

Preventing Boating Accidents

Although serious boating accidents are reported infrequently, they tend to be very expensive in terms of human and financial costs. These incidents serve as a reminder that you should review and update boat driver and jet-ski safety programs and seek opportunities to improve them.

While state laws vary regarding boat driver/jet ski certification requirements (go to www.nasbla.org for details, including ages of jet-ski participants), boat driver training for staff is only part of the issue. Here are some suggestions:

- Always use a spotter when towing any participants.
- Never follow or parallel another boat towing participants.
- Ensure all towed participants wear Personal floatation devices; people on the boats should wear them as well.
- Check water-ski/tubing areas carefully for hazards such as submerged rocks or floating debris, particularly after storms.
- When operating more than one powerboat at a time in a specific area, equip one staff person with communications equipment (walkie-talkie). Designate that person to be alert for and warn of boats operating unsafely or coming in close proximity.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.