



NIWA to Crack Down on Illegal Inland Waterways Operators

Description

The National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) has announced its intention to impose strict penalties on illegal operators within the nation's inland waterways. This move aims to enforce compliance with the recently gazetted Inland Waterways Transportation Code 2023.

Bola Oyebamiji, Managing Director of NIWA, issued this warning in a statement released on Tuesday. The statement, signed by Suleiman Makama, NIWA's Assistant General Manager for Corporate Affairs, made it clear that operating without a license on the inland waterways is illegal.

"No unlicensed operator should be found anywhere near the Inland Waterways Transportation after the 2023 Code has been enforced," Oyebamiji emphasized. "Any unlicensed operator caught violating this code will face severe sanctions, including prosecution."

Enforcement Measures and Safety Precautions

NIWA has advised that all unregistered boats must be removed from the inland waterways, as any boat found in violation will be impounded. The authority also reminded the public, especially those using the inland waterways and residents along riverbanks, to adhere strictly to safety regulations, especially as high tidal periods approach.

It is mandatory for both passengers and operators to wear life jackets correctly before boarding any boat or watercraft. Additionally, boats should not be overloaded with passengers or goods beyond the approved limits for safe inland water travel.

Regulations on Operating Hours and Safety Practices

Oyebamiji reiterated that travel on inland waterways is only permitted between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., stressing that “night travel is illegal.” He also urged boat operators to avoid consuming alcohol before or during trips and to maintain safe speeds at all times.

In an appeal to boat operators, Oyebamiji encouraged them to share safety tips with passengers before setting sail and advised that, in case of emergency, operators should discharge any cargo to reduce the risk of water getting on board.

“NIWA is committed to ensuring safe, smooth, and efficient water transportation, which is essential for the economic growth and development of the nation,” Oyebamiji concluded

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