



NTSB

SAFETY ALERT

National Transportation Safety Board

★ **Recreational Boating**

Learn safe boating and protect your children

Recreational boating deaths: a **SERIOUS** problem

- Recreational boating is fun, but the water can be unforgiving.
- An average of 714 boaters die each year—508 of them by drowning.
- Deaths are the result of two major safety failures: lack of a required personal flotation device (PFD), and uneducated boaters.
- About 84 percent of these drowning victims would still be alive if they had worn PFDs, the U.S. Coast Guard estimates.
- On average, 80 percent of recreational boat operators involved in accidents had never completed a boating safety education course.
- Most of those who drown were in open motorboats—51 percent—and in boats less than 21 feet in length—71 percent.

What can you do to reduce recreational boating accidents and deaths?

- Use a personal flotation device when aboard a recreational boat and be sure that children always wear PFDs. PFD wear is effective. Boating accident data shows that when mandatory PFD requirements are adopted, drowning fatalities go down.
- Most parents would not drive anywhere without their kids in seatbelts, car seats or booster seats. Parents should not hesitate to protect their children on the water in a life jacket.
- Complete a recreational boating safety course approved by your State.
- Talk or write to your State lawmakers and urge them to support the NTSB's recommendations that States require children to wear PFDs and require all recreational boating operators to complete a boating safety education course.

What should States do to make recreational boating safer?

- Establish a State minimum boating safety program that:
 - Requires children, under age 13, to wear PFDs.
 - Requires all State recreational boating operators to complete a boating safety education course.
 - Require a recreational boating operator's license.
- As of October 2006, 46 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have enacted laws requiring children to wear PFDs. Wisconsin, Iowa, Virginia and Wyoming need mandatory PFD wear requirements.
- Fifteen States need to act to adopt mandatory boating education safety requirements. They are: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and Wyoming.

Need more information?

- Visit the NTSB Web site: www.nts.gov and click on the Marine section of the Most Wanted List.