

Boating deaths in U.S. increase in 2014

Despite an increase in injuries and deaths from boating in 2014 compared to 2013, last year had the second-lowest number of boating fatalities on record, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

The U.S. Coast Guard on May 13 released its 2014 recreational boating statistics.

From 2013 to 2014, boating deaths increased from 560 to 610, an 8.9 percent increase, injuries increased from 2,620 to 2,678, a 2.2 percent increase and the total number of accidents increased from 4,062 to 4,064, a 0.05 percent increase. Even with these increases as compared to the record low year of 2013, 2012 to 2014 collectively set record lows for accidents, deaths and injuries.

The fatality rate of 5.2 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels reflected a 10.6 percent increase from the previous year's rate of 4.7 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels. Property damage totaled approximately \$39 million.

The publication states alcohol use was the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; it was the main culprit in 21 percent of the deaths. Operator inattention, improper lookout, operator inexperience, excessive speed and alcohol use ranked as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents.

Where the cause of death was known, 78 percent of fatal boating accident victims drowned; of those drowning victims, 84 percent were not wearing a life jacket. Where boating instruction was known, 77 percent of deaths occurred on vessels where the operator had not received boating safety

instructions.

The most common types of vessels involved in reported accidents were open motorboats, personal watercraft and cabin motorboats. The vessel types with the highest number of fatalities were open motorboats, canoes and kayaks.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*