



Mandatory Wear of PFDs on Recreational Boats

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Who is the ACA?

- The American Canoe Association (ACA) is a nationwide, not for profit organization that is in service to the broader paddling public by providing education on matters related to paddling, supporting stewardship of the paddling environment, and enabling programs and events to support paddlesport recreation.



ACA Facts

- Formed in 1880.
- Represent nearly 50,000 members who canoe, kayak, and raft.
- 4,500 certified instructors teach over 100,000 students annually.
- Sanction approximately 700 events each year.



ACA Policy

- ACA requires properly fitted USCG approved PFDs be worn by all participants during all ACA-sponsored water based activities, excepting certain training and competition exemptions, such as those allowed by the USCG PFD carrying regulations.



ACA Policy - continued

- ACA will promote PFD wear and educate the paddling public on the risks avoided and the benefits realized by wearing a PFD.



ACA Policy - continued

- ACA instruction courses, educational materials, and all publications shall promote and portray the wearing of properly fitted PFDs, except where exempted by Paddler Magazine Advertising and Editorial Policy or where otherwise exempted from use by the USCG.



Vast Majority of Paddlers have a safe and enjoyable experience

But Hazards Exist....

- Small Size of Craft
- Avoiding Capsize Dependent on Skill of Operator
- Perception of Skill Required
 - It appears that the simplicity of design that characterizes a canoe or kayak is often misinterpreted as an indication that these craft are simple to operate and inherently safe.



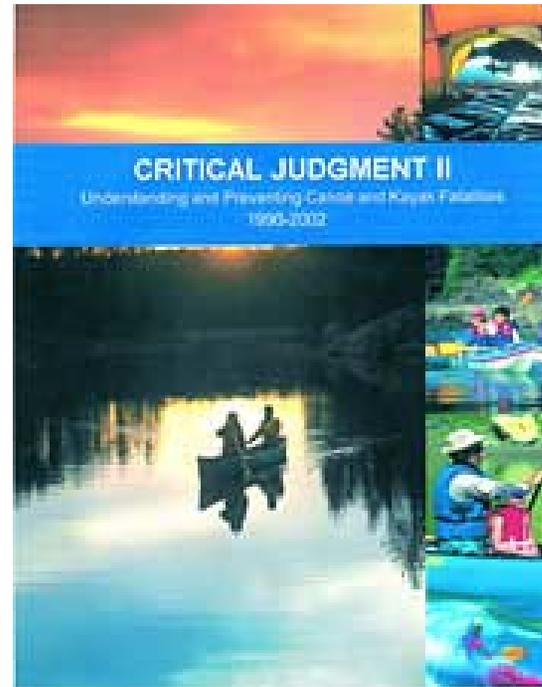
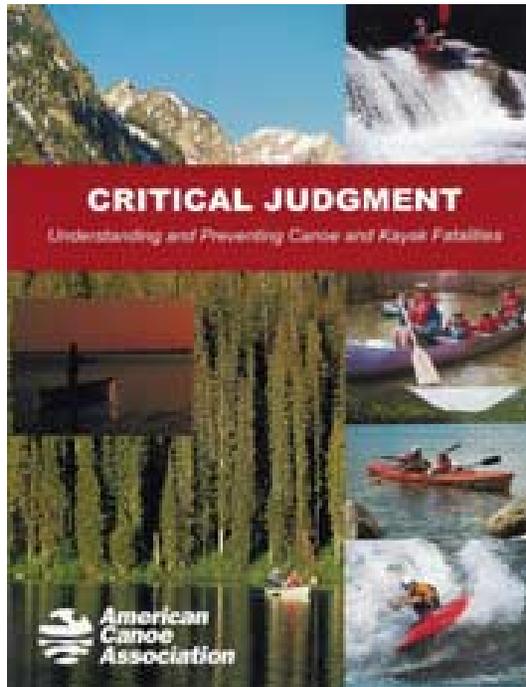
Participants vs. Enthusiasts

- Knowledge separates casual participants from paddlesport enthusiasts.
- Through education the need for a PFD becomes clear.



Critical Judgment I & II

Accident Statistics 1996-2002

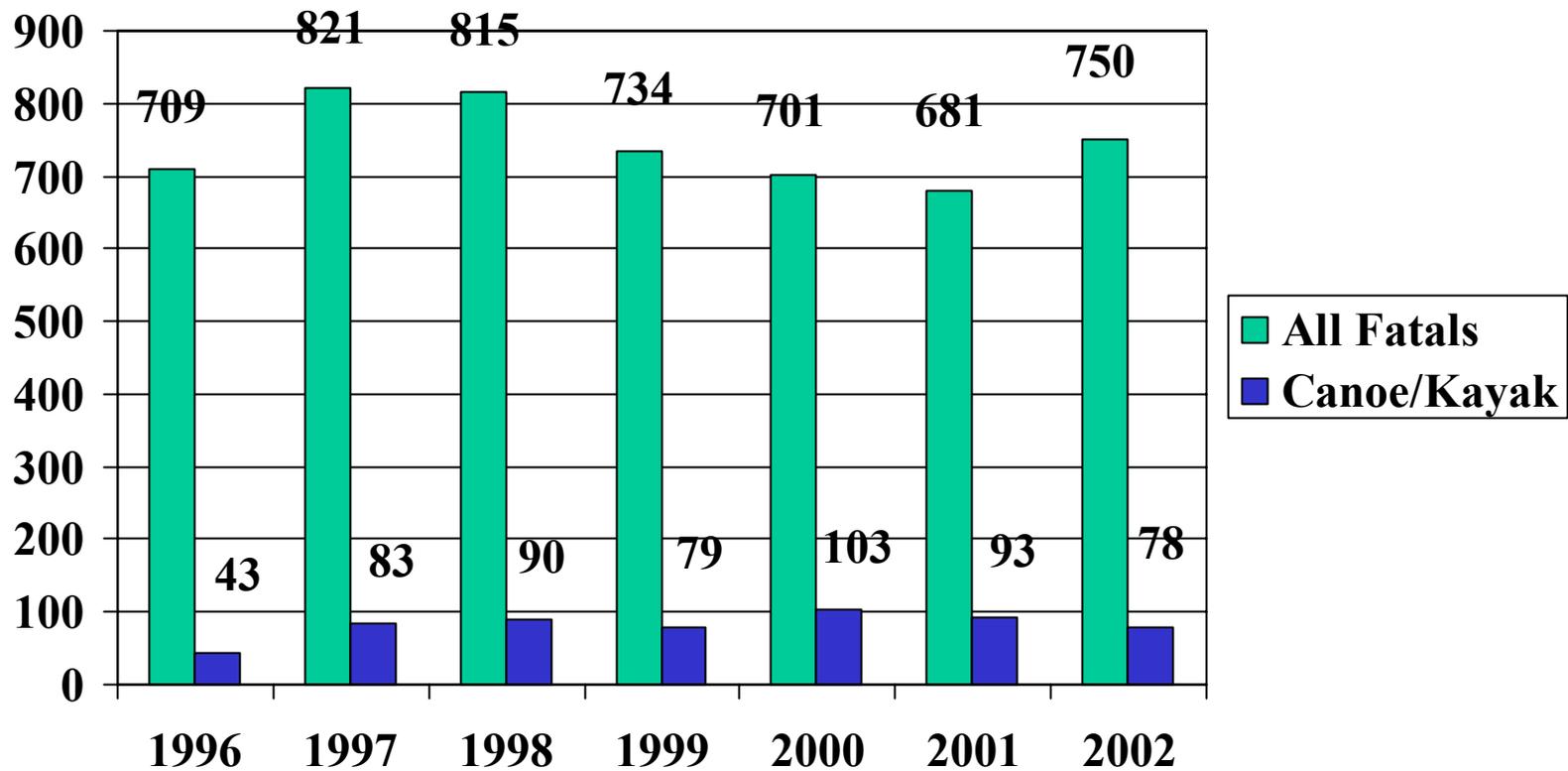




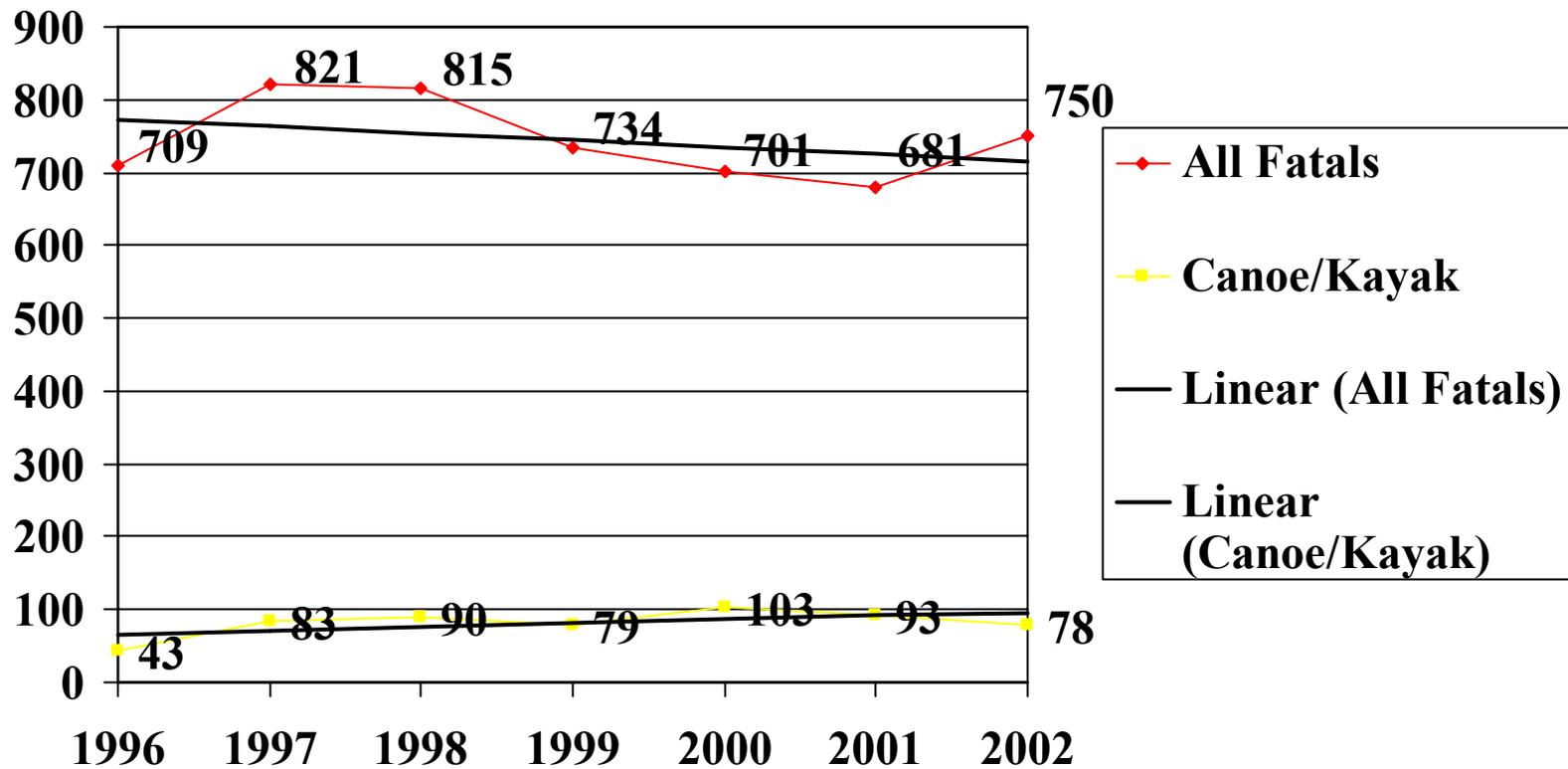
1996 - 2002 USCG Accident Statistics

- Canoe/Kayak Fatalities
 - 2002 stats*: $78/750 = 10.4\%$
 - 2001 stats*: $93/681 = 13.7\%$
 - 2000 stats: $103/701 = 14.7\%$
 - 1999 stats: $79/734 = 10.8\%$
 - 1998 stats: $90/815 = 11.0\%$
 - 1997 stats: $83/821 = 10.1\%$
 - 1996 stats: $43/709 = 6.1\%$
 - **Average: $569/5211 = 10.9\%$**

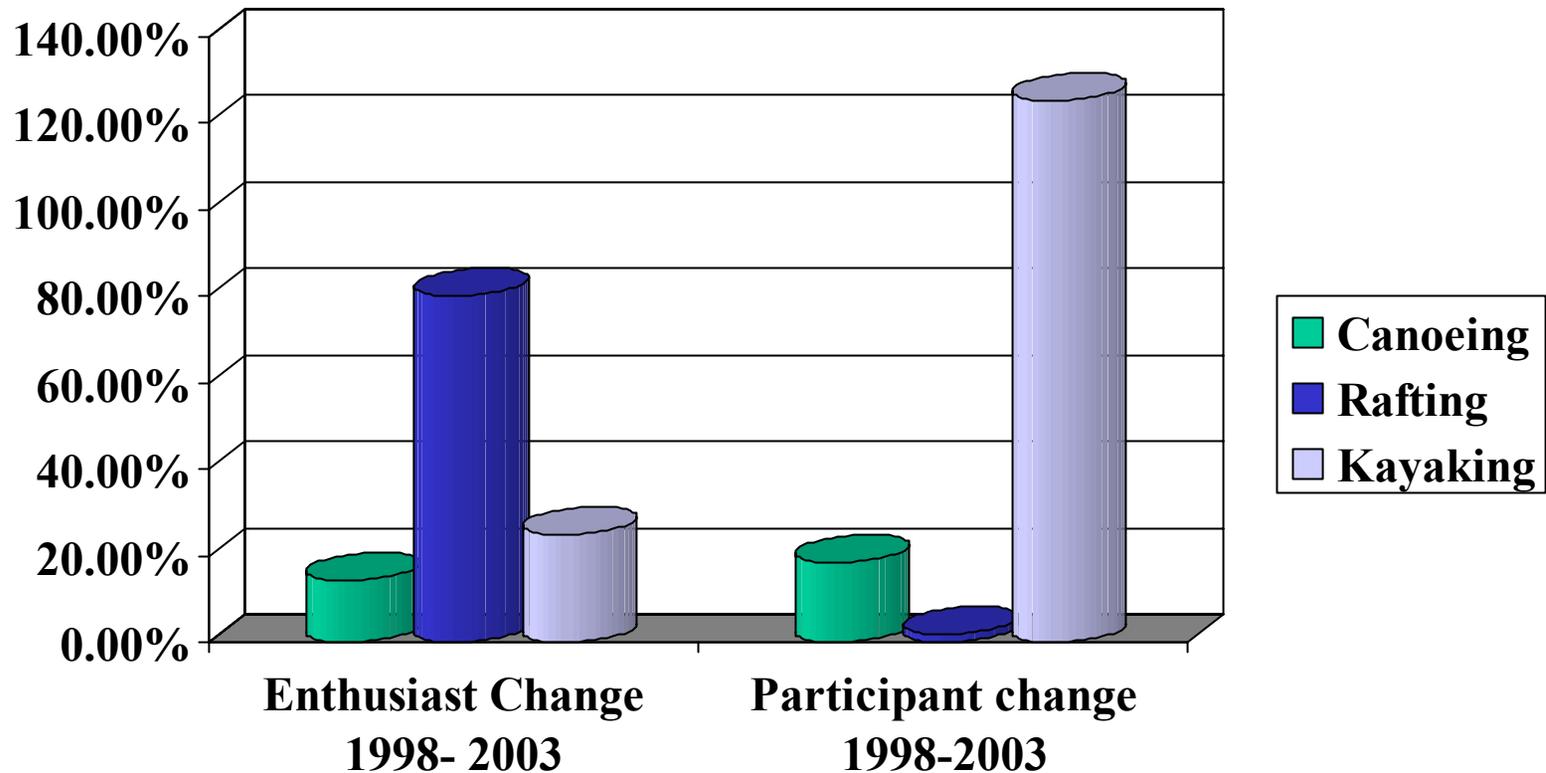
Comparison



Comparison with Trend Lines



Outdoor Industry Assoc. 2004





OIA Study - 2004

- Overall participation increase between 1998 to 2003

Canoeing – 32.9% (25.9 million)

Rafting – 82.2% (12.3 million)

Kayaking – 150% (11.4 million)



Canoe and Kayak Fatalities by Year

Year	Canoe	Kayak	Total Number (100%)
• 1996	77%	23%	43
• 1997	72%	28%	83
• 1998	77%	23%	90
• 1999	77%	23%	79
• 2000	74%	26%	103
• 2001	70%	30%	93
• 2002	58%	42%	78

Source: US Coast Guard Recreational Boating Accident Report Database (BARD), 1996-2002



Who were the Victims, and what was their Behavior

- Most used “entry level” canoes/kayaks, and were not wearing a PFD
- 90% were male
- About 50% were fishing
- 25% of canoeing-related fatalities involved alcohol
- Cold water was a factor in over half of fatalities

Behavior impacts safety

- Occupant movement and weight shift played a major role in 50% of all canoe accidents
- 50% of victims were fishing
- Implication: Lack of learned skills in stabilizing a boat can lead to capsizes.





PFD use differs

- 85% of all **canoe-related** fatality victims were **not** wearing a PFD
- 48% of all **kayak-related** fatality victims were **not** wearing a PFD



Alcohol use differs

- Alcohol use contributed to **25%** of all **canoe-related** fatalities
- Alcohol use contributed to **9%** of all **kayak-related** fatalities



Sad fact 1: Many of those who die while using a canoe or kayak probably do not even consider themselves a “canoeist” or a “kayaker” and therefore do not seek out paddling-specific safety information



Sad fact 2: Boats are being sold to inexperienced paddlers by inexperienced employees not entirely concerned with the risks involved with paddlesport.



Positive fact 1: Statistics show that the number of paddlesport fatalities has NOT increased in proportion to the increased number of paddlesport participants.



Outreach Needed

- Paddlesport participation is at highest levels in history of sport
- Paddlesport is a healthy activity to be encouraged
- National Public Outreach Needed



Conclusions

- ACA strongly believes a properly educated paddler is a SAFE paddler.



Conclusions

- Educate participants by coordinated marketing efforts through dealers and retailers.



Conclusions

- Focus on FUN and ACTIVITY for the next generation – offer paddlesport training in schools, recreation departments, communities and present PFD use as a standard part of the sport.



- Most viable alternative to mandatory PFD use is EDUCATION.