



ABSTRACT

Paper title: Safety on Board: Monitoring safety behaviours among recreational boaters

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Abstract:

Recreational boating is a popular leisure time activity in Western Australia. It is estimated that, in Australia, boating incidents cause more harm than rail and air crashes combined and, in terms of transport, are second only to motor vehicle crashes as a cause of serious injury. Therefore, it is important to assess trends in safety issues and behaviours among recreational boaters. A survey was conducted among 500 boaters in 2006 to monitor changes in attitudes toward safety and safe boater behaviour. These results were compared to those from a similar survey conducted in 2003.

The key marine safety issues considered as requiring more focus or effort among the boaters included boating safety education, the control of boaters under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and the control of reckless operation. Few of the boaters reported having had an alcoholic drink while on their most recent trip, logging on, checking the weather, checking fuel supplies, or conducting a general boat and equipment check prior to using their boat. There was a high level of support among those surveyed for the introduction of the Recreational Skippers Ticket. Although the numbers reporting alcohol drinking were low, the effects of demographic and boating characteristics on the use of alcohol among boaters will be presented.

It remains important to measure and monitor changes among recreational boaters' in terms of their attitude and knowledge toward boating safety issues particularly due to the large increase in the number of boaters and vessels on our waters. Recommendations regarding areas to target education efforts will be made.