

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
Todd E. Leahy, JD, PhD, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Christy Tafoya, State Parks Division Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Christina Cordova
Public Relations Coordinator, State Parks Division
christina.cordova@state.nm.us
505-476-3363

Susan Torres
Public Information Officer, EMNRD
susan.torres@state.nm.us
505-476-3226

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National Safe Boating Week
May 16 - 22, 2020

SANTA FE – The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department’s State Parks Division announces National Safe Boating Week, May 16-22, 2020.

However, COVID-19 is forcing everyone to navigate uncharted waters, including boaters. Many people are wondering if they can go boating, who they can boat with, and where they can go once they leave the dock. In several areas, lakes are open, but it is more important than ever that boaters are responsible to limit unnecessary risk not only to themselves, but to other boaters, law enforcement, and first responders. Before heading out this spring and summer, check the State Parks website for the most up-to-date information about park openings, hours, and regulations.

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), offers these ten tips for practicing social distancing and keeping not only yourself, but other boaters and law enforcement officers, safe and healthy while boating.

1. Do not drink and boat. Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in boater deaths. Do not bring or consume alcohol or drugs while on the water.
2. Follow federal, state, and local guidance regarding any boating or access restrictions.
3. Only boat with those in your household and do not go boating if you or someone in your household is feeling sick.
4. Do not raft up. Do not congregate with other boats or boaters.

5. Stay at least six feet away from others. This includes maintaining a safe distance at fuel docks and launch ramps. Wear a cloth face mask in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain or during interaction with law enforcement.
6. Limit contacts. Go from your house to the boat and back, limiting unnecessary contacts.
7. Wear a life jacket. All boaters should be wearing a life jacket while near or on the water, and for the entire voyage. 84 percent of people who drowned in a recreational boating accident were not wearing a life jacket.
8. Take a Boating Safety Education course. New Mexico offers free boating safety classes throughout the year and offers online boating courses by third-party vendors. Check out BoatNM.com for more information.
9. Tell someone where you are going and when you will be back. File a float plan and make sure someone knows the details of your trip.
10. Carry all required boating safety equipment and have a method of communication, such as VHF radios and personal locator beacons, that works when wet.

Remember, due to COVID-19 not all parks may be open and additional restrictions are in effect. Visit <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SPD/> before you go.

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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.
<http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us>