

United States Coast Guard

Media Advisory

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Coast Guard Stresses Awareness And Safety On The Water This Summer National Safe Boating Week May 18 – 24

National Safe Boating, which began May 18th, brings with it a strong reminder to boaters that **the decision to wear a life jacket can be a life or death one.**

Studies show that eight out of ten drowning victims were not wearing lifejackets. Nationally, 519 boaters drowned in 2000, and life jackets could have saved approximately 445 of them, according to the Coast Guard's Boating Statistics 2000, the 42nd annual report. But, **simply having lifejackets onboard is not enough** – reaching for a life jacket as you are falling overboard is like trying to buckle a seat belt as your car is crashing – it doesn't work.

Another way to be a safe boater is through a boater education course. According to Boating Statistics 2000, an untrained boater is five times more likely to die in a boating accident than one who received boating safety training, and nearly 90% of recreational boating fatalities occur on boats where the operator has not completed a boating safety education course.

Nationwide in 2000, there were 7,740 accidents resulting in 701 fatalities, 4,355 injuries and nearly 35 million dollars in damage according to Boating Statistics 2000. For more information on safe boating practices visit the Coast Guard's Office of Boating Safety page at <http://www.uscgboating.org/> or call 1-800-368-5647.

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