



*Los Angeles County*  
**Sheriff's Department**

## LAKE OPERATIONS UNIT

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is responsible for providing public safety services in and around two of Los Angeles County's most popular inland lakes, Castaic Lake and Pyramid Lake.

### CASTAIC LAKE

#### Main Lake

The main reservoir has 29 miles of shoreline, covers 2,235 surface acres and is approximately 300 feet deep. The lake is open to recreational boating activities such as fishing, water skiing, and personal watercraft. In addition, the lake area is oftentimes utilized by production companies to film commercials and/or various film scenes. The lake is restricted to a maximum capacity of five hundred vessels. Due to the fact the facility is within a county park, alcoholic beverages are banned (citable offense).

The responsible agency for policing the lake and surrounding area is the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Parks Bureau. The Department has specially trained deputies who can respond to all emergencies, including but not limited to, law enforcement, accident investigations, rescue operations, and medical emergencies. In addition, we partner and work closely with the Los Angeles County Lifeguards to provide a safe environment for the lake patrons.



#### Lower Lagoon

The lagoon covers 197 surface acres, with a 3 mile shoreline. The depth of the lagoon is approximately 70 feet. It is open daily for picnicking, sunbathing, boating, and fishing. Swimming is allowed in designated swim areas, when beach lifeguards are on duty. Boating

activities are limited to sail, electric powered, and self-propelled (manual) boats. The only exception is afforded to the California State University, Northridge Aquatic program.

The Pyramid Lake reservoir is located approximately 21 miles north of Castaic Lake. Pyramid Lake resides at the 3,100 foot elevation level, and it covers 1,250 surface acres, with a shoreline of approximately 21 miles. The deepest portions of the lake descend to approximately 280 feet.

Pyramid Lake is open to boating activities, which include fishing, waterskiing, and personal water craft (PWC). The facility accommodates up to 225 vessels, and allows the public to access the lake via two launch ramps. This is the only lake in Southern California that permits PWC's to utilize the entire lake for recreation. Different than

Castaic Lake, Pyramid Lake is located within the Angeles National Forest, and therefore it doesn't have the same restrictions on alcoholic beverages. Possession and consumption of alcohol is permitted, provided that legal intoxication and impairment levels are not compromised.

The responsible agency for policing the lake and surrounding area is the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Parks Bureau. The Department has specially trained deputies who can respond to all emergencies, including but not limited to law enforcement, accident investigations, rescue operations, and medical emergencies. Due to the fact Pyramid Lake is located in a remote area of the County, Pyramid Lake Deputies and resident deputies assigned to the nearby Gorman area, work closely together to protect the public who utilize the area.



## **BOATING SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT**

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has taken its law enforcement role regarding waterborne enforcement and safety very seriously. The Department has the opportunity of providing law enforcement services to both Castaic and Pyramid Lakes. Boating safety and enforcement on these two lakes, which are the most heavily used bodies of open water in California, are a daily operation serviced by our personnel.

### **Highly Trained Staff**

Eleven permanent deputies and two sergeants were assigned to lake operations. Each member has received extensive, specialized training in boat and ocean operations, and marine law enforcement. The training encompasses, but is not limited to, boating enforcement, advanced boating skills, marine fire and extinguishment, boating under the influence investigations, vessel accident investigations, and vessel rescue operations. Each boat operator has now completed a newly created statewide standardized boat operator certification course in conjunction with the California State Sheriff's Association (CSSA). Due to the standardized training, each Department boat operator can operate any boat in the Marine patrol boat fleet, whether it be inland or off-shore waters.

## Enforcement and/or Life Saving Skills

With advanced knowledge and training, deputies were deployed on Castaic and Pyramid Lakes to respond and address a multitude of service needs which included the following:

- Enforcing all State, local and boating laws
- Enforcing Fish and Game Regulations
- Execute open-water rescues
- Respond to and investigate boating accidents
- Provide emergency medical services to the public
- Perform underwater rescue operations
- Conduct Boating under the Influence investigations
- Respond and extinguish vessel fires
- Assist disabled vessels
- Liaison with LASD's Emergency Services Detail
- Public education regarding boating safety requirements



The Parks Bureau Lake Operations Unit utilized several skillful methods to address the aquatic safety and law enforcement needs of park visitors. Some of the strategies included patrol/rescue boats, off road motorcycle enforcement, 4x4 patrol vehicles, off road All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV), and bicycles. Two additional tools were implemented which included the Automated License Plate Recognition System (ALPRS) and solar powered surveillance cameras on both lakes.

