

## TALKING POINTS

**WHO:** Through partnerships with volunteer organizations, state-led agencies, boaters and the maritime community, the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 (FBSA) led to a significant reduction in recreational boating accidents and fatalities.

**WHAT:** The Act mandated a cooperative Federal-State effort to improve the safety of recreational boating in the United States.

**WHERE:** With its endless ponds, rivers, lakes, bays and oceans, the United States is a boating country. The FBSA is instrumental in ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for boaters.

**WHEN:** On August 10th, 1971, President Richard Nixon signed the Federal Boat Safety Act.

**WHY:** The 20th century saw a dramatic increase in the number of recreational boaters, but this also brought growth in the number of boating-related accidents and fatalities. Marine legislation was needed.

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### QUICK FACTS:

- FBSA established the National Recreational Boating Safety Program and gave the U.S. Coast Guard the authority to establish mandatory boat manufacturing and safety standards.
- The Act motivated organizations to support the National Safe Boating Week Committee's annual awareness week leading up to Memorial Day. This committee later became the National Safe Boating Council.
- The fatality rate has dramatically DECREASED since the passage of FBSA:

In 1971 the fatality rate was 20.6 per 100,000 boats.

From 1972 to 1975, the years right after the FBSA was passed, the recreational boating fatality rate dropped by 12%.

In 2019, that fatality rate was 5.2 per 100,000 boats (about 600 per year).

- The recreational boating community continues to grow and the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 is instrumental in guiding industry standards that ensure a safe enjoyable experience for the boating public.





- Examples of improved industry standards: flotation and capacity requirements, ignition protection, electrical safety requirements, safe installations of gasoline fuel systems, maximum horsepower and safe handling, navigation lights and sound signals, engine cut-off devices, and firefighting.

## WHAT BOATERS CAN DO

In order to keep everyone safe on the water, recreational boaters are encouraged to:

- Take a boating safety course
- Check equipment
- File a float plan
- Always wear a life jacket
- Never boat under the influence
- Use an engine cut-off device
- Watch the weather
- Be aware of your surroundings