

# Kentucky Fish & Wildlife encourages safe summer boating

## Simple safety precautions help prevent or minimize accident

In conjunction with National Safe Boating Week, May 16-22, 2026, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources reminds boaters and motorists to be safe as they get out on the water and roads during the upcoming Memorial Day weekend.

Simple safety precautions help to minimize injuries and incidents. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife game wardens suggest the following tips when heading out on the water:

**Wear a Life Jacket:** Kentucky law requires each occupant of a boat to have ready access to a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket that properly fits each person. Children younger than 12 must wear an appropriately fitting life jacket at all times while in the open portion of a boat that is underway. Life Jacket Loaner Stations, available in a growing number of locations across the state, allow boating parties to borrow life jackets temporarily. Make wearing a life jacket a

habit for the boat operator and passengers.

**Use an Engine Cut-Off Switch:** It only takes a second for something to go wrong when operating a powerboat. Using an engine cut-off switch is vital when unexpected emergencies happen, such as the boat operator or a passenger being thrown overboard. Automatically shutting down the engine can prevent injuries from a boat propeller or from striking other boats.

**Boat Sober:** Every year, alcohol is the leading cause of injuries and accidents on Kentucky waterways. Oftentimes, this leads to individuals leaving the lake and driving under the influence (DUI), putting everyone on the roadways in danger. Operating a vehicle or boat under the influence (BUI) is extremely dangerous, impairs judgment and reaction time, and is illegal.

**Take a Safe Boating Course:** Boaters should familiarize

themselves with Kentucky boating laws, regulations and navigation rules before heading out. While everyone can benefit by taking an easy online Boater Education Class, Kentucky law requires that youth 12 to 17 years old and unaccompanied must complete a boater safety course.

**Double Check Boating Equipment:** Don't assume that boat equipment is still on board and in working order after the winter. Be sure to check the working condition and presence of all safety gear. Replace batteries and any equipment that may be missing or in poor working order.

**Be Aware of Surroundings:** Operator inattention and improper lookout are contributing factors in many boating accidents. Always stay focused and alert while operating a vessel. Pay attention to water traffic, water levels, obstacles and swimmers in the water. Watch for signage and warnings regarding low head dams or other

dangers. Be aware that these dangers may not be marked.

**Stay Weather Aware:** Check the weather forecast and be prepared for changing conditions. Sudden storms or rough waters can pose significant dangers. Always have a reliable means of communication onboard to receive weather updates.

**File a Float Plan:** Provide boating plans with someone ashore before getting on the water. File a Float Plan with a friend or family member detailing the day's itinerary and all the people going out. In the event of an emergency, this information can be crucial for rescuers.

The Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Waterbodies Search webpage shows that Kentucky has many lakes and streams on which to enjoy fishing and boating. Waterbodies may be affected by low and high waters given weather conditions or engineering work, so boaters are advised to check the status of boat

ramps before leaving the house. Conditions may vary between waterbodies, which may cause a closure to some ramps but not others.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife game wardens will be patrolling the state's waterways over Memorial Day weekend to check boaters for legal and safety considerations, including life jackets, boat registration, watercraft safety and possible impairment. The U.S. Coast Guard and other law enforcement agencies will also be patrolling Kentucky waters.

For emergencies, call 911. For assistance while on the water call 800-25-ALERT (800-252-5378) or contact a local law enforcement agency or nearest Kentucky State Police post. Marine channel 16 can be used to contact a local marina.

The Fish Boat KY smartphone app, available for iOS and Android, allows boaters to buy a fishing license, find directions to local lakes, read fishing reports, learn

about regulations, find fish stocking schedules, locate the nearest boat ramp and more. Download the app at Fish Boat KY App on the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website (fw.ky.gov) or search for "Fish Boat KY" in your preferred app store.

Additional boating information can be found on Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's website at Boating - Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife. The department's 2026-2027 Kentucky Fishing and Boating Guide also provides basic boating information, including regulations, and can be viewed online or printed to keep in a boat or other type of vessel.

Of final note, Kentucky boat registrations expire April 30 each year, so owners who haven't already done so must renew them through their county clerk's office.

Questions on boating, regulations, education and more may be directed to the agency's information center at 800-858-1549, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (ET) weekdays, excluding state holidays.

# Hart County rest area selected best in Kentucky

Kentucky's 2025 Best Maintained Rest Area award has returned to the state's facility on northbound Interstate 65 in Hart County, it was announced by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC).

While all rest areas across the state received at least an 'A' rating, according to KYTC, the location between Horse Cave and Mundefordville distinguished itself by consistently providing premier attention to cleanliness and grounds maintenance - no matter the season or time of day.

"Well-rested drivers are safe drivers," said Transportation Secretary Rebecca Goodman. "Providing safe, clean, reliable areas for drivers to stop and rest is a key component of Team Kentucky's comprehensive approach to roadway safety."

National studies have shown use of designated rest stops can help increase driver alertness and reduce drowsy driving, which was a factor in 2.4% of all fatal crashes nationwide from 2011 to 2015, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

This marks the second time in the award's 26-year history that the Hart County rest area earned the honor. The facility is also one of the largest in the state, with more than 100 well-lit parking spaces, clean restrooms, stocked vending machines, picnic areas and other accessible and pet-friendly amenities serving those who rely on I-65 as a major travel corridor.

"The Best Rest Area award is a recognition of the great work being done at this great facility," said State Highway Engineer James Ballinger. "It's also a commitment to travelers that our investment in maintaining quality places where they can comfortably rest will help keep them safe on and off the road."

Each year, KYTC judges the Best Maintained Rest Area award based on seven categories that examine the entire grounds - from the lobby and restrooms to the vending machines and staff. All of the state's rest areas undergo 12 unannounced inspections, with each of the three staff shifts receiving a

quarterly evaluation throughout the year.

Community Services Project Inc. (CSP), a nonprofit that trains and employs about 400 disabled workers in Kentucky, operates the Hart County rest area and others across the commonwealth. Contract employees with CSP, Velocity and Cleaning by Regina and Associates maintain Kentucky's 16 rest areas, six welcome centers and four truck rest havens.

CSP employees



and employees of the Department of Highway District 4 were

presented with certificates commemorating the award. In all 12

inspections, the evaluation of the staff received perfect scores.

The Green County Food Pantry is open Thursdays in the new building on First Street

Ending Hunger Takes Teamwork



Volunteers & Donations Welcome

For more information, including how to volunteer, call or text 270-405-3247 Let's work together to bring hunger relief to our neighbors in need.

Open Thursdays (except holidays) 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. CT Must have driver's license or other proof that you are living in Green County. Income guidelines apply. Linda Judd, Director

**GREEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**FEEDING AMERICA**

**SUMMER MEALS PROGRAM**

NO COST. NO SIGN-UP. JUST SHOW UP!

This program is open to children who are currently enrolled in school (K-12). Each child will receive a 7-day supply of shelf-stable breakfasts and lunches. First come, first served!

**EACH FRIDAY**

**MAY 22- JULY 31**

**GREENSBURG FOOD PANTRY**

**107 S. FIRST STREET, GREENSBURG, KY 42743**

**11:00 AM CST- 1:00 PM CST**

**QUESTIONS?**

**CALL US: 270-932-7081**

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