

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary



June 2008

National Safe Boating Campaign

NEWS

***Boat Smart.
Boat Safe.
Wear It!***

DID YOU KNOW?...

By Harriet Howard, DVC-AS

We've traced the origins of the life jacket from Da Vinci's leather life ring to the blocks of wood or cork used by Norse sailors to keep afloat. We've progressed from kapok to foam and introduced the inflatables to the boating public. Now, in the 21st century, there are life jackets available for infants, youths and adults and even for our pets to wear aboard. There's a variety of types, sizes and colors to choose from. But why do we still have such Coast Guard statistics as 90 percent of boaters who drown were not wearing their life jacket?



Graphic Courtesy of National Safe Boating Council

We know that life jacket wear is critical to surviving a boating accident. More statistics: About 70% of boaters involved in accidents have never taken a safe boating course and 85 percent of all boating accident fatalities nationwide were due to sudden, unexpected capsizing or falls overboard. We know that education and awareness are the best weapons in preventing boating accidents. And "Safe Boating is No Accident!"

During National Safe Boating Week we met the boating public at our Public Affairs events and exhibits and at our vessel safety stations. We urged them to take a boating safety class and asked them to boat safely and soberly and to Wear It! We promoted life jacket wear during the Memorial Day weekend and will continue to pass the Wear It! message during the July 4th and Labor Day weekends. National Safe Boating Week may be over for this year, but every week can be a safe boating week to the water-wise boater.