



# **United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Recreational Boating Safety Missions**

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# What is the USCG Auxiliary?



- USCG Reserve founded in 1939 as a uniformed volunteer civilian component of the USCG. Missions focused on boating safety and augmentation of USCG missions.
- Military reserve founded in 1941, volunteer reserve renamed USCG Auxiliary.
- Legislation in 1996 expanded AUX augmentation to all USCG missions ex law enforcement and military operations.
- Currently 24K Auxiliary members, delivering over 4.5 million hours per year across 500K missions.
- Enabling legislation: [US Code Title 14 Chapter 23](#)





# What is the role of the USCG Auxiliary in Recreational Boating Safety?



*Do you work, play or travel on the water?*



Learn how to keep your boat, yourself and your family safe with a

## **Boating Safety Class**

Offered by the Coast Guard Auxiliary

- Held monthly over two sessions, four hours each
- Experienced instructors
- Important training for boaters, fishermen, hunters, kayakers, personal watercraft users
- Good for discounts on boat insurance
- Fee reimbursed for MWR morale boat renters
- Covers terminology, traffic rules, towing, life vests, knots, emergency procedures, and more



- USCG Auxiliary has primary responsibility for the promotion of Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) operating under the USCG Director of the Auxiliary.
- All Auxiliary actions are taken under the authority of the USCG, who maintain the ultimate authority.
- USCG Auxiliary has no stand-alone enforcement or legal authority to issue summons / fines / etc. It therefore focuses on education and outreach to impact its RBS mission.



# How is the USCG Aux organized to address Recreational Boating Safety?



- **Three National Directorates:** Outreach, Public Education, and Vessel Inspections.
- Outreach: Building relationships with various communities inclusive of paddle craft (2/3 of US boating growth) through direct outreach and various publications
- Public Education: High quality boating safety instruction to reduce boating accidents and fatalities.
- Vessel Inspection: Ensure proper safety equipment carried and utilized correctly.

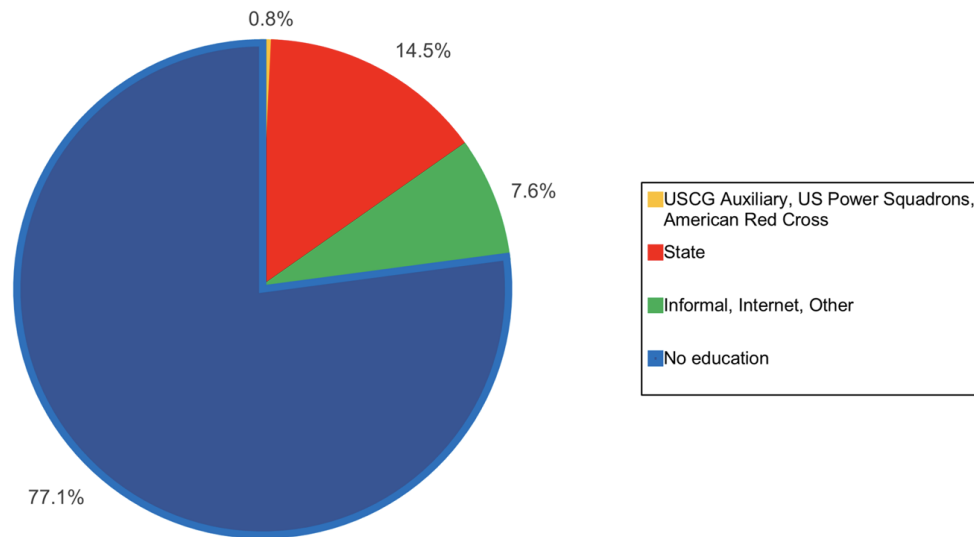




# Key RBS Issues in the U.S.



Figure 7 PERCENT OF DEATHS BY KNOWN OPERATOR INSTRUCTION, 2023



- 2023 saw 3,844 reported accidents, 564 deaths, 2,126 injuries and USD63mn in property damage.
- Boating Safety Instruction: 75% of deaths occurred on boats where the operator did not receive boating safety instruction. Only 15% of deaths occurred on a vessel with an operator with a nationally approved boating safety certificate.
- Lifejacket awareness Instruction: 75% of deaths were by drowning, of these, 87% were not wearing lifejackets.

LIFE JACKET WEAR BY TOP FIVE KNOWN CAUSES OF DEATH

Known Cause of Death Rank	Cause of Death	Number of Deaths	Life Jacket		
			Worn	Not Worn	Unknown if worn
1	Drowning	377	48	319	10
2	Trauma	93	39	50	4
3	Cardiac arrest	18	6	12	0
4	Hypothermia	3	0	3	0
5	Other	3	0	3	0



# Education vs. Enforcement



USCG Auxiliary as a volunteer organization without law enforcement authority:

- Proactive Safety Promotion & Voluntary Compliance:
  - Prevent accidents and violations before they occur as boaters know WHY things are important.
  - Create a culture of safety.
- Broad Reach:
  - Education can reach a wider audience inclusive of potential future boaters.
- Practical Skills development:
  - Go beyond rules to teach navigation, emergency preparedness, proper equipment use.
- Long term impact:
  - Create lasting behavioral changes as opposed to temporary compliance.



# Key information resources



U.S. Coast Guard annually compiles and publishes:

[Recreational Boating Statistics \(uscgboating.org\)](https://uscgboating.org):

- Focuses on recreational boating accidents
- Source is accident reports filed by owners / operators of recreational vessels involved in accidents
- From 50 states, 5 U.S. territories and District of Columbia

[Life Jacket Wear Rate Observational Study](https://uscgboating.org/statistics/national-life-jacket-wear-rate-study.php)

(<https://uscgboating.org/statistics/national-life-jacket-wear-rate-study.php>)

- Observed life jacket wear rates by age / vessel type / operating conditions

[USCG Auxiliary RBS website](https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=B-DEPT)

(<https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=B-DEPT>):

- Information for boaters / paddlers / educators / partners

