

2026 National Recreational Boating Safety Survey Press Kit

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Social Media Language

Volunteer for the 2026 National Recreational Boating Safety Survey!

The National Recreational Boating Safety Survey (NRBSS) is a nationwide survey sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard to understand how many people go boating, what types of boats they use, and how often they are on the water. As part of the survey, we are asking for volunteers to complete a brief sign-up page asking about their boating habits and share their contact information with the Coast Guard so a wide range of boaters can be invited to participate in the larger NRBSS survey later in the year.

To volunteer, please go to:

https://norcfed.gov1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0ezfBlrTYxLdG4e

Rack Cards & Stickers

Rack Card Sticker Information and Instructions

The U.S. Coast Guard can provide a rack card with boating safety links. However, you can choose to place stickers on your state literature. Requests for rack cards or stickers can be sent to onthewater@norc.org or SMB-COMDT-CG-BSX-Data@uscg.mil.

This rack card sticker links to a short sign-up page as part of the National Recreational Boating Safety Survey, a large national boating safety study conducted for the U.S. Coast Guard. This short sign-up page asks boaters to share a little about their boating habits and contact information to help the Coast Guard reach a broad and representative group of

people who boat so that a wide range of boaters can be invited to participate in the larger NRBSS survey later in the year.

Instructions

1. Place sticker in the blank spot on the bottom of the rack card OR on your state literature
2. When handing out the rack card or state literature, please draw attention to the sticker.

Example language: “If you’re interested in participating in the Coast Guard’s national boating survey this year, simply scan this QR code [point to QR code] or visit the website listed on the sticker. You’ll answer a few brief questions about your boating habits and provide your contact information. They’ll then follow up with participants throughout the year to learn more about their boating experiences. It is a great way to have your voice heard.”

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the survey about?

A: The National Recreational Boating Safety Survey (NRBSS) is a nationwide survey sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard. It has been conducted since 1973 to understand how many people go boating, what types of boats they use, and how often they are on the water. Through this short sign-up page we are collecting boating habits and contact information from boaters. Throughout the year, some boaters who volunteer their information through this page will then be invited to take part in the larger national survey (NRBSS).

Q: Why is the NRBSS important?

A: The information collected through the NRBSS helps support national, state, and local boating safety and law enforcement programs. The results are used by the U.S. Coast Guard and state agencies to improve boating safety, make better decisions about how resources are used, and help make boating and water recreation safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

Q: Should people who don’t boat much volunteer?

A: Yes. By completing this short sign-up page and sharing your contact information, you’re helping make sure all types of boaters are represented. It’s important to hear from everyone, including people who boat often, only occasionally, or not at all. This helps ensure the NRBSS results accurately reflect boating activity across the country.

Q: Who is conducting the survey?

A: The survey is being conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago, in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard. NORC is a nonpartisan research organization with more than 80 years of experience conducting high-quality, unbiased research for organizations such as Consumer Reports, the American Cancer Society, the American Red Cross, the Associated Press, the National Science Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Q: Will information be kept private and confidential?

A: Yes. Any information provided to NORC is kept strictly confidential.

Sample Press Release

The United States Coast Guard launches the 2026 National Recreational Boating Safety Survey

The survey is the only source for recreational boating data in all 50 states and informs about safety and security on the water.

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) is launching the 2026 National Recreational Boating Safety Survey (NRBSS), which will provide detailed estimates in every state of how many people go boating, what types of boats they use, and how often they go boating. This survey is funded under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund administered by the USCG.

The survey supports national safety and law enforcement programs by improving boating safety. The 2026 NRBSS is particularly important as it is the first time the survey has been conducted since 2020 when the industry saw a rise in boating as an outdoor activity across the country. The Coast Guard has regularly conducted the survey since 1973, and it was last conducted in 2018.

“The NRBSS has an extensive history of giving important insight into how people are boating in waterways across the country,” said Captain Brent Schmadeke, Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary & Boating Safety, United States Coast Guard. “The findings are critical in guiding the Coast Guard’s security efforts to keep boating safe and enjoyable for everyone.”

The survey is being conducted via cooperative agreement by NORC at the University of Chicago, a nonpartisan research organization that has been conducting impactful research and analysis for more than 80 years. Over the next year, NORC will interview more than 50,000 households across all 50 states and the District of Columbia to gather information from individuals who own or rent boats. The results will provide valuable information to national, state, and local agencies through both national and state-level estimates.

Selected households will be invited to participate in the study via invitation letters, postcards, emails, and text messages. Those who receive an invitation are encouraged to participate to have their voice heard. Participating will help the United States Coast Guard keep our rivers, oceans, and other waterways safe.

Respondent information will be held in the strictest confidence and will be grouped to produce statistical summaries.

The U.S. Coast Guard is the national coordinator for the National Recreational Boating Safety Program, established by the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971. This foundational act empowers the Coast Guard to enhance safety on our nation's waterways by setting standards for boat construction, improving accident investigations and reporting, and providing crucial financial assistance to programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and six U.S. territories. Through the Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety, the Recreational Boating Safety Program remains a cornerstone of our commitment to ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all recreational boaters. The National Recreational Boating Safety Program estimates 95,000 lives have been saved since the Program's inception. The most recent year of information recorded the fewest deaths in the Program's history.

For more information about the NRBSS, visit <https://uscgboating.org/statistics/national-recreational-boating-safety-survey.php>.

For further assistance or questions, contact onthewater@norc.org or SMB-COMDT-CG-BSX-Data@uscg.mil.

Websites and Resources

- **National Recreational Boating Safety Survey:** <https://uscgboating.org/statistics/national-recreational-boating-safety-survey.php>
- **USCG StoryMap Overview:** <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/88843802027049299d25ae755b724ccd>
- **NORC Project Page:** <https://www.norc.org/research/projects/the-national-recreational-boating-safety-survey.html>