

RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY FACTS

All figures are from the U.S. Coast Guard's 2021 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 81 percent of all boating fatalities.
- Approximately 83 percent of those who drowned were not wearing life jackets.
- In 2021, the Coast Guard counted 4,439 accidents that involved 658 deaths, 2,641 injuries and approximately \$67.5 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 15.4% decrease from the 2020 fatality rate of 6.5 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels.
- Only 16 percent of deaths occurred on boats where the operator had received boating safety instruction.
- Operator inattention, operator inexperience, improper lookout, machinery failure, and excessive speed 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 16 percent of deaths.
- Where data was known, the most common types of vessels involved in reported accidents were open motorboats (47%), personal watercraft (19%) and cabin motorboats (13%).

Data Snapshot

- Fatalities: 658
- Drownings: 489
- Injuries (requiring medical treatment beyond first aid): 2,641
- Boating accidents: 4,439
- Property damage: \$67.5M
- Number of registered recreational boats in the U.S.: 11,957,886

