



## **Dangerous 'teak surfing' prohibited in Nevada, California**

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SOUTH LAKE TAHOE - A dangerous boat activity called teak surfing will be banned by the Nevada Department of Wildlife and made illegal in the state of California.

The Nevada ban and California law, to take effect next year, are intended to save lives after a series of accidents and fatalities over the past decade, officials said Tuesday.

On May 28, 2003, an 11-year-old El Dorado Hills boy died behind the boat his father was driving at Folsom Lake.

An autopsy revealed Anthony Farr had 63 percent of his bloodstream filled with carbon monoxide, which was emitted from the boat's engine into the boys lungs as he surfed hanging onto the step at the back of the boat.

"Had I known this was dangerous, had I heard of the dangers of doing this, I would never have put my son or myself at risk," said Mike Farr, Anthony's father, who convinced Sacramento lawmakers to support the legislation.

All marine engines emit lethal amounts of carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can kill anyone in minutes if they are too close to the boat's exhaust. The highest concentrations of carbon monoxide are around swim decks and areas where occupants sit or swim at the rear of the boat.

The new California law will be known as the Anthony Farr and Stacy Beckett Boating Safety Act of 2004, in memory of Anthony and 15-year-old Stacy Beckett of Chino, Calif., who died the year before while teak surfing in Mexico.

The law goes into effect Jan. 1, with implementation May 1 for mailing and labeling requirements in the bill.

Anthony and Stacy's Law will inform boaters of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and prohibit teak surfing and other activities in which a person is near the exhaust system in the back of a motorized boat.

"I thought it was just a freak accident," Farr said. "But then I learned that my son wasn't the only one who has died doing this. That's why a law like this warning people of the dangers is so important."

The Nevada ban on teak surfing was agreed to Sept. 12 by the Board of Wildlife commissioners, the body that regulates boating safety in the Silver State.

"We are extremely pleased the Wildlife Commission has stepped up to address this very serious issues," said Fred Messmann, the boating law administrator for Nevada. "We have had a hard time quantifying the exact number of deaths each year because of this activity, but the specific examples show how dangerous teak surfing can be."

The California legislation, introduced by Assemblyman Paul Koretz, D-West Hollywood, was signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Sept. 17.

The law requires any boat sold in California, new or used, to carry warning stickers so both the driver and

anyone behind the boat is aware of the hazard.

It will also be illegal to operate a boat whenever anyone is teak surfing, skidding or occupying the swim platform or swim ladder when the engine is running.

Finally, the law calls upon boat manufacturers to invest in research and development to find ways to clean up the engines and re-design their boats to reduce the risk.

#### Teak surfing defined

Teak surfing is when a person holds onto a boat's swim platform surfing or skidding behind the boat while the boat is moving. Aside from the obvious danger of propeller injury, the practice can be fatal as swimmers breath in dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

