

COAST GUARD NEWS

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LOSS OF LIFE PREVENTED! COAST GUARD CAPTAIN OF THE PORT DECLARES THUNDER OVER LOUISVILLE MARINE SAFETY PLAN A GREAT SUCCESS

Months of careful planning and seamless cooperation paid off handsomely for this year's Thunder Over Louisville river safety coalition. Consisting of the Coast Guard; Indiana Department of Natural Resources; Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources; Indiana State Police; Louisville Police & Fire Departments; Jefferson County Police & EMS; Jefferson County Sheriffs; and Harrods Creek and Utica Fire departments, the coalition worked side-by-side to make "Thunder 2001" a safe and enjoyable event. Vigorous law enforcement, precise coordination, and outstanding media cooperation were the keys to safeguarding lives on the Ohio River.

After a risk assessment of past events, the agencies joined forces to create a detailed plan to prevent tragedies such as the loss of two lives on the river at Thunder Over Louisville 2000. The chief components of this plan were the "no wake zone" regulation, a "moving picket line" to escort boats slowly and safely out of the viewing area after the fireworks, and a widespread public outreach campaign to educate the boating public. Because extensive media coverage began months in advance, boaters were given plenty of time to prepare and become aware of the new safety regulations. Groups such as the U. S. Power Squadron and Coast Guard Auxiliary also helped get the word out using website links and safe boating classes. These efforts contributed to the area's boaters experiencing what many believe was the best, safest Thunder ever.

The Coast Guard's tally of reported enforcement actions shows that 10 agencies collectively made 5 alcohol related arrests, and issued 11 citations and nearly 100 verbal and written warnings for various violations. Additionally, dozens of disabled spectator boats were towed out of harm's way by the coalition agencies and vessels provided by the sponsor.