

Sea Tow Foundation Quick Reference

HISTORY

In 2007, Sea Tow Services International, Inc. founder and CEO, Capt. Joe Frohnhoefer, was concerned about the number of preventable boating-related accidents, injuries and deaths taking place on the waters in the U.S. (see www.uscgboating.org/statistics) He decided to create a non-profit organization that could directly address these issues through education and awareness. The resulting national public service organization received 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and was named the Sea Tow Foundation. You can find out more about the Sea Tow Foundation at their website: www.boatingsafety.com

MISSION

Sea Tow Foundation's mission is to promote safe boating practices that directly reduce fatalities, injuries, and property damage related to recreational boating.

FUNDING

Sea Tow Foundation efforts are funded through federal, state and local grants as well as corporate donations, sponsorships, and individual donations. The Sea Tow Foundation does not receive dedicated funding from any one source. As a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, all donations to the Sea Tow Foundation are tax-deductible.

LIFE JACKET LOANER PROGRAM

Since 2008, nearly 65,000 life jackets have been provided to boaters at no charge at more than 750 Sea Tow Foundation Life Jacket Loaner Stations located across the U.S. (see www.boatingsafety.com/map for locations) Boaters may borrow and return the life jackets at no charge from stations located at marinas, boat ramps, yacht clubs, fire departments, community centers and other venues where boaters can easily access them all in an effort to prevent drowning-related deaths.

The Life Jacket Loaner Program has the following components:

1. **GRANT:** Through grants received from the Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard, the Sea Tow Foundation offers organizations, government agencies and businesses the opportunity to receive life jackets at no charge that will be used to set up a loaner stand for their area. Applications for life jackets open on November 1st and approved recipients will receive them the following spring.
2. **LIFE JACKET DRIVE:** The purpose of the Life Jacket Drive is to collect new and gently used life jackets from boaters that no longer need them or have outgrown them. These life jackets are used on nearby Life Jacket Loaner Stations or can be used to start a new station. A manual and materials to help host a drive is available or for information on how to donate life jackets, check out www.lifejacketdrive.org.
3. **PARTNERSHIPS:** Your business or organization can partner with the Sea Tow Foundation to establish a Life Jacket Loaner Station in your local area. Your company's logo will appear on the back of the life jackets that are made available on Life Jacket Loaner Stations in your area.
4. **BOAT SHOWS:** Life Jacket Loaner Stations are available at many on-water boat shows to provide children with borrowed life jackets to help keep them safe while walking on the docks or taking



boat rides with their family. Volunteers help the Sea Tow Foundation by serving a shift at the boat shows in exchange for admission into the show.

SOBER SKIPPER PROGRAM

We all want to have a great day on the water. On a boat, the wind, vibration, noise and heat from the sun can impair a boater's balance, coordination and concentration. These are only enhanced when consuming alcohol or taking illegal drugs and doing so has led to many Boating Under the Influence injuries and fatalities that could be 100% prevented. (see www.uscgboating.org/statistics) The Sea Tow Foundation wants boaters to "Take the Pledge" to be or to designate a Sober Skipper before leaving the dock or the boat ramp.

Taking the Sober Skipper Pledge involves promising to:

1. Not operate a vessel if your plans include drinking alcohol.
2. Be responsible for your passengers and the boat.
3. Be or designate a Sober Skipper before leaving the dock.

Boaters that "Take the Pledge" receive a yellow Sober Skipper wristband as a reminder of their commitment to boating safe and sober. Organizations, governmental agencies and businesses can also request a set of 100 wristbands in a display box to host a Sober Skipper event or set up a display at Boat Dealer, Convenience Store, Fuel Dock, Marina, or Restaurant. For more information, check out www.soberskipper.com

GET INVOLVED AND LEARN MORE

1. **NEWSLETTER:** The Sea Tow Foundation sends out a quarterly e-newsletter containing information on our boating efforts and keeps our friends informed of ways they can get involved in boating safety in their area. www.boatingsafety.com/newsletter
2. **BLOG:** The Sea Tow Foundation writes 2-3 blog posts per month on boating safety topics and news that you need to know, and the blog is searchable if you'd like to find past articles. You can find articles on how to check the weather forecast before boating, how to safely load and unload your boat, how to ensure a life jacket fits properly and even some fun topics like music, movies or books that have to do with boating. www.boatingsafety.com/blog
3. **PRINTED MATERIALS:** The Sea Tow Foundation has developed a number of printed materials that are available to help you promote boating safety in your local area and many of these are available as a free download. These include the First Mate Checklist, How to Choose the Correct Children's Life Jacket, Selfie Station Thought Bubbles, and a Boating with Tow Bee Activity Book. www.boatingsafety.com/store
4. **VOLUNTEER:** The Sea Tow Foundation helps connect life-minded people who volunteer for the Sea Tow Foundation at Boat Shows, help maintain our Life Jacket Loaner Stations or host Sober Skipper events. Groups can arrange in-person meetings or they can connect online. www.boatingsafety.com/groups

U.S. COAST GUARD RECREATIONAL BOATING STATISTICS

The U.S. Coast Guard maintains detailed statistics on all reported recreational boating safety incidents throughout the U.S. The most recent statistics are from 2019 and a full copy is available at www.uscgboating.org/statistics

- 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.