

Apply Now for the National Boating Safety Awards

The Sea Tow Foundation™ Unveils 9 New Categories in 2026

Southold, NY (July 27, 2026) – The [Sea Tow Foundation™](#), a national non-profit dedicated to reducing boating-related accidents and fatalities, in partnership with its Boating Safety Advisory Council, is now accepting applications for the [2026 National Boating Safety Awards](#). The awards recognize and celebrate outstanding efforts within the recreational boating industry that promote safe and responsible boating and help build more confident boaters.

Winners will be recognized live at [IBEX](#) (International BoatBuilders' Exhibition & Conference) in Tampa, FL on October 6, 2026, at 4:00 pm as a Special Event in the Tech Talks on the Main Stager.

New for 2026, the nine new award categories focus on how boating safety is being promoted rather than the type of company or individual submitting the entry. This shift allows campaigns, programs, products, partnerships and other efforts to be evaluated based on their strength, reach and impact.

"The Sea Tow Foundation is incredibly proud to celebrate the creativity, leadership and commitment to safety found throughout the recreational boating industry," said Gail R. Kulp, Executive Director of the Sea Tow Foundation. "The nine new categories allow us to recognize the many different ways companies, organizations and individuals are reaching boaters and celebrate the efforts that are helping create more responsible and confident boaters."

The 2026 National Boating Safety Awards categories include:

- **Best Boating Safety Education & Training Program** – Recognizes outstanding boating safety classes, workshops, certifications, training initiatives and hands-on education.
- **Best Youth Boating Safety Initiative** – Recognizes boating safety efforts focused specifically on children, teens and young boaters.
- **Best Boating Safety Community Engagement Program** – Recognizes efforts primarily focused on reaching and engaging a specific audience within the boating community.
- **Best Boating Safety Digital Initiative** – Recognizes safety efforts delivered through digital platforms such as videos, podcasts, websites, email, webinars, social media and e-newsletters.
- **Best Boating Safety Product or Technology Innovation** – Recognizes a new product or technology that has a direct impact on boating safety.
- **Best Boating Safety Partnership/Collaborative Initiative** – Recognizes formal collaborations between two or more organizations working together through a shared program, campaign or initiative.
- **Best Marine Dealer Boating Safety Effort** – Recognizes a marine dealer or retailer demonstrating a high level of commitment to boater safety through education, events, training, outreach, employee engagement or community leadership.
- **Best Integrated Boating Safety Campaign** – Recognizes a strategic campaign using three or more channels under a unified strategy, creative theme and measurable objective.

- **Best Individual Boating Safety Advocate** – Recognizes an individual within the recreational marine industry who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and advocacy in promoting boating safety.

In addition to the individual category awards, the Sea Tow Foundation Boating Safety Advisory Council will select one category winner to receive the **Boating Safety Excellence Award**, the program's highest honor. All entries will be considered and the award will be presented to the best overall safety initiative of the year. It will not be available as a separate entry category.

Any for-profit company, trade organization or individual whose work is rooted in and directed toward the recreational boating community is welcome to apply. Non-profit organizations whose primary mission is to promote safe and responsible boating are not eligible.

Applicants may submit efforts carried out between January 1, 2025, and July 1, 2026. There is no cost to enter. Applicants may submit multiple entries, whether in the same or different categories, as long as each entry represents a distinct initiative. Past entries may be resubmitted only if applicants clearly explain how the effort was changed, improved or expanded during the eligible timeframe.

Applications will be judged by members of the Sea Tow Foundation Boating Safety Advisory Councils and winners will be notified before IBEX to ensure they can have a representative there to accept the award. The public announcement of winners will be made at IBEX on October 6 and posted on the Sea Tow Foundation website and social media channels the next day.

For complete eligibility information, category descriptions and to apply, please visit <https://www.boatingsafety.com/page/Awards>. **Applications must be submitted by August 31, 2026.**

ABOUT SEA TOW FOUNDATION

The Sea Tow Foundation – a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization - was started in 2007 by Captain Joe Frohnhoefer, founder of Sea Tow Services International, after he witnessed too many preventable accidents and fatalities on the water. Through its flagship programs which include the Life Jacket Loaner Program, Sober Skipper Campaign, and the National Boating Safety Awards, the Sea Tow Foundation strives towards its vision of a world where boaters are safe and responsible.

To learn more, visit [boatingsafety.com](https://www.boatingsafety.com).

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