



**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**  
**May 20, 2022**

**Contact: Kim Y. Hylander**  
**Senior Communications Analyst**  
**Office: 703-792-6162**  
**Cell: 571-722-8689**  
**Email: [khylander@pwcgov.org](mailto:khylander@pwcgov.org)**

---

**“Wear It!”**  
**National Safe Boating Week**  
**May 21– 27, 2022**

As the weather becomes warmer, individuals are planning their summer outdoor activities; for some that includes recreational boating. In the U.S., over 100 million Americans participate in some type of recreational boating. According to the U.S. Coast Guard 2020 Recreational Boating Statistics, there were 5,265 reported accidents that involved 767 deaths, 3,191 injuries and approximately \$62.5 million dollars of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents. Compared to the previous year (2019), the number of recreational boating accidents, deaths and injuries increased. Although 2 out of 3 victims were good swimmers, 75% of fatal boating accident victims drowned. Of those drowning victims, 86% were not wearing a life jacket.

Reports indicate 77% of deaths, that occurred on boats, operators had not received boating safety instruction; while 12% of deaths that occurred on vessels, operators had received nationally approved boating safety education. One major concern in recreational boating is alcohol use; it is the leading contributing factor resulting in 18% of deaths in which the primary cause was known. “No matter the type of boat or boating activity you choose,” states, Prince William County Fire & Rescue System Chief Tim Keen, “take the necessary precautions to reduce risks and stay safe.”

National Safe Boating Week is May 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>. This annual campaign, “Wear It!” promotes safe and responsible boating to include consistent wearing of a life jacket when you are on a boat or any watercraft/water transportation. “Wear It!” is a reminder, when on the water, unexpected situations can occur and escalate. Wearing a life jacket will not only provide you peace of mind in controlling an emergency situation but can also save your life. According to the American Red Cross, most drownings occur in inland waters, within a few feet of safety. Most of the victims had access to a life jacket but did not have it on. Fire and Rescue System Chief Tim Keen advises parents/caregivers, “When participating in recreational boating, protect yourself and your loved ones by wearing a lifejacket; be consistent, be a role model for others, especially young children, and ‘Wear It!’.”

**-more-**

## Boating Safety Tips

- **Wear a life jacket.**
  - Make sure your life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved, appropriate for your water activity and fits properly. Life jackets save lives.
- **Know state boating laws.**
  - Rules and laws can differ from state-to-state and violations can result in ticketing, fines, or jail time.
- **Take a boating safety course.**
  - Learn valuable tips that can help save your life in unexpected situations by taking a NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators) approved boating safety course.
- **Make sure your boat is prepared.**
  - There are many items that need to be checked and rechecked on any boat. Schedule a Vessel Safety Check with your local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadrons before you hit the water.
- **Be sure to know your boat’s capacity.**
  - If you have too much on your boat, the boat may become unstable and capsize.
- **Check the weather, including the water temperature. ([weather.gov/marine/](http://weather.gov/marine/))**
- **Dress properly.**
  - Always dress for the weather, wearing layers if cooler weather, and bring an extra set of clothes in case you get wet.
- **Always file a float plan**
  - Leave a detailed float plan with a friend or family member who is staying back. The sooner a craft can be reported overdue, the more likely a positive outcome will result. ([floatplancentral.cgaux.org/](http://floatplancentral.cgaux.org/))
- **Always follow navigation rules. ([boatoncourse.com](http://boatoncourse.com))**
- **Don’t drink while you boat; avoid alcohol consumption.**
- **Beware of carbon monoxide poisoning.**
  - Gasoline-powered engines on boats, including onboard generators, produce carbon monoxide (CO). Be sure to install and maintain a working CO detector.
- **Keep in touch.**
  - Communication devices can be the most important piece of emergency equipment on board a vessel, especially in an emergency. Be sure to have at least two communication devices that work when wet, such as satellite phones, emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRB), VHF radios and personal locator beacons (PLB). *Cell phones **are not** reliable in an emergency situation.*

For more information on safe boating tips, visit the National Safe Boating Council Campaign [www.safeboatingcampaign.com](http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com), National Safe Boating Council [www.safeboatingcouncil.org](http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org), U.S. Coast Guard’s Boating Safety Division [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org), U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary [cgaux.org](http://cgaux.org), National Marine Manufacturers Association [www.nmma.org](http://www.nmma.org), American Red Cross [redcross.org](http://redcross.org), and Statista [www.statista.com/topics/1138/recreational-boating/](http://www.statista.com/topics/1138/recreational-boating/).