



2019 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 2019, the Coast Guard counted 4,168 accidents that involved 613 deaths, 2,559 injuries and approximately \$55 million dollars of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents.
 - The fatality rate was 5.2 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels. This rate represents a 1.9% decrease from the 2018 fatality rate of 5.3 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels.
 - Compared to 2018, the number of accidents increased 0.6%, the number of deaths decreased 3.2%, and the number of injuries increased 1.9%.
- Where cause of death was known, 79% of fatal boating accident victims drowned. Of those drowning victims with reported life jacket usage, 86% were not wearing a life jacket.
- Where length was known, eight out of every ten boaters who drowned were using vessels less than 21 feet in length.
- Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; where the primary cause was known, it was listed as the leading factor in 23% of deaths.
- Where instruction was known, 70% of deaths occurred on boats where the operator did not receive boating safety instruction. Only 20% percent of deaths occurred on vessels where the operator had received a nationally-approved boating safety education certificate.
- There were 171 accidents in which at least one person was struck by a propeller. Collectively, these accidents resulted in 35 deaths and 155 injuries.
- Operator inattention, improper lookout, operator inexperience, excessive speed, and alcohol use rank as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents.
- Where data was known, the most common vessel types involved in reported accidents were open motorboats (45%), personal watercraft (19%), and cabin motorboats (16%).
- Where data was known, the vessel types with the highest percentage of deaths were open motorboats (48%), kayaks (14%), and personal watercraft (8%).
- The 11,878,542 recreational vessels registered by the states in 2019 represent a 0.22% increase from last year when 11,852,969 recreational vessels were registered.