



## LC 25000-006/497 Boater Education Cards

- Problem** Oregon was the first state west of the Mississippi to enact a mandatory boating safety education requirement in 1999. The law applied to boats over 10 horsepower and required operators to carry a boater education card. Now, 49 of the 50 states have some form of mandatory boating education. When the program was implemented in 2003 there were relatively few courses available. Now, there's a bounty of education options, from approved Internet courses, to equivalency exams for experienced boaters. Early on, to prevent negative impacts to industry, boaters were exempt from the education requirement for the first 60 days of purchasing a boat. Additionally, non-resident visitors to Oregon are exempt from the boater education card requirement if operating in Oregon for less than 60 consecutive days. These exemptions allow novice boaters to recreate on Oregon's waterways without any type of education. The issue has escalated to a point where there's resentment among boaters who have their boater education cards and see flagrant violations and unsafe operation on our waterways. Boats registered from out-of-state also create enforcement conundrums when the owner loans the boat to a family member or friend who have not taken an education course in their home state.
- Solution** Require all boat operators to complete an approved boating safety course as defined in ORS 830.084 prior to operating a boat with a motor greater than 10 hp and remove the 60-day exemption for people who purchase a new or used boat. Out-of-state visitors would be required to complete the level of education required in their home state of registration. Additionally, commercial fishing licenses would no longer be an exemption from the boater education requirements when operating recreationally.
- Fees** No changes under this concept