

Alcohol use is No. 1 contributing factor in boating fatalities

Contributed by Betty Strach
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LAKE COUNTY – According to the most recent U.S. Coast Guard statistics, alcohol use is ranked No. 1 as a contributing factor in fatal boating accidents in the United States.

There were 133 alcohol use-related boating fatalities in 2006 (the latest statistics available). In California in 2007, the California Department of Boating and Waterways reported 1,800 alcohol-related boating accidents.

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Lake County is asking all boat owners and operators to help reduce fatalities, injuries, property damage and health care costs related to recreational boating accidents by taking personal responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their passengers. Essential steps include always wearing a life jacket and requiring passengers to do the same; never boat under the influence of drugs or alcohol; complete a boating safety course; and get a free vessel safety check annually from the local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Vessel Examiners. Eight of 10 boat operators have never taken a boating class. If asked, the typical boat operator will respond to the question of their taking a boating class with: a) My dad always had a boat; b) I’ve been boating for years; c) I’m only going fishing; or d) I don’t take my boat out of the county.

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Lake County reminds all boaters, "You're in Command. Boat Responsibly!"
The USCG Auxiliary is offering America’s Boating Course, a Coast Guard approved boating safety course. The next three classes are June 21 and July 19.

Please call Betty Strach for details, 928-9811 or 245-3136.

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