

Coast Guard Reports Fewest Boating Fatalities in More Than 50 Years



[From U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters](#), July 1, 2025

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard released its 2024 Recreational Boating Statistics Report Tuesday.

The report records the fewest boating fatalities since the Service began collecting statistics more than 50 years ago.

Fatalities fell 1.4% to 556 from 564 in 2023, while overall incidents increased by 1.1% from 3,844 to 3,887. Nonfatal injuries increased 2.1% from 2,126 to 2,170. Alcohol continued to be the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents in 2024, accounting for 92 deaths, or 20% of total fatalities.

The fatality rate was 4.8 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels, a 2% decrease from last year's rate of

4.9 deaths per 100,000. In 1971, when the Safe Boating Act was first passed, the rate was 20.6 deaths per 100,000. Property damage totaled \$88 million, and operator inattention, improper lookout, operator inexperience, machinery failure and navigation rules ranked as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents.

“Boating under the influence is not only illegal but it is also dangerous,” said Capt. Robert Compher, inspections and compliance director. “The effects of alcohol can be magnified when boating in the sun and on a moving vessel. Staying sober protects you and those around you.”

Deaths occurred predominantly on vessels operated by individuals who had not received boating safety instruction, accounting for roughly 70% of fatalities. Open motorboats, personal watercraft and cabin motorboats were the vessel types most involved in reported incidents.

There was an increase in deaths on standup paddleboards. Drowning accounted for three-quarters of deaths, with 87% of victims not wearing life jackets. The Coast Guard reminds boaters to wear serviceable, properly sized and correctly fastened life jackets, and encourages boaters to check the weather and water conditions before getting underway.

The data in the report is based on incidents that resulted in at least one of the following: death, disappearance, injury that required medical treatment beyond first aid, damage to the vessel(s), or other property equal to or greater than \$2,000 or a loss of vessel.

“We thank our federal, state and nonprofit partners who strive to make the nation’s waterways safer. We also thank recreational boaters who follow safe boating,” said Compher.

In addition to wearing a life jacket and taking a boating safety course, the Coast Guard recommends all boaters attach

the engine cutoff switch, get a free vessel safety check and boat sober.

The full 2024 Recreational Boating Statistics Report is available at [USCGBoating.org](https://www.uscgboating.org).