



Arkansas House Newsletter

June 28, 2019

Boating Safety in the Natural State



Arkansas is home to more than 600,000 acres of lakes and more than 90,000 miles of rivers, streams, and creeks. As this is a popular time of the year for Arkansans to enjoy the waterways, we wanted to highlight boating safety in the state.

Last year, Arkansas saw a 9% decrease in boating accidents and a 36% decrease in the number of boaters who died from boating accidents. However, there were 60 reported boating accidents in 2018 which resulted in 29 injuries that required medical attention and seven fatalities. Of those seven fatalities, six drowned.

According to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, three of those six were not wearing a life vest and the other three were either improperly wearing their life vest or their vest was in poor condition and not functioning properly.

In order to ensure your safety, we wanted to remind you of some of the laws passed over the years regarding boating safety so that we can continue to reduce the amount of property damage and to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities associated with boating. Make sure to keep in mind that:

- Anyone born on or after January 1, 1986, must have successfully completed an approved Arkansas Game and Fish Boating Education course and carry proof while operating a motorboat or sailboat on Arkansas water.
- Every boat must have at least one U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket per person on-board. Children 12 and under must be wearing their life jacket at all times. Also, no matter the age, every person aboard a personal watercraft must be wearing an approved life vest
- To operate a personal watercraft, a person must be 16 years or older. Children aged 12-15 must be under the direct supervision of a person of at least 18 years old. Children 12 and under must be under the direct supervision of a person of at least 21 years.

For more information on boating safety please visit the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission at www.agfc.com.