



National Safe Boating Week

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Summer is fast approaching. For many, that means undertaking the annual ritual of getting their boats ready for the boating season. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary reminds boaters it is important that we give as much thought and attention to safety precautions for ourselves and our passengers as we do in the maintenance on our vessels to keep them in top condition.

Over 500 people drown each year in recreational boating accidents, a staggering figure. This can be greatly reduced by adhering to a very simple strategy: “*Wear It*.” Wear your life jacket at all times when operating on the water.

National Safe Boating Week, May 17 through May 23, is the kickoff to the 2014 North American Safe Boating Campaign. Safe boating advocates, including the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, offer a number of safety tips to keep in mind this boating season:

1. Wear a life jacket every time you are out on the water. The 2012 Recreational Boating Statistics compiled by the United States Coast Guard showed that over seventy percent of fatal boating accident victims drowned. Of those, almost eighty-five percent were not wearing a life jacket.

NOTE: Life Jackets must be immediately accessible; not in packaging.

2. Make sure all of your life jackets are U.S. Coast Guard-approved and in good condition with no rips or tears. Replace worn out jackets so when needed, they will provide the buoyancy necessary to keep you afloat and alive.
3. Size matters when it comes to life jacket selection and use. When boating with children, make sure they are wearing properly sized and fitted life jackets. Children must not be able to slide out of life jackets when they hit the water.
4. Don't operate a vessel while impaired by alcohol or drugs. Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; it was listed as the leading

factor in 17% of deaths in the 2012 boating statistics.

5. Pay attention to your surroundings and boat responsibly. Operator inattention, operator inexperience, improper lookout, machinery failure, and excessive speed rank as the top five primary contributing factors in 2012 boating accidents.



For information about the 2014 National Safe Boating Week and the North American Safe Boating Campaign, go to: <http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com/>

For more information about the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, a Safe Boating class or free Vessel Exam chose one of the following links:

For Safe Boating Class information: boatingclass2014@gmail.com

For a Free Vessel Safety Check: asafetycheckplease@gmail.com

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is composed of uniformed, non-military volunteer civilians who assist the Coast Guard in all of its varied missions, except for military and direct law enforcement. These men and women can be found on the nation's waterways, in classrooms and on the dock, performing safety patrols, vessel safety examinations and public education.

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