

NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK

National Safe Boating Week is May 20-27 and it comes at the right time. The weather has changed, the water is warming and everyone is beginning to use their boats for the first time this season. It is the time to consider water and boating safety and discuss it amongst family and friends. The water is fun to play on but it can be cruel if you do not respect it.

This year the counties of Essex, King William, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland acknowledged National Safe Boating Week and offered a proclamation to their citizens to be safe while boating and to always **“WEAR A LIFE JACKET”**. Combined there are 13,489 boats registered in these counties and many more coming to enjoy our rivers and waterways. We need every boater to be safe at all times.

Are you ready for boating this year? The law now requires anyone who operates a boat with a greater than 10 horse power engine to have taken, passed and be able to prove you have taken a safe boating course. Has your vessel had a Vessel Safety Check to be sure it is seaworthy? Of course you have looked it over but sometimes that extra set of trained eyes see things you may not. The USCG Auxiliary offers the Boating Safety Course and/or Vessel Exams and we patrol the waters to help keep them safe.

In 2016 Flotilla 3-10 taught water safety in 5 Northern Neck Elementary Schools and in 2017 we are teaching in 9. We reach out to the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts as well as local civic organizations. Boating safety is not an accident. You are never too young or old to learn and exercise good boating safety. Do you wear a life jacket? Did you realize 80% of boating fatalities are not wearing life jackets?

We have all heard our kids ask “Why isn’t there a kid’s day” and we have replied with “every day is kid’s day”. Why isn’t every day National Safe Boating Day then? Shouldn’t it be? That one lapse in attention while boating may be tragic. I would ask that we all work at being safe on the waters but as no one wants to ‘work’ while boating I will ask all to ‘play’ safe. Let’s all make Safe boating Week a daily occurrence.

Reach out to us for that Boating Safety Course or a Vessel Examination or consider becoming a member of the USCG Auxiliary. Go to www.flotilla3-10.org or contact Ed Gray, Flotilla Commander at 804-854-1309.