

# RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY FACTS

All figures are from the U.S. Coast Guard's 2020 Recreational Boating Safety Statistics, the latest official record of reported recreational boating accidents. Full report available: [http://uscgboating.org/statistics/accident\\_statistics.php](http://uscgboating.org/statistics/accident_statistics.php)

## Key Facts

- Drowning was reported as the cause of death in 75 percent of all boating fatalities.
- Approximately 86 percent of those who drowned were not wearing life jackets.
- In 2020, the Coast Guard counted 5,265 accidents that involved 767 deaths, 3,191 injuries and approximately \$62.5 million dollars of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents.
- The fatality rate was 6.5 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels. This rate represents a 25% decrease from the 2019 fatality rate of 5.2 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels.
- Only 23 percent of deaths occurred on boats where the operator had received boating safety instruction.
- Operator inattention, operator inexperience, improper lookout, excessive speed, and machinery failure 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 18 percent of deaths.
- Where data was known, the most common types of vessels involved in reported accidents were open motorboats (46%), personal watercraft (22%) and cabin motorboats (13%).

## Data Snapshot

- Fatalities: 767
- Drownings: 534
- Injuries (requiring medical treatment beyond first aid): 2,182
- Boating accidents: 5,265
- Property damage: \$62,500,000
- Number of registered recreational boats in the U.S.: 11,838,188

