weather and sea conditions; 17 victims were handicapped by heavy clothing; 14 were victims of exhaustion; 12 were trapped in lines or under-growth; 9 were under the influence of intoxicants or drugs; 8 died from over-exposure, and 8 more had panicked; 7 were in poor physical condition; 7 were trapped in the vessel. The saddest aspect of the tragic statistics is that 170 of the deaths occurred because personal flotation devices (PFDs) were not worn by the victims. Ironically, in 121 of the cases, PFDs *were* available, but not used!

The last statistics were the most distressing to us in the U. S. Coast Guard. Why would anyone, including he who believes that he is a good swimmer, go aboard a boat without carrying...and using... personal flotation devices?

How, then, do we as law enforcement officers go about reducing the alarming statistics? I can only give you the Coast Guard's philosophy. We believe that law enforcement is a necessity, though it need not be an end unto itself. Our experience and research has proven that proper enforcement techniques contribute greatly to boating safety; and, after all, *safety* is the end product we want! We do not want as an end product citations, fines, or arrests. Enforcement, we believe, should be the last resort; and, we feel that enforcement is a tool that works hand-in-hand with education. By the way....conservation officers for the state of Iowa have stopped wearing side arms during marine safety patrols, and they have found a reduction in both arrests and in resistance to arrests.

We assume that manufacturers are building safer boats; that boatmen want accident-free usage of those boats. We also assume that hunters and fishermen want safe hunting and fishing trips and want to bring their catches back. But, in spite of all of the assumptions, statistics show that many members of the public are not motivated to learn and observe safety standards for themselves. So it is that law enforcement, applied in its finest public relations sense, can be an effective tool for motivating the public to learn (and practice) safe boating techniques.

In the realm of law enforcement, the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 has given us one particularly effective tool. Let me explain. Coast Guard boating safety personnel have the power to order the correction of especially hazardous boating conditions. That is, where certain unsafe conditions exist, and the Boarding Officer determines that the conditions are "especially hazardous," he has the authority to require those conditions to be corrected on the spot. If that cannot be done, the Officer can direct the boat to return to mooring. This is an important and powerful authority; and, the Coast Guard is determined that the authority will not be abused.

To insure against abuse, and to provide competent, qualified boating safety officers, the Coast Guard has established the National Boating Safety School at Yorktown, Virginia. Who can attend the school? Coast Guardsmen assigned to boating safety detachments (BOSDETs) comprise the bulk of the student body; but, in addition, state personnel assigned to boating safety-related programs are also encouraged to attend.

The curriculum for the school consists of three two-week modules. During the first two weeks of the school, the instruction covers laws, regulations, equipment requirements, boat examination techniques, negligent operation, firefighting, arrest procedures, and documentation. The second two-week period is devoted to instructor training, public speaking, impromptu talks, test development, actual boat handling and boarding, seamanship, and marine events. The final two weeks include such topics as Rules of the Road, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary,

boating accidents, pollution, search and rescue, state programs, and public relations. You may choose to attend the entire six weeks, or any of the two-week segments.

For those who cannot attend the school, there is a Boating Safety Correspondence Course, known as BOSAF-I. The course is available from my office for state enforcement personnel. Just write to U. S. Coast Guard (G-BBE-2), Washington, D.C. 20590.

Many of your states have already sent people to attend the National Boating Safety School; and many persons have studied the Correspondence Course. I encourage all of you to take advantage of what we consider to be an excellent program. If money is a problem, expenses in conjunction with attendence at NBSS are considered appropriate expenditures under the financial assistance program to the states from the federal government.

The goal of the training is to provide the highest degree of expertise and knowledge to the law enforcement officer who is associated with boating as part of his professional duties.

BOATING ACCIDENTS INVOLVING HUNTERS AND FISHERMEN CALENDAR YEAR 1972

— U.S. COAST GUARD STATISTICS —

Number of cases reported	213	
Number of deaths involved	261	(drownings)
	8	(heart attack, etc.)
Type of craft involved	124	(open motorboats)
	38	(rowboats)
	7	(canoes)
	3	(sailboats)
	9	(cabin motorboats)
	3	(others; i.e. rafts)
	29	(unknown types)
Of the 213 cases	159	were fishing underway
	31	were fishing, not underway
	23	were hunting underway
Of the 213 cases, all boats carried 1 to 4 passengers; 25% had operator only.		
Of the 213 cases	131	occurred in daylight
	40	occurred at night
	42	were unknown
Of the 213 cases	155	occurred on inland waters
	8	occurred on oceans and on the Gulf of Mexico
	41	occurred on tidal waters of rivers and bays
	9	occurred on the Great Lakes
Type of casualty reported	117	capsizings
	58	falls overboard
	8	sinkings
	8	floodings
	3	hit other vessels
	3	hit floating objects

..... 6 hit fixed objects
..... 1 disappearance (person)
..... 1 disappearance (craft)
..... 8 unknowns

Of the 213 cases, operators' age, training, and experience was as follows:

Age	Number Of Operators	Number Having Training	Average Hours Of Experience
15-30	36	1	20-100
30-45	59	4	100-500
45-60	73	4	100-500
60-70	36	1	100-500
over 70	9	0	100-500

Of the 213 cases, the following were cited as reasons for casualties:

..... 40 standing up in boat
..... 39 improper or uneven loading
..... 12 overloading
..... 9 careless or reckless operation
..... 23 disregard of weather
..... 7 bad weather
..... 39 miscellaneous (poor maintenance, engine failure, lightning, etc.)
..... 44 unknowns

Of 261 drownings, the following were cited as contributing causes:

..... 45 could not swim
..... 31 in extreme weather and sea conditions
..... 17 handicapped by heavy clothing
..... 14 failed from exhaustion
..... 12 trapped in lines or under-growth
..... 9 under influence of drugs or intoxicants
..... 8 from exposure
..... 8 panicked
..... 7 poor physical condition (heart trouble, etc.)
..... 7 trapped or submerged by vessel
..... 5 too far from nearest help
..... 3 improper use of PFDs
..... 1 failure of PFD
..... 2 injured in casualty
..... 1 rescue hindered by extreme weather
..... 91 unknowns

Of the 261 drownings.....121 were from vessels equipped with PFDs but not used
..... 49 were from vessels NOT equipped with PFDs
..... 21 were from vessels equipped with PFDs, and the PFDs WERE used
..... 70 unknowns

Of the 213 cases, the average age of victims, by percentage:

5 to 25	12%
25 to 35	15%
35 to 45	12%
45 to 65	35%
over 65	12%
unknown	13%

LAW ENFORCEMENT'S SUPPORT OF COASTAL FISHERIES

by
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INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement and Coastal Fisheries have as their goal, the maximum production and utilization of Georgia's natural resources.

How this is accomplished on Georgia's coast is an inneraction with Coastal Fisheries providing the technical knowledge for legislation and management which is necessary to insure the biological understanding of growth and reproduction of the resource and its environment, and to recommend that which will insure maximum returns. Law enforcement's part in achieving this goal is to provide the professional law enforcement that will insure that those laws enacted to protect our natural resources are complied with and as an end result, through coordination and cooperation with Coastal Fisheries, this goal is achieved.

COASTAL FISHERIES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Within the Coastal Fisheries Section are Sports Fisheries. Coastal Fisheries and Resource Management all of which are conducting research in separate areas of Georgia's coastal resources. Only since 1954 has Georgia been in the field of marine research, however, through adequate funding and staffing, major contributions have been made toward understanding, managing and improving our coastal resources. (See appendix A for organizational chart.) The Sports Fisheries Section has an artificial reef project that has been undertaken to develop and enhance Georgia's marine fishery resource through habitat improvement. Reefs are being constructed using discarded automobile tires and concrete in offshore areas of virtually no bottom relief and very little marine life. As part of this project a large steel tug was sunk during July of this year which has shown tremendous success in attracting marine life. Construction of 14