

Thursday, 27 October 2011

New lifejacket rules campaign ahead of 1 November

NSW Maritime will lead a multi-agency campaign in the Hunter region this weekend focusing on the new lifejacket rules which came into effect in November 2010.

NSW Maritime Hunter/ Inland Regional Manager Sonia McKay said Maritime Boating Safety Officers would be joined by local Water Police Officers and volunteers from Marine Rescue NSW for the campaign.

“On Saturday and Sunday, people who are on the water and at boat ramps in Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Port Stephens and Forster will be approached randomly to check they are aware of new lifejacket regulations,” Ms McKay said.

“Legislation regarding when to wear a lifejacket when boating has changed to ensure the best safety for anyone on a boat – especially during times of heightened risk.”

Over the past 12 months NSW Maritime has undertaken an intensive campaign educating boaters about the new lifejacket requirements. From 1 November 2011 the focus will change from education to compliance. Boaters found not to be complying with lifejacket regulations may be issued with fines.

“There needs to be enough lifejackets on board for every passenger, and these need to be worn at the appropriate times. A lifejacket can’t save your life unless you’re wearing it,” Ms McKay said.

The new rules for wearing lifejackets include:

- By children less than 12 years of age when:
 - in a vessel less than 4.8 metres;
 - when in an open area of a vessel less than 8 metres in length that is underway;
- By all boaters in a vessel less than 4.8 metres in the following heightened risk:
 - at night;
 - on open (ocean) waters;
 - on alpine waters; and
 - when boating alone.
- At times of ‘Skipper Judgement and Direction’ in ‘heightened risk’ situations such as when the weather worsens or the boat breaks down (this makes it clear the skipper has a high level of responsibility);
- When water-skiing or wakeboarding;
- When operating a canoe or kayak on:
 - enclosed waters, when more than 100 metres from shore; and
 - open (ocean) waters.

Media contact: Penny Robins 0457 756 797