

Did You Know?

August 2020

Boating: COVID-19 has halted many families' plans to take trips or vacations this summer. Some Americans are using the money they saved staying home and purchasing a boat for some socially distant fun. This year's boating sales have increased 75 percent due to COVID-19. One of the great things about living in Western New York is our close proximity to many lakes and rivers, giving Western New Yorkers ample opportunities for some summer fun! Reports show that nearly half a million New Yorkers are registered boat owners. But all this fun in the sun still has its fair share of risk for injuries and fatalities, especially when substance use is involved.

What You Should Know:

- In 2019, the Coast Guard reported:
 - There were 4,168 boating accidents involving 613 deaths, 2,559 injuries and approximately \$55 million dollars of property damage.
 - Compared to 2018, the number of accidents increased 0.6%, the number of deaths decreased 3.2%, and the number of injuries increased 1.9%.
 - Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; where the primary cause was known, it was listed as the leading factor in 23% of deaths.
 - 70% of boating deaths occurred on vessels where the operator had not received boating safety instruction. Only 20% of deaths occurred on vessels where the operator had received a nationally-approved boating safety education certificate.
 - 86% of fatalities involved individuals who were not wearing a life jacket.

What You Can Do:

Watercraft activities can be dangerous, but the accidents attributed are often very preventable. Listed below are some safety tips to keep in mind if you or a loved one are headed out for a boating adventure. Remember, these tips can help prevent injury and death.

- **Don't drink and drive:** Operating a boat or other water vehicle under the influence of alcohol is illegal and can result in high fees and even jail time.
- **Wear a life vest:** It's a simple sentiment, but it can make all the difference. Be sure there are enough life jackets for all passengers and that all individuals on the boat are wearing their vest.
- **Have your safety equipment on board at all times:** Follow guidelines and be sure to have all the necessary equipment onboard before leaving the dock. Items include:
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Lights
 - Flares
 - Anchor
 - Map and GPS
- **Know and understand how to correctly operate the watercraft:** Don't overload the watercraft. Only allow passengers to sit in designated seating areas, and don't exceed the speed limit, especially in shallow or no-wake areas. Read and study the manual.



Information obtained from: www.uscgboating.org; wja.com