

Coast Guard Reports a Rise in 2008 Recreational Boating Fatalities

Local News

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WASHINGTON — The U.S. Coast Guard announced Wednesday the publication of the 2008 boating safety statistics, reporting a rise in recreational boating fatalities.

The fatality rate, a measure of the number of deaths against the number of registered recreational boats, increased from 5.3 in 2007 to 5.6 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational boats in 2008. During this time, the Coast Guard recorded 709 deaths, 3,331 injuries and approximately \$54 million dollars in damage to property, stemming from 4,789 recreational boating accidents.

Operator inattention, careless or reckless operation, no proper lookout, operator inexperience and passenger or skier behavior rank as the top five contributing factors to recreational boating accidents. Alcohol consumption continues to be of major concern in fatal boating accidents and is listed as the leading contributing factor in 17 percent of the deaths.

Rear Adm. Kevin Cook, the Coast Guard's director of prevention policy, emphasized the importance of boating education saying, "The 2008 report shows a clear link between safety and boating education by highlighting that only 10 percent of deaths occurred on boats where the operator had received boating safety education. This statistic indicates that boaters who have taken a boating safety course are less likely to be involved in an accident. In addition, two-thirds of all fatal boating accident victims drowned; and of those, 90 percent were not wearing a life jacket. The Coast Guard urges all boaters, whether as an operator or passenger, to take a boating safety course and to always wear your life jacket."

To view the 2008 recreational boating safety statistics, go to:

http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/accident_stats.htm.

For more information on boating responsibly, go to: <http://www.uscgboating.org/>.