

COUNTY OF OAKLAND  
**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**

**MICHAEL J. BOUCHARD**



**SAFETY FIRST! THE DANGERS OF SWIMMING AND  
BOATING ARE VERY REAL**

*Ashleigh Iserman Boating Safety Foundation Recognizes Sheriff's Office*

*For Immediate Release*

*Contact: Megan Noland  
(248) 858-5009*

May 23, 2017 (Oakland County) – Today, Jan Iserman, founder of the Ashleigh Iserman Boating Safety Foundation, and mother to Ashleigh Iserman, presented the Oakland County Sheriff's Office with a plaque to recognize their efforts to encourage boater safety. Ashleigh Iserman tragically died several years ago in a boater accident while operating a PWC (personal watercraft). The Ashleigh Iserman Boating Safety Foundation was formed in her honor and works tirelessly to promote boater safety and education, successfully lobbying to change the law of solo operation of a personal water craft from age 14 to age 16. This law, [Ashleigh Iserman Law](#), went into effect in 2011. Sheriff Bouchard, upon receiving the award, said, "I am proud of our team that works tirelessly promoting water safety, and I thank Jan Iserman for all her dedicated efforts to prevent future tragedies."

With the Memorial Day weekend fast approaching, we need to remind residents of prudent safety precautions related to water activities. We urge boaters and swimmers to please use caution at all times when out on the lakes this summer. Young children need constant, close (within a few feet) supervision in and around the water.

Facts about Drowning –

- 90% of all boating fatalities are due to drowning.
- Drowning is the 3rd leading cause of accidental deaths in the United States, and is the 2nd leading cause of accidental death in people ages 11-44.
- 70% of people whose boats have capsized or people who fall overboard drown.
- 85% of people whose boats capsized or those who fall overboard and drown have PFDs in their boat but are not wearing them.
- 63% of all people who drown never intended to be in the water.
- Drowning is the second leading cause of injury-related death among children under the age of 15.
- It takes only 20-60 seconds for struggling victim to drown.
- Most drownings occur 10-15 ft. from safety.
- Drowning is suffocation in the water. Drowning victims resort to an instinctive drowning response which includes: Inability to call or wave for help- the respiratory system was designed for breathing, speech is a secondary function. A drowning person is not getting enough air to breath; therefore they don't have enough air to call for help. Arms tend to extend laterally- appears that they are playing in the water. Struggle briefly for 20-60 seconds before submerging.

Whether out tubing, diving, jet or waterskiing, people need to remember the rules of the water and use extreme care during sporting activities. Familiarize yourself with all applicable federal, state and local laws, the risks inherent in the sport and the proper use of equipment. Please, if you have not taken a boater safety class, sign up for one today. A list of free boater safety classes being offered by the Sheriff's Office is at [www.oakgov.com/sheriff/Pages/safety\\_tips/course\\_boating.aspx](http://www.oakgov.com/sheriff/Pages/safety_tips/course_boating.aspx). To register, please call (248) 858-7831.

Water and watersports safety rules to follow:

- Learn how to swim.
- Never swim alone.
- Only swim in areas supervised by trained lifeguards.
- Always supervise young children within a few feet.
- Do not dive headfirst into any body of water.
- Avoid the use of alcohol during all water activities.
- If engaging in watersports, know the waterways and always have a person other than the boat driver as an observer (spotter).
- Always keep a safe distance from other boats (at least 100 feet).
- The rider, observer, and driver should agree on hand signals.
- Never start out until the rider signals that they are ready.
- Always use caution and common sense.
- Regarding your equipment and your towrope:
  - Inspect all equipment prior to use. Check bindings, fins, and flotation device prior to each use and DO NOT USE if damaged.
  - Towropes stretch during use. If a rope breaks or is suddenly released, it can snap back striking boat occupants or the user which could result in injury or death.
  - Inspect rope before use and do not use towrope if frayed, knotted or damaged.
  - Use proper tow rope for the activity.
  - Ensure rope is free from all body parts prior to starting out or during use.
  - Keep persons and ropes away from propeller when engine is running, even if in neutral. Should rope become entangled in propeller, SHUT OFF ENGINE AND REMOVE IGNITION KEY BEFORE RETRIEVING ROPE. Propellers are very sharp and can cut wet skin easily.

Boating Safety Rules to follow:

- Be weather wise.
- Bring extra gear you may need in case you become stranded on a boat.
- Before boating, tell someone where you're going, who is with you, and how long you'll be away.
- Ventilate after fueling.
- Stay dry and warm.
- Anchor from bow, not stern.
- Take a safe boating course.

- Be ready for trouble when a powerboat passes you in a narrow channel.
- When changing seats, stay low and near center line of a small boat.
- Always carry distress signals on board your boat.
- Go through the Boat Safety checklist (below).

## **BOAT SAFETY CHECK LIST**

### PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFD'S)

- PFD's must be readily accessible, correct size, & one per person.
- Children under the age of 6 must wear a Type I or Type II while on the open deck of a vessel.
- Persons operating, riding on, or being towed behind PWC must wear a Type I, II, or III PFD.
- Vessels 16' or longer in length must have a Type IV throwable PFD in addition to jacket type PFD's on board.
- Use of Type III inflatable PFD's is illegal when operating, riding on, or being towed by a PWC.
- Type III inflatable PFD's are legal on watercraft (other than PWC's for persons 16 years of age or older).

### WATERCRAFT REGISTRATION

- Watercraft registration must be current and on board.
- Where required by law, ensure that the operator has State of Michigan Boater Safety Certificate on board.
- Properly display MC numbers and current validation decal, e.g. both sides of the hull, forward half of vessel, above waterline, 3 inch block letters and numbers of contrasting colors to the watercraft's hull.

### VENTILATION

- Check for fuel smells.
- Check for bilge for gas or oil. Correct all flammable liquid problems before starting your engine or operating electrical devices.
- Run your ventilation blower before initially starting the engine.
- Before fueling, close all compartments. After fueling is completed, open all compartments to ventilate and run the blower for at least 4 minutes to purge all trapped fumes.

### FIRE EXTINGUISHERS - Required when carrying flammable liquids or fuel on board.

- Must be fully charged. Check the gauge or use of small test button to check the pressure.
- Must be a type "B" fire extinguisher (for flammable liquids).
- Must be U.S. Coast Guard approved for marine use.
- Vessels less than 26 feet, one size 1 extinguisher is required.
- Vessels 26 feet & less than 40 feet, two size 1 extinguishers, or one size 2 extinguisher is required.
- Vessels 40 feet to less than 65 feet, three size 1 extinguishers, or one size 1 and one size 2 extinguisher are required.

### SOUND PRODUCING DEVICE

- Horn or portable device, e.g. whistle or air horn capable of producing a 4 second blast that can be heard for at least 1/2 mile.

LIGHTS - Required between the hours of sunset & sunrise.

- Red and green navigation lights.
- White stern and/or anchor light.

VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS - Required on Federal waters.

- Accessible flares and day signals stored in a dry location.

FUEL AND OIL

- Be sure to have enough fuel to provide a reasonable margin for safe return.
- Check the oil to make sure it is at the proper level.

TRAILERS

- Safety chains must be used when towing.
- Trailer must be equipped with working brake lights and tail lights.
- Make sure tires are in good condition with proper pressure.
- Maintain wheel bearings.
- Ensure that trailer hitch size matches the towing ball size.

SAFETY CONCERNS, TOOLS AND SPARE EQUIPMENT

- Consider carrying "tools" you may need such as a cell phone.
- Spare light bulbs, spare keys, flashlights, etc.
- Anchor & line
- Dock lines
- Boat fenders / bumpers
- First-Aid kit