

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our evaluation of reports of investigation of boating accidents, the Safety Board recommends that:

1. The Coast Guard and State officials investigating boating accidents accord high priority to developing information which will be useful in formulating preventive measures. Such information should include but not be limited to:

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a. Detailed description of the boat and its equipment: capacity, stability, freeboard, visibility from operator's position, flotation, attitude of floating in flooded condition, condition, power, load, weight distribution, availability of rails, handgrabs, and availability and location of lifesaving equipment.

b. Weather and sea conditions, including wave length and height, forecasted weather, if weather forecast was known or sought, and methods of dissemination of the weather forecast.

c. The operator's experience in boating and boating safety courses completed by the operator, swimming ability of persons involved, the reason for the boating trip, physical condition of occupants, and maintenance of an adequate lookout.

2. The Coast Guard consider the use of specially trained investigators who would be familiar with small boat design and operations, and who could conduct on scene investigations in depth.

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3. The Coast Guard, in cooperation with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, consider establishment of a training program for boating accident investigators.

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4. The Coast Guard evaluate the effectiveness of the present narrative report of investigation to provide data for documentation of the need for minimum safety standards for recreational boats and equipment.

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5. Based on this evaluation, the Coast Guard consider limiting narrative reports to those accidents which are investigated on scene and in sufficient detail to develop preventive measures, including nonfatal accidents.

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6. The Coast Guard, in reviewing reports of boating accident investigations, analyze those involving similar or identical boats to determine what design changes are necessary to prevent recurrence.

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7. The States utilize the Federal funds provided when the Federal Boat Safety Act is implemented, supplemented by State funds, to increase the number of State boating officials and necessary equipment to expand and improve the effectiveness of boating accident investigations.

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8. The Coast Guard consider alternative investigative techniques in recreational boating accident investigations, such as those used in highway accidents: i.e., specialized accident investigation forms, multi-discipline investigative teams, and selection of accidents for in-depth investigation which have the best potential for preventive countermeasures.

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