

Supervisor Romaine, Suffolk County PD and MADD Promote Safe Boating and Announce Crackdown on Intoxicated and Unsafe Boaters

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Farmingville, NY - On June 4, Brookhaven Town Supervisor Ed Romaine and officials from the Suffolk County Police Marine Bureau and the United States Coast Guard held a press conference at the Town's Sandspit Marina in Patchogue to promote safe boating and announce plans to increase enforcement against unsafe and intoxicated boaters in Brookhaven Town waterways. Also at the press conference were Daniella Rella, Program director of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Gina Lieneck, whose 11-year-old daughter, Brianna, was killed in a boating accident. Pictured at the press conference are Suffolk County Marine Bureau Officer Kevin Comiskey, Daniella Rella, Officer Frankie Sierra, Supervisor Romaine, Danielle Lieneck and Gina Lieneck.

Supervisor Romaine said, "The recent incident in the Great South Bay when a boat slammed into a jetty injuring two people underscores the importance of boating safety. I urge all boaters to wear life preservers and refrain from drinking alcohol while on the water. Boating While Intoxicated is a serious crime, and if you are caught, you will be arrested. Let's do the right thing on the water and have a safe and happy boating season."

June and July are the busiest boating months on the waters off Long Island and in the Town of Brookhaven, there are more than 270 square miles of navigable waterways. In 2013, the US Coast Guard reported over 4,000 boating accidents with 560 deaths and 2,620 injuries. Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents and the leading factor in 16% of all deaths on the waterways.

Supervisor Romaine outlined a number of safety precautions that people should take when boating:

- Always check the local weather. Storms can come up pretty fast.
- Follow a pre-departure check-list. Check flotation devices, navigation lights, sound-proofing devices and distress signals.
- Always operate at safe speeds.
- Designate an assistant skipper in case you are injured or otherwise unable to assume command of the vessel.
- Avoid alcohol while boating
- Take a swimming and first-aid course.
- Take a boating course approved by the U.S. Coast Guard
- Consider a free vessel safety check by a local power squadron or marine patrol.

To learn more about safe boating, go to the U.S. Coast Guard's website at www.uscgboating.org.

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