



Coast Guard Boating Safety Alert



April 27, 2009 – Released by Sector Ohio Valley

While the investigations into these incidents are on going, the Coast Guard is publishing this alert to promote public safety. Once the investigations are complete, the findings will be made available.

Over the weekend, the Coast Guard responded to a series of tragic incidents along the Ohio River. While boating and recreation can be safe and enjoyable, the Coast Guard encourages the public to respect the River's potential dangers and to take reasonable precautions when on or near the water.

April 25 – Four individuals were out enjoying the weekend in a 14ft boat near the Belleville Lock and Dam, on the Ohio River south of Parkersburg, WV. The sky was clear, the wind was light and it was almost 90 degrees outside. ***No one was wearing a life jacket.*** As they headed up bound directly into the wind and current, the bow of the boat became swapped. The boat capsized and all four people went into the water. Everyone was recovered out of water, which is uncommon. Often, people not wearing life jackets who enter the water unexpectedly drown. Two individuals were sent immediately to the hospital. The fourth person, a 55 year old male, was not responsive and later pronounced dead at the hospital.

April 26 – the next day, on just as nice as the day before (clear skies, little wind and nearly 80 degrees), four individuals were out enjoying the evening in a 18ft boat on the Ohio River near downtown Louisville, KY. ***No one was wearing a life jacket.*** Suddenly, the boat capsized and all four people went into the water. Again, the response by local authorities was swift and three people were immediately recovered. The fourth person, a 46 year old male, drowned and his body has not yet been recovered.



Common sense, life jacket use, and a better understanding of the potential dangers could have prevented all of these deaths. Nationwide, Coast Guard statistics show that smaller vessels (21ft and under), alcohol use, and failure to wear life jackets are associated with boating accidents. **Wear your life jacket,** take extra precautions at night, around locks and dams, around barges and commercial vessels, and in areas with unusual currents - it can save your life. For more information on a “Boating Skills and Seamanship Course” or a free Vessel Safety Exam contact the Coast Guard Auxiliary at www.cgaux.org, or contact Sector Ohio Valley at 502 779-5400.

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