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Contact: [Ron Sarver](#), 859.225.9487 (NASBLA) | [Dr. Jamila Porter](#), 678.389.4575 (Safe States)

Just Released: New Recommendations for Improving Boat Occupant Injury Surveillance

Public health and boating experts issue recommendations for improving data to prevent injuries

Lexington, KY – New recommendations on improving recreational boat occupant injury surveillance were jointly released today by the [National Association of State Boating Law Administrators](#) (NASBLA) and the [Safe States Alliance](#), in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Public health surveillance – the continuous and systematic collection and analysis of health-related data – is essential to understand and prevent injuries before they occur. However, previous data reports released by the U.S. Coast Guard have revealed that non-fatal injuries among recreational boat occupants have often gone underreported, limiting the ability of officials to track and prevent these injuries. To address the underreporting of these injuries, recreational boating and public health injury prevention experts convened to identify surveillance gaps, determine needed improvements, and develop a new set of recommendations to improve boat occupant injury surveillance. This project was funded under a grant from the Sports Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Occupants make up nearly half of the injuries that occur while boating and over a third of the total deaths according to the latest U.S. Coast Guard statistics," said Cody Jones, NASBLA Chairman. "While we may typically focus our attention on boat operator safety, these numbers show us that it is as vitally important to address the safety of the other occupants on board. NASBLA is working with the Safe States Alliance, the U.S. Coast Guard, and others to identify ways to collect more complete information about all victims of recreational boating incidents so that we as a community can find more effective ways to educate boaters and prevent these injuries and deaths."

The [new recommendations](#) align with previous calls to address issues in recreational boat occupant injury surveillance by galvanizing collaborative efforts between boating and public health injury prevention communities. The recommendations include improving data quality and collection processes, linking boating-related injury data sources, making data more widely accessible, supporting more multidisciplinary collaborations between public health and boating professionals, and working toward long-term social, political, and cultural changes within the recreational boating industry.

"Safe States and NASBLA are excited to release these important and critically needed recommendations," said Dr. Jamila Porter, Director of Programs and Evaluation at the Safe States Alliance. "In collaboration with the U.S. Coast Guard, we hope to move these recommendations forward by conducting more detailed investigations into specific surveillance issues and testing potential solutions in several pilot states."

[For more details, click here for the full recommendations report.](#)

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[NASBLA](#) is a national nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization and professional community leading recreational boating safety through innovation and collaboration for excellence in policy development, national standards, and best practices. NASBLA represents the recreational boating authorities of all 50 states and the U.S. territories.

The [Safe States Alliance](#) is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to strengthening the practice of injury and violence prevention. Founded in 1993, the Safe States Alliance is the only national non-profit organization comprised of public health injury prevention professionals representing all states and territories in the United States.