



## 2016 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 2016, the Coast Guard counted 4,463 accidents that involved 701 deaths, 2,903 injuries and approximately \$49 million dollars of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents.
  - The fatality rate was 5.9 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels. This rate represents a 11.3% increase from last year's fatality rate of 5.3 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels.
  - Compared to 2015, the number of accidents increased 7.3%, the number of deaths increased 12%, and the number of injuries increased 11.1%.
- Where cause of death was known, 80% of fatal boating accident victims drowned. Of those drowning victims with reported life jacket usage, 83% were not wearing a life jacket.
- 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 15% of deaths.
- Where instruction was known, 77% of deaths occurred on boats where the operator did not receive boating safety instruction. Only 13% 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 24 deaths and 175 injuries.
- Operator inattention, operator inexperience, improper lookout, excessive speed, and machinery failure 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 (47%), personal watercraft (18%), and cabin motorboats (15%).
- Where data was known, the vessel types with the highest percentage of deaths were open motorboats (47%), kayaks (13%), and canoes (9%).
- The 11,861,811 recreational vessels registered by the states in 2016 represent a 0.04% decrease from last year when 11,867,049 recreational vessels were registered.