

COUNTY OF OAKLAND

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

MICHAEL J. BOUCHARD



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sheriff's Office Lake Patrols to Increase for July 4-6 National "Operation Dry Water" Enforcement

OAKLAND COUNTY, Mich. – June 30, 2025 – Deputies from the Oakland County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit will be out in force on county lakes for the July 4 holiday weekend as part of Operation Dry Water, a national awareness and enforcement campaign to reduce alcohol and drug-related accidents and fatalities on the water.

Sheriff Michael Bouchard encouraged residents and visitors to enjoy the holiday with family and friends, but to do it safely. Oakland County is a popular destination for water sports with its 450 navigable lakes and 83,000 registered boats, the most of any county in Michigan. Additional marine deputy patrols will be on the lakes for the holiday weekend.

"We know the Fourth of July holiday is the focal point of summer for many families," Bouchard said. "No matter whether you're behind the wheel of a car or operating a boat, don't drink alcohol and drive. Protect yourself, your family, and your friends. We want everyone to enjoy the many things that make Oakland County such an attractive destination, but we want the holiday to be a safe one."

The Sheriff's Office Marine Unit – the largest in the state – has more than 45 part-time marine deputies who can quickly respond to emergencies on any of the lakes in the county. The unit is part of the Sheriff's Office Technical Support Group, which includes the 30-member Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team, comprised of full-time deputies who are highly trained in search and rescue and public safety diving and expanded to include personnel from other area public safety agencies. They can dive in virtually any weather or water condition.

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The unit has 23 patrol boats, three rapid response jump boats, one hovercraft, 11 all-terrain vehicles, and six specialty boats and is equipped with SONAR and AquaEyes for search and rescue emergencies. The Sheriff's Office also contracts with 12 communities to patrol 19 lakes: Cass Lake, Cedar Island Lake, Deer Lake, Lake Orion, Lower Straits Lake, Lake Sherwood, Lakeville Lake, Maceday Lake, North Commerce Lake, Orchard Lake, Pine Lake, South Commerce Lake, Sylvan Lake, Upper Long Lake, Voorheis Lake, Walled Lake, Walnut Lake, White Lake, and Williams Lake.

The Operation Dry Water campaign was launched in 2009 by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard and local, state, and federal law enforcement. Since inception, law enforcement officers have removed 7,453 boating under the influence operators and made contact with 3.1 million boaters during the three-day weekend.

- In 2024, 485 local, state, and federal agencies and more than 7,000 officers participated in Operation Dry Water.
- Over the three-day weekend, law enforcement officers made 584 boating "under the influence" arrests and issued 43,554 citations and warnings for safety violations.
- It is illegal in every state to operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, which includes canoes and rowboats.
- 85 percent of people who drown in a recreational boating accident did not wear a life jacket.
- Operating a boat with a blood alcohol content of .08 or higher is against federal and most state laws.