



WAVES

Watercraft and Vessel Safety

The Newsletter from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Department of Boating

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Here's a re-cap of State Educational Requirements. This information is gathered from many sources, including the Boat/US Web Page, Boatsafe.com web page and various state pages. As legislation is dynamic, this information needs to be verified prior to use.

| State | Requirement |
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| AL | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 4-28-54 must complete a proctored, boating safety course, or an equivalency exam at a Division of Motor Vehicles office. The minimum age for certification is 12. |
| AR | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 1-1-86 must complete a boating safety course, or an equivalency exam. The minimum age for certification is 12 |
| CO | Mandatory Education. Boaters 14-15 must complete a proctored, boating safety course. Minimum age for certification is 14. |
| CT | Mandatory Education. Boaters must complete a proctored, classroom based boating safety course. There is no minimum age for certification. Anyone who has a Boating Safety Certificate may operate any boat (except personal watercraft PWC), except that someone under age 12 may operate a boat over 10 hp only with an 18 year old or older (who also must have a Boating Safety Certificate) aboard. In order to operate a personal watercraft (PWC), one must have a Personal Watercraft Operation Certificate. Anyone who has a Personal Watercraft Operation Certificate may operate a PWC. Someone under age 12 may operate a personal watercraft PWC provided s/he has a Personal Watercraft Operation Certificate and is accompanied by someone 18 years or older, who also has a PWC Operation Certificate, aboard the PWC. Boaters from another state who have a boating safety certificate must still take the Connecticut course to operate a PWC in Connecticut - there is no reciprocity. |
| DE | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 1-1-78 must complete a proctored, boating safety course. No minimum age. |
| DC | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 7-1-72 must complete a boating safety course, or an equivalency exam. |
| FL | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 9-30-80 must complete a non-proctored or proctored boating safety course. |
| GA | Mandatory Education. Boaters 12-15 must complete either non-proctored or proctored boating safety course. |
| IL | Mandatory Education. Boaters must complete a proctored, boating safety course. Minimum age for certification is 12. |
| IN | Mandatory Education. Boaters may complete either non-proctored or proctored boating safety course for certification. The minimum age for certification is 15. Upon completion of a boating safety course, persons 15 years of age must obtain a boater I.D. card from their local Bureau of Motor Vehicles before they may operate a vessel. Otherwise, boaters must possess a valid driver's license. |
| KS | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 12-31-88 must complete a non-proctored or proctored boating safety course. |
| KY | Mandatory Education. Boaters 12-17 must complete a proctored boating safety course. Minimum age for >10HP is 12 |
| MD | Mandatory Education. Boaters born on or after 7-1-72 must complete a proctored, boating safety course. |
| MA | Mandatory Education. Boaters 12-15 must complete a proctored, boating safety course |
| MI | Mandatory Education. Boaters must complete a proctored, boating safety course |

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| MN | Mandatory Education. Boaters 12-17 must complete a non-proctored or proctored, boating safety course. No operator age restrictions on boats with engines 25 hp or less. |
| MS | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 6-30-80 must complete a non-proctored or proctored, boating safety course. Minimum age for certification is 12. |
| MT | Mandatory Education. Boaters 13-14 must complete a non-proctored or proctored, boating safety course. |
| NE | Mandatory Education. Boaters 14-16 must complete a non-proctored or proctored, boating safety course to operate a PWC. |
| NH | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 1-1-83 must complete a non-proctored or proctored, boating safety course by 2002. Each Jan. 1 the law expands to older and older groups until by 2008 it applies to all boaters.. |
| NJ | Mandatory Education. All boaters must complete a proctored, boating safety course to operate a PWC . Minimum age for certification is 13. No person under 13 years old may operate any power vessel on NJ waters. Those 13-15 years old may operate the following vessels after completing an approved boating safety course: A vessel powered by a motor of less than 1HP or a vessel powered by a 12-volt electric motor or a vessel 12 feet or greater in length powered by a motor, or combination of motors of less than 10 total HP. Those 16 years and older may operate any power vessel in accordance with the following: People born on or after January 1, 1979 must complete an approved boating safety course prior to operating any power vessel. Persons born on or before December 31, 1978 are not required to complete an approved boating safety course unless they are operating a PWC . |
| NY | Mandatory Educational. Boaters born after 1-1-81 must complete a proctored, boating safety course. For PWC Operators, each year the law expands to older and older groups until by 2004 it applies to all PWC Operators . |
| ND | Mandatory Education. Boaters 12-16 must complete either non-proctored or proctored boating safety course. The minimum age for certification is 12. |
| OH | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 1-1-82 must complete non-proctored or proctored boating safety course. |
| OK | Mandatory Education. As of 1-1-01, boaters 12-15 may operate a boat of less than 10hp if they complete a non-proctored or proctored boating safety course. Boaters 16 and over may operate boats over 10hp if they complete a non-proctored or proctored boating safety course. PWC Operators, 12-17, must take a proctored exam. |
| PA | Mandatory Education. All PWC operators must complete a proctored, boating safety course. Boaters 12-15 must complete non-proctored or proctored boating safety course. |
| RI | Mandatory Education. PWC operators under the age of 16 must complete a proctored exam. |
| SC | Mandatory Education. Boaters under the age of 16 must complete either non-proctored or proctored boating safety course |
| TX | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 9-1-84 must complete either non-proctored or proctored boating safety course to operate a motorboat over 10hp or sailboat over 14' |
| UT | Mandatory Education for PWC operators between the ages of 12 and 17. PWC operators must complete the state's home/classroom study course for certification. Those 12-15 may operate the PWC if someone 18 years of age or older accompanies the individual aboard the PWC OR the individual age 12-15 may operate the PWC alone if the individual operates the PWC within visual supervision of another individual, 18 or older. |
| VT | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 1-1-74 must complete a non-proctored or proctored, boating safety course |
| VA | Mandatory Education. PWC Operators 14-15 must complete either non-proctored or proctored boating safety course. |
| WV | Mandatory Education. Boaters born after 12-31-86 must complete a non-proctored or proctored, boating safety course. |
| WI | Mandatory Education. Boaters 12-15 must take a proctored boating safety course. |
| | No mandatory educational requirements as of October 2000: (Note: Down from 23 States in 1999) AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, IA, LA, ME, MO, NV, NM, NC, OK, SD, TN, WA, WY |

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