



MANDATORY BOATER EDUCATION

IT'S WORKING IN WASHINGTON

National and statewide boating accident statistics tell us that educated boaters are safe boat operators. In 2008, boater education became mandatory in Washington and it was done through a boater led effort. The Washington Alliance for Mandatory Boater Education – a stakeholder group representing all facets of boating in Washington, led the way. The Recreational Boating Association of Washington and Northwest Marine Trade Association Two were two strong supporters of that effort and remain so today. The goal of boating education is to make boaters safer, reduce on-the-water conflicts and ultimately make boating more enjoyable for everyone. Washington's course is approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and has been highly successful.

FACTS

- The program is administered by the Washington State Parks Commission Boating Program.
- The law applies to all boaters 12 years and older who operate a motorboat with 15 horsepower or greater.
- The law will be completely phased-in by 2014. Anyone born before January 1, 1955 is exempt from the requirement.
- In the law, the Washington Legislature specifically emphasized the role of volunteer education through such course providers as the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadron.
- Since 2008, Washington has issued over 100,000 boater education cards.
- Boaters can take a safety course online, in the classroom and by using the State Parks Adventures in Washington home-study course.
- Once an application and the \$10 fee are received, a boater usually receives their card within 2-3 weeks.
- The card is good for a lifetime.
- Exemptions exist for those operating commercial vessels and those with a valid USCG marine operator's license. 60-day exemptions are in place for out of state boaters, boaters with a valid card from another state, and those that have purchased a new boat.
- Find out more at the State Parks website: <http://www.BoaterEd.org/>



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