

 Print |  Close Window



THE ENQUIRER

Last Updated: 4:52 pm | Monday, May 14, 2007

## River beckons to boaters

### And patrol's on its beat

BY AMANDA VAN BENSCHOTEN | [AVANBENSCHOTEN@NKY.COM](mailto:AVANBENSCHOTEN@NKY.COM)

Put on your life jacket and remember: nature's in charge, not you.

That's the advice of water safety officials as the boating season dawns in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

The most common problem, says Boone County Water Rescue Capt. Dale Appel, is boaters who leave the dock unprepared and don't pay attention to other boats once on the water.

That can leave boaters stranded or in the path of a barge - the biggest safety risk on the river because barges can't stop or change paths abruptly.

"People need to have their safety equipment ready - not stowed away, but wearing it," Appel said, adding the boat should be checked out and in proper working order.

Kentucky requires one life jacket on board for each passenger. Children age 12 and under must wear a life jacket at all times on the water.

Prevention is the key, agrees Petty Officer David Clifford of the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment in Cincinnati.

"(Boaters) assume because they can see the bank, everything's safe, and that's not always the case," Clifford said.

Kentucky bans drinking on its waterways. It's illegal, Clifford said, to have any open container of alcohol on board.

Appel recommends boaters also leave a "float plan" with the marina, a relative or friend. The one-page plan can help authorities locate a stranded boat and know when to start searching for missing people.

Law enforcement from Ohio and Kentucky patrol the river, but Boone County Water Patrol is one of the largest. Last boating season, the patrol made 18 major rescues.

The patrol is the only one on the river every day during boating season from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

The patrol has sonar and radar technology to spot anything from objects on the river floor to boats in the path of an oncoming barge.

Boone County's patrol members handle everything from water-skiing accidents to propeller cuts, and from fishing corpses out of the water to rescuing boaters thrown overboard by waves.

### SAFETY FIRST

For more information, visit [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

To download a float plan, visit [www.bcwr-ky.com](http://www.bcwr-ky.com).

To take a free online safety course, visit [www.boat-ed.com/ky](http://www.boat-ed.com/ky).

---

 [Print](#) |  [Close Window](#) | Copyright 2007, *Enquirer.com*