

Boating Accidents

Every year, the United States Coast Guard compiles information regarding boating accidents in the United States. These studies are very comprehensive and are based on accident reports filed by boaters who have been involved in boating accidents.

There are certain regulations that the USCG has set forth regarding the reporting of a boating accident. You must report the accident under the following conditions:

- * A person dies
- * A person is injured and requires medical treatment other than first aid
- * The damage to a vessel is more than \$2,000 or there is a total loss of a vessel
- * A person disappears from a vessel and circumstances indicated there may be a death or an injury

It's a good idea to report the boating accident within the first forty-eight hours. Regulations differ as to the required time frame, but a responsible boater will take care of the situation as soon as possible.

In the year 2005, there were 267 fatalities directly attributed to boating accidents. Of those fatalities, seventy percent of them were due to drowning, and eight-seven of those who drowned did so because they were not wearing their life jackets.

The most reported boating accidents were the result of collisions with another vessel. However, capsizing and falls overboard were also among those most reported and contributed also to the drowning fatalities overall.

Overall, carelessness, reckless driving, operator inattention, excessive speed, and operator inexperience were the most prevalent contributing factors to boating accidents. That is why the Coast Guard highly recommends all boaters take a certified boating safety class as well as qualified boating instruction classes.

The most common types of boats involved in boating accidents were open watercraft, personal watercrafts (Jet Skis), and cabin motorboats. There was a marked increase also in sailing accidents, houseboats, and fishing boats.

Alcohol was also shown to be a huge contributing factor in boating accidents.

Impaired captains were shown to have a larger incidence of the possibility of accidents because of lack of judgment, inattention, and reckless behavior. In fact, one-fourth of all boating accidents could be directly linked to the consumption of alcohol by the driver.

Boating accidents can be prevented rather easily if more people would take boating safety classes and receive proper boating instruction. Because of the various factors that are involved in boating, it can be dangerous if you don't know what you are doing. If you want to be a responsible boater, the way to prevent boating accidents is to stop them before they start. Get educated and then put that information to use - all the time!