

Presidential Documents

Title 3—**Proclamation 7096 of May 14, 1998****The President****National Safe Boating Week, 1998****By the President of the United States of America****A Proclamation**

Recreational boating is one of our Nation's most popular and most rewarding pastimes. Blessed with an abundance of scenic rivers, lakes, streams, and coastal waters, our country is a haven for people who love the water. More than 78 million Americans take to the water each year with family and friends to appreciate nature, relax, and simply escape from the cares of the day. However, while boating can be a wonderful recreational activity, it can also be dangerous for the unprepared.

Tragically, more than 700 Americans die each year in boating-related accidents. In most cases, human error and poor judgment are to blame. Drinking or taking drugs while operating a boat, ignoring safe navigation rules, and failing to wear a life preserver are all examples of poor judgment that can lead to loss of life. The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that last year alone, 80 percent of boating-related fatalities could have been prevented had life jackets been worn. So, the theme of this year's Safe Boating Week, "Boat Smart from the Start! Wear Your Life Jacket," is truly a matter of life and death. I encourage all Americans to wear life preservers every time they are on the water—this simple precaution can save hundreds of lives each year.

The National Safe Boating Council, the U.S. Coast Guard, other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and many recreational boating organizations actively promote boating safety and work to save lives on the water. However, it is ultimately up to each individual to take responsibility for his or her own safety and for the safety of friends and family. This year, during National Safe Boating Week, I urge all Americans who use our Nation's waterways to practice safe boating and to educate others about the importance of wearing life jackets, abstaining from drugs and alcohol, and following safe navigation rules. Together we can save lives and ensure that boating remains an enjoyable activity—for ourselves and for our loved ones.

In recognition of the importance of safe boating practices, the Congress, by joint resolution approved June 4, 1958 (36 U.S.C. 161), as amended, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim annually the seven-day period prior to Memorial Day as "National Safe Boating Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 16 through May 22, 1998, as National Safe Boating Week. I encourage the Governors of the 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to join in observing this occasion and to urge all Americans to practice safe boating not only during this week, but also throughout the year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William Clinton

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