



What is **Mandatory Boater Education**

This law, passed by the 1999 Oregon Legislature, requires operators of powerboats greater than 10 horsepower, and youths 12-15 operating any size powerboat, to take a course on basic boating skills and/or pass a test to demonstrate basic boating knowledge. Upon passing a test, the boater will apply for a boater education card which he or she will carry when boating.

This brochure answers the most common questions about the law. For more details, check the Marine Board's website at www.boatoregon.com.

Why is this law necessary?

Safety is the primary concern, to reduce accidents, injuries, deaths and property damage, and to reduce conflict on the state's waterways. There are more variables on the water than on highways; for example, weather, waves, tides or currents. The number of registered Oregon boats has doubled since 1970. There are greater varieties of craft, faster and more powerful, and many are operated by inexperienced boaters. More than 90 percent of all motorized accidents are in boats with more than 10 horsepower.

Who is affected?

Though there are limited exemptions for certain boaters, there is no grandfather clause in the law. Once the program is fully phased in, powerboat operators of all ages must carry a boater education card. Here is how the program will work:

- All operators of craft greater than 10 horsepower, and youths operating any size power boat, must carry a boater education card.
- Youths must be 12 or older to obtain a boater education card. Youths 11 or younger may no longer operate a powerboat.
- A person age 12-15 who possesses a boater education card may operate a boat of 10 hp or less without an adult on board.
- A person age 12-15 who possesses a boater education card may operate a boat of more than 10 hp if accompanied by an adult 16 or older who possesses a boater education card. (Additional age restrictions apply to personal watercraft. See regulations for details.)
- A person age 16 or older will need a boater education card to operate a powerboat greater than 10 horsepower.

When will I need a card?

The phase-in is age-based as listed at right. Once you get your card, it is good for life and never needs renewal.

Year	Your Age
2003	30 and younger
2004	40 and younger
2005	45 and younger
2006	50 and younger
2007	60 and younger
2008	70 and younger
2009	All boaters

Are there exemptions?

Yes, there are two levels of exemptions.

1) Exempt from taking a class or equivalency exam, but still required to carry a card to operate recreationally:

- A boater with an expired Coast Guard Boat Operator License.
- A person who has attained the status of Coast Guard Crewman or Coxswain.

2) Exempt from carrying a boater education card:

- **Out-of-state and foreign visitors** if boating in Oregon for less than 60 consecutive days or if they hold a boater education card from another state.
- **Adult supervised by another card-holding adult.** A non-certified adult may operate a powerboat IF under direct supervision of an adult 16 or older who is

carrying a boater education card.

- **A boater with a current Coast Guard Boat Operator License.**
- **Boat buyers.** Buyers have a *temporary* exemption, valid for up to 60 days from date of purchase.
- **Boat renters.** Renters are exempt but must complete a dockside safety checklist.

What are my options for getting boating safety training?

There are three options:

- 1) **Classroom Course:** Get practical and relevant instruction from a trained boating safety instructor. Basic courses are usually 4-8 hours. Classroom courses are offered by several different organizations, including the Oregon State Marine Board, U.S. Power Squadrons, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Code 4 and the American Red Cross. Community Colleges, law enforcement officials, public safety officials and private companies also offer courses. The Marine Board keeps a list of approved courses.
- 2) **Internet Course:** Anyone with access to the Internet can take one of the approved online courses. To access these

courses, go to the Oregon State Marine Board website at www.boatoregon.com.

3) Equivalency Exam: This proctored exam is designed for the experienced boater who knows the rules and regulations for safe boating in Oregon waters. If you choose this option, you will need basic knowledge of personal watercraft and sailboat, as well as powerboat, operation. We recommend that all boaters request the publication, "Boat Oregon - A Course On Responsible Boating" when scheduling for an exam. It is available free from your local marine patrol. Call or check the Marine Board's website for more information on test locations, times and contact information.

If none of these options meets your needs, contact the Marine Board for further assistance.

What will this cost me?

There is a one-time fee of \$10 for the boater education card. Funds are dedicated to the program and are used to expand class and testing options, create and maintain the database and produce the wallet card boaters will carry.

Depending on which course option is chosen and where classes and tests are offered, boaters may pay material, room or test fees; costs are usually minimal when taking a volunteer-sponsored class.

What about experienced boaters?

Experienced boaters, or boaters who have otherwise prepared for a test, have the option of taking a proctored equivalency exam. See under "What are my options..." for more information.

Where can I find class listings?

Check the Marine Board website or contact us by phone, e-mail or fax. Contact information is on the back panel of this brochure.

I took a boating course years ago...

...and still have my completion certificate. Can I use the course completion certificate to get my Boater Education Card?

Yes, as long as you have the course completion certificate or diploma from an approved course, you are qualified to apply for your Oregon boater education card.

How do I apply to get my boater education card?

You will need to fill out an official application form and send it into the Marine Board. Include a check/money order for \$10 and a copy of one of the following:

Did you know?

You may be eligible for a 10-15% discount on your boat insurance by completing a boating safety course. Call your agent for information.

➡ A certificate of completion issued to you by a NASBLA-approved boating safety course. It can be a certificate from the Marine Board's "Boat Oregon" course or other approved classroom course, an approved Internet course, the Marine Board's equivalency exam; or

➡ A certificate, card or other official document issued by another state or Canada that is equivalent to Oregon's boater education card.

Where and when can I get an application for my boater education card?

Application forms are available at the Marine Board office, County Law Enforcement offices, Boat Registration Agents, many sporting goods stores and from our website.

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Oregon's Mandatory Boater Education Program



Oregon's popular waterways are not the uncrowded playgrounds they were decades ago. In fact, Oregon's waterways are increasingly congested with larger and faster boats than ever before. With that congestion comes increasing conflict and concern for safety. The goal of the Mandatory Boater Education Program is to reduce accidents, injuries and deaths, and keep Oregon's waters safe and enjoyable for all water users. This brochure will answer common questions about the law.