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| **Dozens Water Sports Foundation, Inc.**  Division of WSIA  P.O Box 568512  Orlando, FL 32856-8512 | Text, logo  Description automatically generated | Wanda Kenton Smith  Director of Communications  [wanda@WaterSportsFoundation.com](mailto:wanda@WaterSportsFoundation.com)  407.697.8055  **National Boating Safety Media Center:**  [www.watersportsfoundation.com/media/](http://www.watersportsfoundation.com/media/) |

Water Sports Foundation Executive Director Jim Emmons Responds to new 2020 USCG Report on Boating

**LINK TO THE 2020 USCG REPORT ON RECREATIONAL BOATING STATISTICS Published June 2021:**

[**https://www.watersportsfoundation.com/recreational-boating-statistics-2020/**](https://www.watersportsfoundation.com/recreational-boating-statistics-2020/)

**LINK TO THE PRESS RELEASE: US COAST GUARD BOATING SAFETY STATISTICS REPORT:** [**https://www.watersportsfoundation.com/uscg-releases-2020-boating-safety-statistics-report/**](https://www.watersportsfoundation.com/uscg-releases-2020-boating-safety-statistics-report/)

Capt. Scott Johnson, chief of the Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety at Coast Guard Headquarters, noted in the press release above a number of cases where boaters had recently purchased the vessel involved in the incident, but had not taken many of the proper safety precautions before getting underway.

WSF Executive Director Jim Emmons believes that the new 2020 report and statistics are sobering and uphold the long-standing message that the Water Sports Foundation has proffered for years: “Get skills training before you take a boat or paddle craft out on the water.”

The comparisons between 2019 and 2020 figures on fatalities are especially staggering in these categories:

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| **TYPE OF CRAFT** | **2019** | **2020** | **CHANGE** |
| Open Motorboats | 288 | 376 | +30.6% |
| Personal Watercraft | 46 | 66 | +43.5% |
| Pontoon | 40 | 67 | +67.5% |
| Human Propelled | 167 | 202 | +21.0% |
| **TOTAL FATALITIES** | **613** | **767** | **+25.1%** |

“These numbers are alarming and strongly reinforce the messaging the WSF has recently circulated to promote safer boating. The sheer increased numbers of boaters would obviously increase the numbers of incidents of all kinds, but when we see that in 77% of boating deaths in 2020 that those boaters *had no boating safety education*, we know that at least some of those deaths could sadly have been prevented with education.

“Again, the statistics show, in 2019 13,515 people received boating safety certificates and in 2020 there were only 9,082 issued. Even though the USCG Auxiliary, Power Squadrons and other private boating education and safety providers quickly pivoted to provide online training from approximately July-December, many new boaters were simply unaware and did not receive the customary personal training from traditional boating safety educators and retailers due to COVID mandates and restrictions.

“We must take a different course for 2021. We MUST stress boating safety and education, along with better communicating the life-saving benefits of wearing life jackets and avoiding boating while impaired. Through these simple practices, recreational boating can be safer and more enjoyable with a practical and appropriate response from the recreational boating industry and boating consumers alike.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or to coordinate an interview with Jim Emmons to further discuss this topic, please contact Wanda Kenton Smith, WSF Communications Director: [Wanda@WaterSportsFoundation.com](mailto:Wanda@WaterSportsFoundation.com); 407.697.8055

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**BIO/Jim Emmons**

# Executive Director, Water Sports Foundation

Jim Emmons has been a passionate advocate of boating and boating safety for more than three decades. As the WSF Executive Director since 2010, Jim worked tirelessly to promote a culture of safety among recreational boaters and paddlers. Under Jim’s leadership and in partnership with the United States Coast Guard, the WSF’s consumer outreach campaigns have delivered nearly one billion online impressions.

He served 12 years as president of the Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA), unifying major brands in support of the organization and laying the foundation for its continued success by creating membership benefits tailored to many segments and founding the biggest annual conference of industry leaders. In two decades as a boating media executive, Jim was co-founder and publisher of *WakeBoarding* magazine and publisher of *WaterSki* magazine and created the highly successful WakeAwards. Jim is a former Chair of the Coast Guard’s National Boating Safety Advisory Council (NBSAC). He currently chairs the Wakeboarding Hall of Fame and a member of the NASBLA Paddlesports Committee. A lifelong boater and surfer, Jim lives with his wife in Deland, Florida.