



Guidelines for Investigator's Boating Incident Report

The DEEP Boating Division is required to submit all reportable boating incidents to the United States Coast Guard (USCG) within 30 days of receipt of the boating incident form. Therefore, all law enforcement agencies must submit their incident reports in a timely manner. If an investigation precludes the incident report from being complete, submit as much as possible and note that further investigation is required.

Please send all reports to:

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"Reportable" Boating Incidents

A vessel is involved in a boating incident if any of the circumstances are met below:

- The death of any person from whatever cause; or
- The disappearance of any person from on board that indicate death or injury; or
- The injury of any person is sufficient to require medical attention beyond first aid (Including hypothermia); or
- Damage to vessels and other property that totals \$500 or more. (The property damage must result from the vessel's operation, construction, seaworthiness, equipment, or machinery); or
- There is a complete loss of any vessel.

Note: **Beyond First Aid** is defined as any physical harm or hurt for which a person received treatment by a medical professional at a licensed medical facility. Observation without treatment is not treatment beyond first aid and it not considered an injury beyond first aid.

The following are some examples of incident types that will always or nearly always meet the reporting requirements of DEEP:

- Grounding, capsizing, sinking, flooding, or swamping.
- Person ejected or falls overboard from a vessel, when: underway or anchored; or properly docked or moored, and due to another vessel's actions.
- Person impacts a vessel, when: underway or anchored; or properly docked or moored, and due to another vessel's actions.
- Person departs vessel voluntarily when the vessel is underway or the vessel was recently anchored for immediate repairs (e.g., unfouling an anchor or cleaning intake).
- Fire or explosion (fuel and non-fuel materials related), when the vessel is underway, at anchor, or is properly moored or docked and involved in fueling or starting or when attributed to the vessel's equipment or electrical components.
- Towed watersport mishap.
- Collision with a vessel, fixed object(allision) or floating object.
- Person struck by a propeller, propulsion unit, water jet or steering machinery.
- Person struck by vessel.
- Carbon monoxide exposure.
- Electrical shock due to stray current related to a vessel (e.g., electric shock drowning).
- Interaction with natural phenomena, when the vessel is underway, and at least one state regulatory reporting threshold was met, and another event occurred.

The following are some examples of incident types that will always meet the reporting requirements of DEEP:

- Casualties while swimming from a vessel that is not anchored, moored or docked.
- Casualties where natural causes served as a contributing factor in the death of an individual, but the determined cause of death was drowning.
- Casualties from natural phenomena including interaction with things such as lightening, being struck or bitten by a fish, or falling debris from a cliff.
- Casualties where a person falls off an anchored vessel.
- Casualties that result when a person departs a recently anchored, disabled vessel voluntarily to make immediate repairs, such as unfouling an anchor or cleaning out the intake of a jet-propelled vessel.

“Non-Reportable” Boating Incidents

Not every occurrence involving a vessel must be reported to the Boating Division. The following occurrences involving an incident with a vessel are not required to be reported to DEEP:

- Person dies, is injured, or is missing as a result of self-inflicted injuries, including wounds, alcohol/drug overdose, or poisoning that occur when unrelated to the vessel or its equipment and involving no other vessel.
- Person dies, is injured, or is missing as a result of assault by another person or persons while on board a vessel.
- Person dies or is injured from natural causes while aboard a vessel where the vessel did not contribute to the casualty or injury.
- Person suffers injury while boarding or departing a docked, moored, or anchored vessel, when no other occurrence and no other state regulatory reporting threshold was met.
- Person suffers injury or death as a result of voluntarily jumping, diving, or swimming for pleasure from an anchored vessel, or a properly docked or moored vessel.
- Person suffers injury, death or is missing as a result of voluntarily entering the water from the shore or from another non-vessel place of inherent safety to swim to a vessel to swim for pleasure, or to retrieve another object.
- Person ejected from a properly docked or moored vessel when no other vessel was involved.
- Person falls overboard from a properly docked or moored vessel when no other vessel was involved.
- Person impacts a properly docked or moored vessel when no other vessel was involved.
- Medical emergencies unrelated to the vessel or its equipment and involving no other vessel. A medical emergency does not refer to physical impairments such as poor eyesight, hearing, or mobility.
- Launching and recovery occurrences, including when the vessel is not on the water and capable of use or not free from the launching apparatus.
- Failure of the vehicle used for trailering.
- Occurrences that solely involve a pool float toy, innertube, float tube propelled by feet or fins, surfboard, submersible, diving propulsion aid, stock tank, air mattress, fish tote, floating dock, unmodified log, non-propelled residential platform, snowmobile, seaplane and/or a watercraft or artificial contrivance that has already been determined to not be a vessel.
- Property damage occurs to a docked or moored vessel due to theft or vandalism.

- Vessel damage or loss involving a properly docked or moored vessel and attributed to a lack of or improper maintenance.
- Casualties that result from a person climbing aboard an anchored vessel from the water or swimming near an anchored vessel (unless the casualty was related to carbon monoxide exposure or stray electric current).
- Occurrences meeting vessel-use exceptions, including non-propelled residential platforms; vessels used for solely governmental or criminal activities; and vessels engaged in sanctioned-activity events that are exempted from being state numbered since they are used exclusively racing.
- Interaction with natural phenomena, when no other event occurred and when no other state regulatory reporting threshold was met.
- Fire or explosion when the vessel is not involved in fueling or starting or not attributed to the vessel's equipment or electrical components.

The following definitions are for reference when filling out the Investigator's Boating Incident Report.

Vessel Type (Every description of watercraft, other than a seaplane on water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water).

- **Airboat:** A vessel with a solid hull that is propelled using an engine that produces air thrust. This type of vessel does not include "ground effect" as a means of propulsion (e.g., hovercraft).
- **Open motorboat:** Craft of open construction specifically built for operating with a motor, including vessels canopied or fitted with temporary partial shelters.
- **Cabin motorboat:** A motorboat equipped with accommodation spaces, e.g., bunks or berths.
- **Auxiliary sail:** A sailboat also equipped with an engine.
- **Sail (only):** Any vessel whose sole source of propulsion is the natural element (e.g., wind) or a vessel designed or intended to be propelled primarily by sail, regardless of size or type.
- **Rowboat:** An open vessel propelled by one or more persons using oars.
- **Canoe:** A small narrow vessel, propelled by paddles. Canoes usually are pointed at both bow and stern and are normally open on top but can be covered.
- **Kayak:** A small vessel with a cockpit that is propelled by a double-bladed paddle by a sitting paddler.
- **Inflatable:** A vessel constructed with its sides and bow made of flexible tubes containing pressurized gas. On smaller inflatables, the floor and hull beneath it is often flexible.
- **Personal Watercraft (PWC):** Craft designed to be operated by a person or persons sitting, standing or kneeling on the craft rather than within the confines of a hull.

- **Pontoon:** A vessel consisting of a rigid structure connecting at least two parallel fore (front) and aft (back) rigid sealed buoyancy chambers.
- **Houseboat:** A motorized vessel designed primarily with accommodation spaces with little or no foredeck or cockpit, with low freeboard and with a low length to beam ratio.
- **Mini jet boat:** A vessel with an inboard engine powering a water jet pump as its primary propulsion and designed to be operated with one or more persons within the confines of the hull.
- **Boat Type Other:** If this vessel does not fit any of the descriptions above, enter another term for the vessel that best describes it.
- **Standup Paddleboard (SUP):** A vessel, typically 7' – 15' in length with enough width and flotation to stay afloat without momentum while boarded, that is propelled by a standing operator with the use of a single or double-bladed paddle.

Hull Material

Enter the type of hull material for this vessel:

- **Wood:** Hulls of plywood, molded plywood, wood planking, or any other wood fiber in its natural consistency, including those of wooden construction that have been “sheathed” with fiberglass or sheet metal.
- **Aluminum:** Includes hulls of sheet steel or steel alloy, not those with steel ribs and wood, canvas, or plastic hull coverings.
- **Fiberglass:** Hulls of fiber reinforced plastic. The laminate consists of two basic components, the reinforcing material (glass filaments) and the plastic or resin in which it is embedded.
- **Plastic:** synthetic material usually made from organic materials that have a polymeric structure and can be moulded when soft and then set, ESP such a material in a finished state containing plasticizer, stabilizer, filler, pigments, etc.
- **Rubber/Vinyl/Canvas:** Hull made with the material(s) of rubber, vinyl, and/or canvas.
- **Other:** If this boat’s hull material does not fit any of the descriptions above, enter another term for the hull material that best describes it.
- **Steel:** Hulls of sheet steel or steel alloy, not those with steel ribs and wood, canvas, or plastic hull coverings.

Engine Type

Enter the type of engine used as the primary means of propulsion for this vessel:

- **Outboard:** An engine not permanently affixed to the structure of the vessel, regardless of the method or location used to mount the engine (e.g., motor wells, motor pockets).
- **Inboard:** An engine where the power unit of the motor is fitted inside the vessel.

- **Sterndrive:** An inboard/outboard engine system, with the motor fitted inside the hull. Gears distribute the power to the outside propeller and steering is done by turning the outboard (propeller) unit.
- **Pod drive:** means an engine mounted in front of the transom of a vessel and attached through the bottom of the hull to a steerable propulsion unit.

Engine make (e.g., Evinrude, Mercury, Cummings)

Number of engines

Enter the number of engines used to mechanically propel this vessel.

Horsepower

Enter the total combined amount of horsepower for all engines used in the propulsion (movement) of this vessel.

Fuel Type

Enter the primary type of fuel used in the propulsion of this vessel. -Gasoline -Diesel - Electric-None-Other

Propulsion type

Enter the primary method of propulsion (movement) used for this vessel.

- **Propeller:** A rotating device, with two or more blades, used as the means of propulsion.
- **Water Jet:** A pump that expels a high-pressure stream of water through a directional nozzle that provides both propulsion and steering.
- **Air Thrust:** A means of propulsion where the force of air propels the vessel into a course of direction.
- **Manual:** A means of propulsion where one or more persons use oars, paddles or poles.
- **Sail:** A means of propulsion solely dependent on the natural element (e.g., wind).

Vessel length

Length (in feet) of this vessel. Length means the straight-line horizontal measurement of the overall length from the foremost part of the vessel to the aftermost part of the vessel; measured from end to end over the deck and parallel to the centerline.

Outboard motor brackets, rudders, and other similar fittings, attachments, and extensions are not included in the measurement.

Model year

Enter the manufacturer's model year for this particular vessel.

Operation 1 -Operation 2 -Operation 3

Enter this vessel's operation at the time of the incident. Three types of operation can be entered for each vessel. Vessel operations should be entered first for those operations closest to the time of the accident.

For example, if the vessel is:

(1) cruising and then

(2) changes direction and as a result of changing direction ends up in an incident, the correct entry is as follows: Operation #1: Changing Direction and Operation #2: Cruising.

- **Cruising:** Proceeding in a normal manner, unrestricted, with an absence of drastic rudder or engine changes.
- **Changing speed:** Changing the propulsion (movement) of the vessel either faster or slower.
- **Changing direction:** Changing the course of the vessel's direction.
- **Drifting:** Underway, but proceeding over the bottom without use of engines, oars or sails; being carried along only by the tide, current, or wind.
- **Towing another vessel:** Vessel was engaged in towing another vessel at the time of the incident.
- **Being towed:** Vessel was being towed by another vessel at the time of the incident.
- **Rowing/Paddling:** The vessel is propelled by using (1) oars (long, slender wooden shafts shaped into a round handle at one end and a flat blade at the other) –or (2) paddles (similar to oars except they are shorter, double-ended, and used vertically rather than horizontally).
- **Sailing:** The technical skill of navigation where the wind is the sole means of propulsion.
- **Launching:** In the act of physically putting the vessel into the water. If a person dies or is injured away from the water while preparing a vessel for launching, it is not a reportable incident.
- **Docking/Undocking:** Guiding a vessel into an enclosed area for the purpose of loading or unloading passengers and/or gear. Undocking is the process where the vessel departs from the enclosed area.
- **At anchor:** Held in place in the water by an anchor. Includes “moored” to a buoy or anchored vessel and “dragging anchor.”
- **Docked/Moored:** A vessel that is securely tied to a fixed structure or moored (fastened with cables and/or lines) to a buoy or anchored vessel.
- **Other:** Enter another type of operation not described above.

Attitude of vessel at time of Incident (How the vessel is positioned in the water)

- **Idling:** relatively level in the water depending on load & weight distribution
- **Plowing:** bow elevated; accelerating from idle speed
- **Planing (On Plane):** relatively level but higher in the water when drifting or at idle speed.

Activity 1 -Activity 2 -Activity 3

Enter this vessel's activity at the time of the incident. Up to three types of activities can be entered for each vessel in the incident.

- **Commercial activity:** The vessel is being used for commercial activity. This type of activity includes carrying passengers for hire; fishing, crabbing, or shrimping in support of one's business; or charging a fee to tow a vessel.
- **Swimming/Diving:** Vessel occupants engaged in scuba diving, snorkeling, or swimming activity just prior to the incident or the vessel was involved in an incident with individuals who engaged in these activities who were not occupants on the vessel.
- **Fishing:** Occupants on this vessel are engaged in any recreational fishing activity for sport and not in support of a business venture.
- **Fueling:** The vessel is in the process of fueling the engine just prior to the incident. A fire, explosion, sinking or other occurrence involving a vessel, if the vessel, its installed or associated equipment or appendages failed, malfunctioned, or otherwise caused or contributed to the incident or casualty. A vessel could be docked, moored, or anchored.
- **Hunting:** Occupants on this vessel are engaged in any recreational hunting activity for sport and not in support of a business venture.
- **Racing:** The vessel is involved in a racing activity that is not sanctioned. An incident is not reportable when a fatality, injury or property damage occurs while the boat is participating in an organized and sanctioned race, warm-up, or in a vessel uniquely designed for racing.
- **Making repairs:** This vessel was making repairs to the machinery or material, design or construction, or components involved in the mechanical or sail propulsion of the vessel (e.g., engine, sails, transmission, fuel system, electric system, and steering system), and/or repairing any equipment on the vessel (e.g., communications, visual distress, seats, and sound producing equipment).
- **Water skiing:** An activity where vessel passengers use one or two skis to plane over water while being towed behind the vessel. The vessel may also be involved in an incident with individuals who were water-skiing but were not passengers on this vessel.
- **Tubing:** An activity involving inner tubes and other devices on which a person can be towed behind a vessel. If the boat was involved specifically with water-skiing activity, it needs to be indicated in the water-skiing category.
- **Starting engine:** The vessel engine was in the process of being started at the time of the incident.

- **Tournament:** This vessel was participating in a fishing tournament at the time of the accident.
- **White water activity:** This vessel was traveling in white water “rapids” where the water conditions were rough and the current very strong.

Incident Types/Events

Chain of events in the incident sequence:

Please enter the events in sequential number for each vessel involved in the incident in the order they occurred. Up to 3 events can be entered for each vessel.

For example, if Vessel A collides with Vessel B and a passenger on Vessel B falls overboard, and then that passenger is struck by the boat propeller, that incident would be entered as follows:

Vessel A:

#1 = Collision with Vessel,

Vessel B:

#1 = Collision with Vessel,

#2 = Falls Overboard,

#3 = Struck by Boat Propeller.

Definitions

- **Capsizing:** The overturning of a vessel.
- **Carbon monoxide exposure:** Death or injury resulting from an odorless, colorless gas generated from auxiliary vessel equipment (including, but not limited to stoves, heaters, refrigerators, generators, hot water heaters), another vessel’s exhaust, or the exhaust of the vessel on which persons were either aboard or within close proximity.
- **Collision with fixed object:** The striking of any fixed object, above or below the surface of the water, except the bottom of the body of water. This includes a vessel striking another vessel moored to a dock, pier, or similar structure; and a vessel striking timber or stumps.
- **Collision with floating object:** The striking of a floating object other than a vessel, above or below the surface of the water, which is not fixed or held in place by any means (e.g., barrels, logs, or other debris).
- **Collision with vessel:** A striking together of two or more vessels, including colliding with an anchored vessel, a vessel secured to a mooring buoy or the tow or another vessel with exception of a towed watersport participant(s). This does not include a vessel striking a vessel moored to a dock, pier, or similar structure.
- **Electrical shock:** When a person makes contact with an electrical current from a vessel or its equipment. This includes system failure and stray current. It does not include lightning (see natural phenomena).

- **Fire/Explosion (fuel):**
 - (1) **Fire/Explosion (Engine (propulsion) or generator related):** Accidental burning or explosion of a vessel due to combustion of vessel fuels or their vapors used for electrical generation or propulsion.
 - (2) **Fire/Explosion (Not engine (propulsion) or generator related):** Accidental burning or explosion of a vessel due to combustion of fuels or their vapors not used for electrical generation or propulsion.
- **Fire/Explosion (non-fuel):** Accidental burning or explosion of any material onboard a vessel except vessel fuels or their vapors.
- **Fire/Explosion (unknown origin):** Accidental burning or explosion of any material onboard a vessel where the cause of the fire/explosion is unknown.
- **Flooding:** The manner by which water enters the vessel through a fitting, a drain plug, a hole or crack in the hull, or other means that allows ingress of water through the hull, not over the top of the gunwale, transom, or decking of the vessel. Flooding is not the same as swamping.
- **Grounding:** Running aground of a vessel; including the striking or pounding on rocks, reefs, shoals, or the bottom of the body of water; includes a stranded vessel.
- **Hull failure:** Defect or failure of the structural body of a vessel. This includes the hull material, design, or construction. It does not include the superstructure, masts, or rigging.
- **Language barrier:** The unsuccessful communication between individuals due to a foreign language or dialect that contributed to the incident.
- **Natural phenomena:** Includes interaction with things such as lightning, being struck or bitten by a fish, or falling debris from a cliff.
- **Person departs vessel voluntarily:** A person, acting of their own free will, enters the water from a vessel, resulting in the person's injury or death.
- **Person ejected from vessel:** A person is thrown out of a vessel involuntarily by a non-human force such as a wake, wave, collision, or unexpected change in direction of the vessel.
- **Person falls overboard:** A person involuntarily falls off a vessel.
- **Person impacts vessel:** A person slips, trips, falls, or strikes a surface on or in a vessel.
- **Person struck by propeller/propulsion unit/water jet:** A person who is located on, inside, or outside of a vessel is struck by the propeller or propulsion unit of a vessel or high velocity water leaving the propulsion unit.
- **Sinking:** After swamping, flooding, or capsizing, the vessel loses enough buoyancy to submerge entirely below the surface of the water. The Coast Guard finds that sinking is often incorrectly used to describe a situation of flooding or capsizing. If a vessel floods or capsizes but does not become completely submerged underwater, "sinking" should not be entered as an incident type.
- **Swamping:** The manner by which water enters the vessel over the top of the gunwale, transom, or decking of the vessel, not through a fitting, drain plug, hole

or crack in the hull, or other means that allows ingress of water through the hull. Swamping is not the same as flooding.

- **Person struck by vessel:** A person who is located inside or outside of a vessel is struck by a vessel.
- **Swamping:** The manner by which water enters the vessel over the top of the gunwhale, transom, or decking of the vessel, not through a fitting, drain plug, hole or crack in the hull, or other means that allows ingress of water through the hull.
- **Towed watersport mishap:** Associated with vessel passenger(s) or person(s) being towed or surfing the wake created by the vessel, including but not limited to persons falling or ejected during their activity; being struck by or entangled in the activity equipment; or running into a person, object, or vessel.
- **Sudden medical condition:** An incident where a person on a vessel experiences an unexpected medical condition.
- **Other / describe:** Incidents that do not fit any of the described types. Provide brief description.
Example:
Person struck by high velocity water leaving the propulsion unit (jet drive) of a vessel.
- **Unknown:** Insufficient information to determine the type of incident.
Examples:
Accidental burning or explosion of any material onboard a vessel where the cause of the fire/explosion is unknown.
Single occupant, vessel found capsized or without the occupant and no witnesses available.

Causes of Incident - CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Chain of events for contributing factors sequence:

Incident Cause 1 (Primary Cause), Incident Cause 2 (Secondary Cause), Incident Cause 3 (Tertiary Cause) Incident Cause Other

Please enter the causes (contributing factors) by number for each vessel involved in the incident. Up to 3 contributing factors can be entered for each vessel.

For example, we find out the operator of Vessel A did not have a proper lookout prior to colliding with Vessel B in congested waters. Further, Vessel Operator A was operating the boat at an excessive speed given the environment in which he was boating and he had little overall boating experience. That incident would be entered as follows:

Vessel A:

Incident Cause 1 (Primary Cause) "No Proper Lookout"

Incident Cause 2 (Secondary Cause) "Excessive Speed"

Accident Cause 3 (Tertiary Cause) “Operator Inexperience”

Vessel B:

Incident Cause 1 (Primary Cause) Primary Cause: “Congested Waters”

Definitions

- **Alcohol use:** In the investigating officer's judgment, use of alcohol by the operator or vessel's passengers contributed to the incident. This does not necessarily indicate intoxication, only that alcohol consumption contributed to the incident.
- **Congested waters:** Where an area of a body of water was either too small or narrow to safely accommodate the number of vessels, or there were a large number of vessels operating in close proximity to one another.
- **Dam / Lock:** A vessel(s) operated in, near, on or over a dam or lock and the structure contributed to the incident.
- **Drug use:** In the investigating officer's judgment, use of legal or illegal drug(s) by the operator or vessel's passengers contributed to the incident. This does not necessarily indicate intoxication, only that use of drug(s) contributed to the incident.
- **Equipment failure**:** Failure of equipment, either carried or installed. This includes unsafe or improper installation. This does not include the failure to carry required equipment. ** If you entered **Equipment Failure**, indicate which equipment failed:
 - **Auxiliary or accessory equipment failure:** (Stoves, heaters, refrigerators, generators, battery chargers, hot water heaters)
 - **Communication equipment failure:** (Radio, cell phones, CBs, Emergency Locator Beacons (ELBs), Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs), Digital Selective Calling (DSC) technology)
 - **Fire extinguisher not functional:** Fire extinguisher prevented from discharging.
 - **De-masting:** Mast fell down, either onto the vessel or into the water.
 - **Seat failure:** Includes the back of the seat or the seat itself, or the base structure that is fixed to the area of the vessel deck supporting the seat.
 - **Sound producing equipment failure:** Horn or bell not functional.
 - **Nav. Equip. Failure:** (GPS, Radar)
 - **Visual distress signal failure:** Visual distress signals failed Includes any of the following used during the day: Day Flags, Shapes, and Smoke Includes any of the following used at night: SOS Light, flares and other pyrotechnics.
- **Excessive speed:** Speed above that which a reasonable and prudent person would have operated under the circumstances that existed. It is not necessarily a speed in excess of a posted limit.
- **Failure to yield:** Failure of stand-on vessel to avoid collision with another vessel in a Rules of Road Violation. May include a violation of the state-regulated distance or proximity requirements. Operator knowingly fails to take action.

- **Failure to vent:** Prior to starting the engine, failure to take action to ventilate a machinery space or enclosed compartment such that gasoline vapors are not expelled.
- **Hazardous waters:** Water conditions that were not weather-related, but were inherent to the location, such as currents, rapids, or rapid tidal flows, contributed to the incident.
- **Hull failure:** Defect or failure of the structural body of a vessel (e.g., hull material, design, or construction) not including superstructure, masts or rigging.
- **Ignition of fuel/vapors:** Accidental combustion of vessel fuel or fuel vapors, regardless of the cause of the spill.
- **Improper anchoring:** Where a vessel was either in the process of being anchored incorrectly or incorrectly held in place in the water by an anchor. Improper anchoring includes dropping the anchor off of the stern of the vessel instead of the bow or a vessel that is improperly moored to a buoy or anchored vessel.
- **Improper loading:** Loading, including weight shifting, of the vessel causing instability, limited maneuverability, or dangerously reduced freeboard.
- **Improper lookout:** Not keeping a proper watch and not scanning effectively for other vessels, persons, or objects. The operator failed to perceive danger and the risk of a collision or grounding, using all available resources, because no one was serving as lookout or the person so serving failed in that regard.

Improper Lookout includes the following Distractions:

- **Looked but did not see:** Observed, but did not detect the relevant vessel, person, or object.
- **Lost in thought:** Was thinking about items other than the task; daydreaming.
- **Background lighting:** Lights on docks, shorelines, or other vessels.
- **Onboard lighting:** Glare from lights onboard the vessel; includes improperly shielded navigation lights.
- **Occupant(s):** Occupant(s) in vessel; includes conversing with or looking at other occupant(s).
- **Moving object(s) in vessel:** Moving object(s), other than occupant(s), in vessel.
- **Navigation device:** Viewing or operating a navigation device; includes GPS or other devices being used for navigation.
- **Using or reaching for mobile/wireless communication devices:** Using, attempting to use, or reaching for a wireless phone or e-mail device; includes talking or listening, entering numbers, or text messaging on the wireless device.
- **Using or reaching for other devices:** Using, attempting to use, or reaching for a spotlight, a VHF radio, an audio device, or any other equipment or devices (excludes mobile/wireless communication devices).

- **Using autopilot:** Reduced attention to navigation as result of reliance on an engaged electronic helmsman or self-steering device to steer or make throttle adjustments.
 - **Person(s) or object(s) outside of vessel:** Fixated on a person, towed watersport participant, another vessel, or any other object(s) in or on the water and outside of the vessel.
 - **Sightseeing:** Fixated on viewing adjacent scenery.
 - **Eating or drinking:** Eating, drinking, or activity related to these actions.
 - **Other distraction:** Details regarding the distraction are known, but none of the specified codes is applicable.
 - **Distraction details unknown:** Distraction noted, but the specifics are unknown.
- **Inadequate on-board navigation lights:** Insufficient and/or improper navigation lights shown by a vessel that indicate direction of travel, position, activity or operation.
 - **Improper/No ski observer:** No one was serving as observer for a watersport participant or the person so serving failed in that regard.
 - **Language barrier:** The unsuccessful communication between individuals due to a foreign language or dialect that contributed to the incident.
 - **Machinery failure**:** Defect or failure in the machinery, material, design, construction, or any installed components involved in the mechanical propulsion of the vessel (e.g., engine, transmission, fuel system, electric system, and steering system). ** If you entered **Machinery failure**, indicate which machinery failed:
 - **Electric system failure:** Shock hazard; system shorted out; battery failure; failure of ignition protection.
 - **Engine:** Engine would not start; engine stalled.
 - **Fuel system:** Fuel tank or fuel lines leaked; clogged fuel lines.
 - **Gear shift:** Shifting mechanism would not operate properly. Engine started in gear, would not go into gear, or went into gear by itself without warning.
 - **Steering:** Failure of the assembly, including all components necessary to transmit remote manual effort to the rudder, sterndrive, water jet drive or outboard engine (includes cable, pulleys, fittings, hydraulic components). Includes **Propulsion system failure** – Failure of the propulsion system to operate properly.
 - **Throttle:** Throttle mechanism would not operate properly.
 - **Ventilation:** Failure of the powered ventilation system that exchanges air and expels gasoline vapors from the engine compartment.
 - **Missing/inadequate Navigation Aid:** The absence of, missing, or off-station navigation aid(s).
 - **Navigation Aid Not Working:** Navigation aid is on station but ineffective or defective.

- **Operator Inattention:** The operator was distracted or failed to pay attention to activities occurring on the vessel, its occupants, or the immediate proximity in which the vessel is operating. **Operator Inattention** should not be selected when a collision or grounding occurred.

Operator Inattention includes the following Distractions:

- **Lost in thought:** Was thinking about items other than the task; daydreaming.
 - **Occupant(s):** Distracted by occupant(s) in vessel; includes conversing with or looking at other occupant(s)
 - **Moving object(s) in vessel:** Distracted by moving object(s), other than occupants(s), in vessel.
 - **Onboard lighting:** Glare from lights onboard the vessel; includes improperly shielded navigation lights.
 - **Navigation device:** Distracted while viewing or operating a navigation device; includes GPS or other devices being used for navigation.
 - **Using or reaching for mobile/ wireless communication devices:** Distracted while using, attempting to use, or reaching for a wireless phone or e-mail device; includes talking or listening, entering numbers, or text messaging on the wireless device.
 - **Using or reaching for other devices:** Distracted while using, attempting to use, or reaching for a spotlight, a VHF radio, an audio device, or any other equipment or devices (excludes mobile/wireless communication devices).
 - **Using autopilot:** Reduced attention to navigation as result of reliance on an engaged electronic helmsman or self-steering device to steer or make throttle adjustments.
 - **Person(s) or object(s) outside of vessel:** Fixated on a person, towed watersport participant, another vessel, or any other object(s) in or on the water and outside of the vessel.
 - **Sightseeing:** Fixated on viewing adjacent scenery.
 - **Eating or drinking:** Distracted by eating, drinking, or activity related to these actions.
 - **Other distraction:** Details regarding distraction are known, but none of the specified codes is applicable.
 - **Distraction details unknown:** Distraction noted, but the specifics are unknown.
- **Operator Inexperience:** Lack of experience, familiarity or knowledge regarding the vessel, environmental conditions, or location.
More specifically:
 - **This vessel:** its operation or controls
 - **Environmental conditions:** prevailing conditions at the time of the incident (e.g., weather, waves, current, other types of environmental conditions)

- **Location:** the immediate area where the incident occurred (e.g., shallow water, shoals, wing dikes, other types of underwater obstructions or hazards)
- **Overloading:** Loading of gear or passengers on the vessel – including inadvertent distribution or redistribution of weight – contributing to instability, limited maneuverability, or dangerously reduced freeboard.
- **Restricted Vision:** Visibility limited due to external conditions such as sun glare, fog, rain, snow, spray, limited night visibility or other environmental conditions. Also includes visibility limited due to the vessel’s bow elevation, passengers, a dirty windshield, canopy top, or other obstruction in or on the vessel.
- **Navigation Rule Violation:** Failure to observe the navigation rules in crossing, meeting, overtaking situations, or in actions to avoid collisions.
- **Sharp Turn:** An immediate or abrupt change in the vessel’s course.
- **Standing/Sitting on Bow, Transom or Gunwale:** Standing or sitting in an area of a vessel not intended for occupancy during the vessel’s operation. Examples of areas not intended for occupancy during vessel operation include, but are not limited to, the gunwale, a cabin top or other elevated platform, the bow, or the stern.
- **Starting in Gear:** The vessel’s engine was started with the transmission in forward or reverse.
- **Force of Wave/Wake:** The wake created by a vessel(s) contributed to the incident.
- **Weather:** One or more atmospheric conditions, such as thunderstorms, lightning, wind, rain, sleet, fog, or snow, created an adverse environmental situation that contributed to the incident.
- **Other / Describe:** Contributing factors(s) that are not described. Provide brief description.
 - Examples:**
 - Did Not Contribute:** The actions of the operator of a vessel did not contribute to the incident.
 - Carbon Monoxide:** The accumulation of carbon monoxide from inadequate or improper ventilation contributed to the incident.
 - Medical Condition:** A person on a vessel or a towed watersport participant experienced a medical condition(s) that contributed to but was not the result of the incident.
- **Unknown:** Insufficient information to determine the contributing factor(s) of the incident.

Damage to Vessel/Property Definitions

- **Associated equipment:** A system, accessory, component, or appurtenance of a recreational vessel; or a marine safety article intended for use on board a vessel.

- **Complete vessel loss:** When the vessel is known or presumed to have been destroyed, is presumed to have sunk in an unknown location, has sunk in a known location but will not be recovered, or is a total constructive loss (i.e., so severely damaged it is not worth repairing).
- **Damage to the vessel or other property:** The damage threshold that requires reporting per reference (b) excludes the value of personal property on the vessel and includes damage to the structural, mechanical, and electronic components of the vessel and its associated equipment, and the material cost of restoring boating infrastructure.
- **Personal property:** Items that are portable gear such as fishing equipment and barbeques, and items not related to safe navigation or carriage equipment such as jewelry.
- **Properly docked or moored vessel:** A vessel secured to a fixed structure, such as a dock, pier, or wharf, or to a mooring buoy or other floating object (excluding another vessel, a floating dock, or ATONs).

Should you have any questions regarding filling out the incident form, please contact:

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