



**“WEAR IT CALIFORNIA!”  
LIFE JACKET CAMPAIGN  
ASSESSMENT  
2007**



# Background

- This study was conducted for the California Department of Boating and Waterways, the National Safe Boating Council, the BoatU.S. Foundation and the U.S. Coast Guard.
- The study was conducted to determine the effect of an intensive marketing effort to increase life jacket usage.
- The “Wear It California!” campaign was piloted in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in 2007 as an effort to encourage the use of life jackets.
- The sample for this survey included all boaters who completed a “Wear It California!” pledge card. The survey was conducted in January 2008, and Responsive Management obtained a total of 404 completed interviews.



# Participation in Hunting, Fishing, and Boating

- The vast majority (86%) of boaters who completed the “Wear It California!” pledge card went boating during the past 12 months; only 14% had not boated.
- Nearly all active boaters (90%) had motorboated, and approximately one-third (34%) had operated a personal watercraft; all other boating activities had participation rates of 11% or less.



# Boat Ownership

- Slightly over three-fourths of active boaters (78%) own a boat.
- The most commonly owned boats are motorboats (owned by 92% of boat owners), distantly followed by personal watercraft (owned by 15% of boat owners).
- Boats of 16 to 26 feet in length are the most popular.



# Boating Companions

- Types of boating companions with whom they usually go boating:
  - Spouse (53%)
  - Friends (48%)
  - Children (30%)
  - Boat Alone (3%)
- Slightly over half of active boaters who also fish from a boat usually go fishing from a boat with friends (56%), while 37% do so with a spouse; 22% do so with extended family, and 19% do so with children.



# Boating Safety

- Half of active boaters (50%) disagree that they practice safer boating behavior when boating with family members than they do when boating with friends; 26% agree.
- An overwhelming majority of active boaters (91%) say that they know a great deal or moderate amount about how to boat safely. Only 8% indicate that they know little or nothing at all about how to boat safely.



# Boating Safety Courses

- Over a third of active boaters (36%) said they have taken a boating safety course.
- An overwhelming majority of active boaters (92%) agree that all boaters under a certain age should be required to take a boating safety course, 78% agree that taking a boating safety course increases the likelihood that a boater will wear a life jacket while boating, and 76% agree that all boaters should be required to take a boating safety course.



# Life Jackets: Knowledge of Life Jacket Requirements

- An overwhelming majority of active boaters (96%) say they know a great deal or moderate amount about when a life jacket should be worn, and a large majority (84%) say they know a great deal or moderate amount about who is required to wear a life jacket.





# Life Jackets: Who and When

- Almost all active boaters (99%) agree that children should be required to wear a life jacket, and 94% *strongly* agree
- A slight majority (52%) agree that all adult boaters should be required to wear a life jacket, and 35% *strongly* agree.
- Nearly all active boaters (98%) agree that life jackets should be worn while boating under bad weather conditions, and 89% *strongly* agree.
- A majority (68%) agree that life jackets should be worn while boating under good weather conditions, and 35% *strongly* agree.



# Life Jackets: Who and When cont.

- A majority of active boaters (74%) agree that life jackets should be worn on vessels under a certain length, and most commonly that length threshold is boats of less than 16 feet in length.
- Active boaters appear more divided on whether life jackets should be worn at all times while boating. Although a slight majority (53%) agree that life jackets should be worn at all times, 41% disagree.



# Actual Use of Life Jackets

- Nearly one-third of active boaters (32%) say they always wear a life jacket while boating, and over half (52%) say they sometimes wear a life jacket. These findings indicate that 84% of active boaters wear their life jacket at least sometimes while boating.
- Over one-third (38%) of active boaters who fish from a boat say they always wear a life jacket, 39% say they sometimes wear a life jacket, and 22% say they rarely or never wear a life jacket while fishing from a boat.



# Motivations for Wearing a Life Jacket

- 78% of active boaters who typically wear a life jacket while boating say that one of the main reasons that they wear a life jacket is safety/responsibility for others.
- Those who say they never wear a life jacket gave as their reasoning:
  - a lack of comfort or restricted movement (57%).
  - they do not feel the need for wearing a life jacket because they have good swimming skills and are comfortable around water (48%).



# MOTIVATIONS FOR WEARING A LIFE JACKET cont.

- The top scenario that would make active boaters wear a life jacket more frequently would be if a law was passed requiring everyone to wear life jackets while boating (70% said this would make them wear a life jacket more frequently).
- 61% said that making life jackets more comfortable would make them wear them more frequently.
- 53% said seeing someone they knew drown because they were not wearing a life jacket would make them wear a life jacket more frequently.



# Awareness of the “Wear It California!” Campaign

- Over half (57%) of active boaters had not seen any advertisements or information regarding the “Wear It California!” life jacket campaign.
  - Meanwhile, 10% saw advertisements for the life jacket campaign on posters
  - 7% saw television commercials
  - 7% saw print advertisements
  - 6% saw the “Wear It California!” boat and boat advertisement
- How the boater was made aware of the “Wear It California!” event where he/she received a free life jacket:
  - 19% indicated that they were in the area or just happened to see the event
  - 15% saw the “Wear It California!” boat and boat advertisement
  - 12% indicated that they heard about the event through word-of-mouth



# Motivations for Participating in the “Wear It California!” Campaign

- A majority of active boaters (63%) participated in the “Wear It California!” campaign to obtain the free life jacket.
- Almost half (48%) of boaters were simply curious about the event or were in the area.



# Type of Life Jacket Issued and Usage Instruction Received

- Over half of active boaters (58%) at the “Wear It California!” event received a belt pack style life jacket, 35% of boaters received an over-the-shoulder suspenders style life jacket, and 1% received both types of life jackets.
- A large majority (85%) of active boaters were offered instructions on how to properly wear and use the free life jacket at the event
  - 93% of those who were offered the instructions received them; only 5% refused instructions.
  - Of boaters who were offered instructions on how to properly wear and use a life jacket, 97% indicated that the instructions were appropriate for the type of life jacket received.



# **“Wear It California” Life Jacket Campaign Effectiveness**





# Free Life Jacket Use and Retention

- An overwhelming majority of active boaters (95%) still have the free life jacket they received at the “Wear It California!” event in their possession; only 5% do not have the free life jacket they received.
- Roughly one-third (35%) of active boaters always wear the free life jacket they received at the “Wear It California!” event while boating, and 42% sometimes wear the free life jacket.



# Free Life Jacket Use and Retention cont.

- 42% of active boaters who still own the free life jacket plan to always wear the free life jacket while boating during the next 2 years.
- 42% plan to wear the free life jacket at least sometimes during the next 2 years.
- A small minority (10%) of active boaters who still own the free life jacket say they plan to wear the free life jacket rarely.
- 3% plan never to wear the free life jacket while boating during the next 2 years.



# Influence on Life Jacket Use

- Almost half (48%) of active boaters said that their use of a life jacket while boating has increased since they received the free life jacket at the “Wear It California!” event.
- Effectiveness of the “Wear It California!” event had been at prompting them to wear their life jacket more often over the past 12 months.
  - 53% believed the event was very effective at prompting them to wear their life jacket more often
  - 28% indicated that it was somewhat effective.
- Effectiveness of signing the pledge card at the “Wear It California!” event was at prompting them to wear their life jacket more frequently during the past 12 months.
  - 36% found signing pledge cards very effective
  - 35% found it somewhat effective in causing them to wear their life jacket more frequently.



# Influence on Life Jacket Purchase

- Only 15% of boaters that received free life jackets and signed the pledge card at the “Wear It California!” event purchased additional life jackets.
- Of those who purchased additional life jackets, 29% purchased one additional life jacket, 32% purchased two additional life jackets, and 37% purchased more than two additional life jackets.



# Influence on Family and Friends

- A large majority (89%) of active boaters said that the reactions of family and friends to the free life jacket were mostly positive
- Almost one-third of active boaters (30%) knew someone who was influenced by the free life jacket to buy one themselves.

