RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY FACTS

All figures are from the U.S. Coast Guard’s 2017 Recreational Boating Safety Statistics, the latest official record of reported recreational boating accidents. Full report available: http://uscgboating.org/statistics/accident_statistics.php

Key Facts

• Drowning was reported as the cause of death in 76 percent of all fatalities (four out of five people died from drowning).

• Approximately 84.5 percent of those who drowned were not wearing life jackets.

• In 2017, the Coast Guard counted 4,291 accidents that involved 658 deaths, 2,629 injuries and approximately $46 million dollars of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents.

• The fatality rate was 5.5 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels. This rate represents a 6.8 percent decrease from the 2016 fatality rate of 5.9 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels.

• Only 14 percent of deaths occurred on boats where the operator had received boating safety instruction.

• Operator inattention, improper lookout, operator inexperience, machinery failure and alcohol use as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents.

• Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents. Where the primary cause was known, alcohol was listed as the leading factor in 19 percent of deaths.

• Where data was known, the most common types of vessels involved in reported accidents were open motorboats (46 percent), personal watercraft (18 percent) and cabin motorboats (16 percent).

Data Snapshot

• Fatalities: 658
• Drownings: 449
• Injuries (requiring medical treatment beyond first aid): 2,629
• Boating accidents: 4,291
• Property damage: $49,992,120.93
• Number of registered recreational boats in the U.S.: 11,961,568

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