

BOATING

and Waterways



2006 FLORIDA BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICAL REPORT

SUMMARY

BOATING ACCIDENT REVIEW

- Total number of **registered vessels** in Florida is at an all-time high with 1,024,375 registered in 2006 (more than **14,002** above 2005 records).
- The reporting threshold for **property damage** accidents was increased from the previous figure of \$500 to the current figure of \$2,000 to compensate for the rise in the repair costs over the years. The change has led to a reduction in Florida's boating accident figures by approximately one-third annually.
- 671 total boating accidents in 2006 (compared to 667 in 2005).

2006 REPORTABLE BOATING ACCIDENTS

- Monroe County reported the **highest number of accidents and injuries** (75 total accidents with 35 injuries).
- Only 29% of operators and occupants involved in a boating accident reported to be **wearing a life jacket** at the time of the accident, while 88% of those involved reported that they could swim.

2006 REPORTABLE BOATING FATALITIES

While fatal boating accidents dropped in 2006, the majority of the fatalities occurred in the falls overboard category. The following information in *italics* summarizes the falls overboard fatalities:

- **43%** of the fatal accidents were the result of falls overboard and vessel capsizing. (26 accidents)
- **73% of fatal falls overboard accidents** involved a vessel 18 feet or less in length which was classified as an open motorboat or some other small, unstable craft.
- **73%** of fatal falls overboard occurred on calm, inland waters such as lakes, ponds, rivers, and creeks.
- **75%** of fatal falls overboard accident victims drowned, while 87% of them were reported as being able to swim.

- **None of the fatal falls overboard accident victims that drowned were wearing or using a life jacket.**
- **75%** of fatal falls overboard accident victims were 36 years of age or older.
- **37%** of fatal falls overboard accident victims were 51 years of age or older.
- The **leading cause of death** in fatal boating accidents was drowning (62%), followed by trauma (32%).
- The **most likely time to be killed in a boating accident** (as determined by fatality frequency statistics) is between the months of April and July between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
- 28% of boating **fatalities occurred** in a posted restricted area.
- 31% of boating **fatalities occurred** in a lake, pond, river, or creek.
- 88% of **those who died in boating accidents** were not wearing a life jacket, while 81% of victims were reported as being able to swim.
- Most **fatal boating accident victims** were males (84%) who were 22 years of age or older (93%).
- **Alcohol** contributed to 15% of all fatal boating accidents.
- 15% of **fatal victims** had been drinking alcoholic beverages or using other drugs.
- *The statistics in this report do not reflect one missing person report with circumstances that may indicate death or serious injury. A summary of this event is as follows: On January 13, 2006 the U.S. Coast Guard responded to an overdue boater who was enroute from the Bahamas to Vero Beach. The 38' Donzi was located 38 miles east of St. Lucie running in circles with no one on board. The evidence and circumstances surrounding this incident neither support nor disprove that a death had occurred.*

2006 REPORTABLE BOATING INJURIES

- 59% of the **boating accident injury victims** were not wearing a life jacket.

2006 REPORTABLE PERSONAL WATERCRAFT ACCIDENTS

- Personal watercraft (PWC) account for 11% of all registered vessels in Florida (98% privately owned, 2% rentals).
- PWC were involved in 26% of reported boating accidents (174).
- **Rental PWCs** were involved in 2% of all PWC accidents in 2006.
- The majority of **PWC accidents involved** a collision with another vessel.
- 37% of PWC accidents were caused by **careless/inattention** operation.
- 42% of PWC operators involved in an accident were between 22-35 years of age. 26% were 36-50 years of age.
- 16% of total boating fatality victims were on a PWC.
- Over **42% of PWC accidents** occurred in Palm Beach, Pinellas, Monroe and Dade Counties, with Palm Beach ranked number #1 (with 20 accidents).

2006 BOATING EDUCATION STATISTICS

- FWC issued 22,094 **Boater Education ID cards in 2006.**
- 56.9% of cards issued were to persons 21 years of age or younger.

***THE COMPLETE 2006 FLORIDA BOATING ACCIDENT
STATISTICAL REPORT IS AVAILABLE ON-LINE
THROUGH THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION WEBSITE AT
www.myfwc.com***