



PRESS RELEASE – June 15, 2015

Communications: 972-624-3156

Safety first: Boaters asked to exercise caution

THE COLONY, Texas — Area lakes, including Lewisville Lake, have been reopened following recent flood conditions but Stewart Creek Park remains closed. Lake levels are still well above the conservation pool, and additional rain is in the [forecast](#). The City of The Colony is in the flood recovery phase waiting for the water to recede so we may begin preliminary damage assessments of the parks.

Boaters who make their way onto a lake are strongly encouraged to practice boating safety as prescribed by [Texas Parks & Wildlife](#) (TPWD). Boaters are also asked to watch for floating debris and to



avoid shorelines as many underwater hazards remain, such as pavilions, grills, and other park or residential structures still submerged due to high water.

Please adhere to the following TPWD safety tips to help ensure a fun outing stays fun:

- **Always wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) or life jacket** – Most boating fatality victims were found (aka recovered) NOT wearing a PFD. Always carry extra PFDs in both adult and child sizes. Children younger than 13 years old *must* wear a PFD while underway.
- **Avoid alcohol** – The probability of being killed in a boating accident doubles when alcohol is involved. Operating a boat under the influence is just as dangerous as driving a car after you've been drinking. Boating while intoxicated (BWI) is strictly enforced and carries penalties similar to driving while intoxicated penalties, including possible Driver's License suspension.
- **Enroll in a Boater Education Course** – It's a good idea for the whole family to enroll in a boater education course. A majority (52 percent) of vessels involved in boating accidents are operated by persons 26-50 years of age. For information on classroom, home video and online course options, visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department [Boater Education webpage](#) or call 800-792-1112.

- **Be especially careful on Personal Watercraft (PWC)** – PWC operators and passengers must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD. Before you borrow or rent a PWC, take the time to learn how to operate the vessel and the rules of the waterway. Obey the 50-foot rule by maintaining a 50-foot distance from other PWCs, vessels, persons, shore, or stationary platform or other object unless operating at headway (idle) speed.

- **Operate at a safe speed** – Although there are no numerical speed limits on the water, citations may be issued for excessive speed or reckless operation. Use common sense, and operate at a safe speed at all times — especially in crowded areas. Excessive speed is a rate of speed greater than is reasonable or prudent without regard for conditions and hazards or greater than will permit a person to bring the boat to a stop within the assured clear distance ahead.

With more square miles of inland water than any other state, there are more than 580,000 registered boats in Texas, ranking it sixth in the country. In 2013, there were 206 boating accidents in Texas, resulting in 85 injuries and 22 fatalities statewide. There were also 209 citations for BWI.

Don't be a statistic! Always wear a life jacket and keep your phones charged for use in an emergency. The City of The Colony wishes a safe and fun summer holiday season – on water or on land!

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