



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

Boating Safety Education Program

Boating Safety Instructor Guidelines

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DGIF Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating, and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting, and fishing.

Contact Information

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Boating Safety Education at DGIF

Virginia's boater education program is designed to meet the minimum amount of training and education needed to help boaters become safer and more responsible operators with a long term goal of reducing the number of boating accidents and fatalities on Virginia waters. DGIF partners with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadron, and other organizations to provide classroom courses. The agency has cooperative agreements with internet course providers to insure that their courses are similar in content to our classroom courses. All courses must be approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and DGIF to comply with the state's boater education requirement. A final component of the program is a proctored "challenge" equivalency exam. This exam is intended for the very experienced boater.

Organization of Boating Safety Education at DGIF

Richmond Boating Safety Education Office

The Richmond Boating Safety Education office develops educational outreach materials that deliver a consistent safety message, responds to current trends in recreational boating accident/fatality data, and complements the overall boating safety education curriculum. They establish effective partnerships with other organizations, individuals, and entities in the recreational boating community to enhance the agency's educational outreach for boating safety. The boating safety education office maintains a volunteer network of trained and certified boating safety education instructors across Virginia. This program delivers materials and instruction to boating students across Virginia in concert with state laws and regulations for boating safety education compliance.

Regional Boating Safety Coordinators

The duties of the regional boating safety coordinator are: hold periodic instructor training and certification classes assist the volunteer boating instructor in obtaining classroom and outreach supplies, documentation of the classroom results, and other classroom delivery issues. The regional coordinator assists the Richmond office with the dissemination of information to volunteer instructors. The regional coordinator helps promote the Boating Safety Education program and recruit new instructors to the program; oversees the conduct of Challenge Exams administered and reported in their region; reviews instructor mileage reported; and oversees the quality of instruction provided in the state classroom course.

Volunteer Boating Safety Instructors

The duties of volunteer boating safety instructors are to deliver the boating safety classroom course as prescribed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. In addition, volunteer instructors are required to submit classroom reports as outlined by the Department. Volunteer instructors who do not report their participation in delivering any classroom course or other boating safety activities for a 24 month period, will be listed as inactive. Once listed as inactive, they must go through a recertification process to change their status to active.

Virginia's Boating Safety Education Requirement

In 2007, the Virginia General Assembly enacted a law to establish a boating safety education compliance requirement. This requirement will be phased in over the next several years and by 2016, all operators of PWCs (Personal Watercraft such as jet skis, Sea Doos, and Wave Runners) and operators of Motorboats with a 10 hp or greater motor, will be required to have a boating safety education course completion card on board when operating the vessel.

Phase-In of Education Requirement

Virginia Boating Safety Education Compliance Requirement Phase-in Schedule

Virginia motorboat operators must meet the education requirements on the following schedule:

Personal Watercraft (PWC) "Jet-Ski"

PWC, age 20 or younger, July 1, 2009

PWC, age 35 or younger, July 1, 2010

PWC, age 50 or younger, July 1, 2011

PWC, ALL ages by July 1, 2012

Motorboat (MB) 10hp and greater

MB, age 20 or younger, July 1, 2011

MB, age 30 or younger, July 1, 2012

MB, age 40 or younger, July 1, 2013

MB, age 45 or younger, July 1, 2014

MB, age 50 or younger, July 1, 2015

MB, ALL ages, July 1, 2016

Boating Safety Classes in Virginia

There are several courses that meet the education requirement in Virginia.

Boat Virginia Classroom Course

Boat Virginia is the introductory course to boating and water safety that is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. This course meets the legal requirements for boating safety education. It is approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), meets most all other U.S. States and Canadian boating education requirements and is recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard. It is presented in six chapters followed by a test and usually requires six to eight hours to complete. Students passing the Boat Virginia course are issued a wallet sized completion card and are in compliance with the Virginia Boating Safety Education Compliance Regulation. Instructors who teach this course must be DGIF certified instructors and are provided the materials to teach the course at no charge. This course must be offered at no charge to the public.

Other Classroom Courses

The following courses are NASBLA-approved and authorized by DGIF. Please note, other classroom courses or classroom course providers may be added to the Agency's list of accepted courses – a current listing of all approved courses is found on the DGIF website. All classroom course providers must sign a cooperative agreement with the agency to provide minimum standards for classroom courses and meet the requirements of the cooperative agreement.

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary "Boating Skills & Seamanship" and "Sailing Skills & Seamanship"

This course is provided by certified USCG Auxiliary instructors in 6-13 lessons. There may be a materials charge for this course.

USCG Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadron "About Boating Safely" or U.S. Power Squadron's "America's Boating Course 3"

This course is provided by certified USCG Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadron instructors in a 6-8 hour class. There may be a materials charge for this course.

Internet Courses

Only internet courses that have a signed cooperative agreement on file with the Department and have meet the requirements of this agreement are accepted by DGIF for compliance with the Boating Safety Education Requirement. Accepted internet courses will provide a minimum of three hours of course content, in accord with the NASBLA standard for internet courses. All accepted internet course providers will be listed on the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries web page.

Home Study Courses

Only home study courses that have a signed cooperative agreement on file with the Department and have meet the requirements of this agreement are accepted by DGIF for compliance with the Boating Safety Education Requirement. All accepted home study course providers will be listed on the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries web page.

Equivalency/Challenge Exam

For very experienced boaters, a special closed book challenge exam is available. The purpose of this exam is to give very experienced boaters the option to "challenge" the Boat Virginia Classroom Course. Boaters desiring to take the challenge exam should have a comparable amount of boating knowledge as if they took a classroom boating safety course. The Boat Virginia, USCG Auxiliary, and US Power Squadrons exams cannot be used as a Challenge Exam. There is no study guide for this exam. More information about this exam can be found in Section 4.

DGIF Volunteer Boating Safety Instructor

Section

2

Volunteer Boating Safety Instructor Job Description

Job Title	Volunteer Boating Education Instructor
Responsible to	Regional Boating Education Coordinator
Job Description	Instructs students in the Boating Education program as prescribed by the Department.
Participation Required	Must actively participate in teaching a NASBLA-approved course or other DGIF boating safety functions at least once every 24 months. An instructor may elect to have their name removed from the rolls at any time.
Pre-Certification Training	Participation in the prescribed Virginia Boating Education Program instructor workshop. Those persons satisfactorily completing the required training will meet the initial requirements for certification without regard to race, sex, or national origin. Applicant screening includes a background check. Instructors must be graduates of BOAT VIRGINIA or be USCGAUX or USPS qualified instructor and have experience in teaching.
In-Service Training	The Department provides in-service training workshops on an as needed basis. Additionally, currently qualified instructors, designated by the Department may instruct potential new instructors and may hold training workshops upon coordination with their regional coordinator.
Qualification	Applicants for the position of Volunteer Boating Education Instructor must be at least 18 years of age, of reasonable health, and good moral character. Character screening and law enforcement background checks may be conducted on applicants. Those failing to meet high standards may be denied certification. Teaching experience is highly desirable. If an instructor has no teaching experience, they must participate in an apprentice training program.
Additional Experience	Other experiences that are valuable in this position include boating, water safety involvement, public speaking, teaching and other public-oriented positions.
Revocation of Certification	Any person failing to participate actively in the program for a twenty-four month period will be dropped from the active instructor rolls. The Department reserves the

right to revoke certification of any person who violates any boating, game or fishing law, failure to perform as required, or failure to follow prescribed procedures including violations the instructor code of conduct of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries boating safety program, hunter safety program, or conduct rules for the Complementary Workforce Program, may be disqualified from teaching future boating safety courses.

Procedures to follow	Certified instructors will be required to follow the procedures outlined in this manual. Once they become an instructor, they will receive their instructor ID which should be included in all of the forms submitted to the department.
Submission of Reports	Volunteer instructors are required to submit reports, either electronic or paper, to the regional coordinator at the conclusion of each class or presentation. Volunteer reports are due 30 days after the completion of the event to qualify for volunteer time and mileage.
Reimbursement of Travel	The volunteer instructor (non-paid) will be reimbursed for mileage (as funds are available) as incurred traveling in their own personal vehicle to and from boating courses, instructor workshops and events authorized by the Department. If car-pooling, only the driver of the vehicle will be reimbursed. Travel over 100 miles one way must be approved in advance by the regional coordinator. Travel that exceeds this mileage may not be reimbursed.
Instructor Recognition	Volunteer instructor hours are maintained by the Department from information provided by the instructor through the online management system or the paper training and activity (TAD) data forms. The Department recognizes those instructors who have demonstrated exceptional service to the program. The specifics of our recognition program vary from time-to-time to meet current needs and therefore are published in a separate document.
Change of Address	The volunteer instructor should update their contact information (mailing address, e-mail address, or telephone) as needed through the online event management system. If you do not have internet access, notify the Regional Coordinator of any contact change within 30 days. If mail is returned as undeliverable, the instructor will be placed on inactive status.

Administration of Classroom Course

Setting up A Course

One of the biggest advantages an instructor has in teaching Boat Virginia is flexibility. The course can be taught at any facility convenient to the instructor. Even though a DVD and PowerPoint are supplied for the course to follow the Student Manual, there is no requirement for an instructor to use these media.

Course Charge - The State provides all necessary material for each class free of charge. No fees may be charged to the student for the state Boat Virginia class. If a facility charges for use, the Department may contract with the management of that facility. No instructors may enter into a contract, verbally or in writing, for the rental of any facility. The Department must be notified at least 30 days in advance of any potential rental of a facility. If no agreement can be arranged an instructor should seek another suitable location. Volunteer instructors may collect donations at the class for organizations that are authorized receive donations (U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadrons, volunteer fire departments, etc).

Location - There are numerous facilities available in all communities which are interested in providing programs, such as: recreation centers, fire halls, marinas, outdoor clubs, boat dealers, high school adult education courses, libraries, churches, as well as numerous community organizations. The lead instructor is responsible for the course from beginning to end. It is best if the instructor can develop a working relationship with the people at the facility where the course will be taught.

Co-sponsors - Having a service or educational organization co-sponsor the course is an excellent way to obtain a facility and provide advertising and program support. Before committing to a facility, the instructor should visit the site to determine the needs of the class and provide a quality learning environment. Instructors having problems locating an appropriate location should contact their Regional Boating Education Coordinator for assistance.

Class Schedule - Teaching the Boat Virginia course in one day, while strenuous for instructors, is the most sought after format for the students. Another format is to teach the course in multiple lessons spread over a reasonable period of time. This will allow students ample time to complete reading assignments and review text material for the final exam. The courses are all classroom work with no on-the-water activities permitted. Classes should be scheduled to allow ample time for breaks and lunch.

Timing - The course should be set up well in advance so that course materials can be requested and the class posted on the DGIF website so students can register for the class well in advance. A minimum of four weeks' notice is recommended. The Boat Virginia course can be taught in any month of the year. Spring and early summer are usually the times of greatest public interest. Classes should be scheduled to reduce or avoid conflicts. For example, scheduling a class on the opening day of trout season or on the 4th of July will affect attendance. Also, instructors should view the class schedule in their area to ensure there isn't too much overlap. In those situations instructors should work together to consider holding a larger class in a central location.

Advertising - The agency uses our web site to advertise all upcoming courses. Instructors may use the online event management system to enter their courses. If the instructor does not have internet access, they may send their course listing to their regional coordinator to be put into the system. Finally, Gaylord Lockett provides a list of all upcoming boating safety courses to various organizations for posting on their websites. Send information about your classes to him at dragonfly064@cox.net

You may wish to provide local newspapers or radio stations with the information regarding your upcoming class for posting in free "community calendar" pages. See sample informational bullets in Appendix D.

Ordering Course Materials – Course materials should be ordered via the supply request form found in Appendix F. Please submit this form well in advance of the class through your Regional Coordinator (2 weeks' notice at a minimum). Instructors should only order sufficient supplies required for upcoming classes and avoid stockpiling materials and hand-outs. *Please note, that the Richmond boating safety office will only send classroom materials to certified instructors.* The Virginia Watercraft Owners guide is available to Vessel Safety Officers for use in completing Vessel Safety Checks.

Course Material Security

Because of nature of the Boating Safety Education Compliance Regulation and the requirement for a boater to show proof of completion of a NASBLA approved course in order to operate, there is an increased risk of theft or compromise of course materials. Instructors shall keep all Training and Activity Data Sheets, Student Data Sheets, Testing Material, Answer Keys, and Wallet cards under a watchful eye and be mindful not to leave any of these materials unattended during the course where the public could have access to them. Further, the Boat Virginia Student Manual may only be issued to Boat Virginia Students. The Watercraft Owner's Guide can be provided to people that want information similar to course content without taking a course.

Course Registration

Instructors should utilize the online event management system to post their upcoming classes and collect registration information. Please contact your regional coordinator or the boating safety office in Richmond for instructions on using the online registration system. If instructor chooses to collect

registrations via telephone or e-mail rather than the online system, one member of the teaching team should be assigned the responsibility of taking registration prior to the class and that instructor's contact information must be included in the special instructions on the Event Management System. Facility staff may also take registration. When possible, it is important to register students for the course prior to the first class to avoid the problem of "walk-in registrations." This may result in many more students showing up than the facility can handle. Conversely, it is not a good idea to go to the effort to hold a class for less than eight students. Registration prior to the class will also help the instructor solve potential problems that may develop during the class. All students should be told the exact dates and times of the course at pre-registration. Students should never be waiting at the course site before or after classes. At least one instructor must stay at the course site until all students have left. The instructor should not leave students unsupervised at any time.

Classroom Accommodations

Reasonable attempts should be made to accommodate special needs of classroom participants. Our website course listing suggests that people let the registrar know in advance if any special classroom need is required by the participant. In addition, during the classroom announcements at the beginning of the class, you may offer to assist anyone who may need assistance in reading the test to let one of the instructors know.

Hearing Impaired Students – Because most instructors utilize the DVD and PowerPoint to teach the Boat Virginia Course, many hearing impaired students can participate in the classroom without additional accommodations. If you have a hearing impaired student, please insure that the close-captioning for the DVD is on. Please forward any requests for a sign-language interpreter to your regional coordinator, who will in turn, forward this to the Richmond boating safety office.

Children - The minimum age for children to attend a Boat Virginia course will be left to the judgment of the lead instructor; however, as a general rule 12 years of age is normally the age where children can grasp the material and pass an end of course test.

English as a Second Language - If you have a student who is not proficient in English, they may bring along a family member to assist in interpreting the spoken material. The Richmond boating safety office has an extremely limited number of Boat American books written in Spanish.

Students with Literacy Issues – If you have a student who cannot read, an instructor may read the test to them.

Disruptive Students – If a student is disruptive during class, the instructor should give them a warning that if the student continues to disrupt the class, they will be dismissed. Please let your regional coordinator know if a student is dismissed from class for being disruptive.

Organizational Recognition

Students may have difficulty knowing who sponsors the class when they see a course book with the Department's name and instructors in differing uniforms, or perhaps no uniform. Take a few minutes at the start of the first class to explain the relationship between the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and your volunteer organization (if any). Let the students know that this free class is being funded by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries from boat registrations and titling fees. Let the students know that the volunteer instructors are provided by your organization (if applicable). The Department needs the support of the boaters, and they can't support us if they don't know us.

Class Size and Team Teaching

Class size should be between 8 and 40 students. Instructors who teach a large number of students in one course should have at least one co-instructor to assist. Teaching this course to less than eight students is less than ideal. Once a Department course is advertised in print, every effort should be made to teach it. If USCG Auxiliary or USPS logos are identified with the course, these members should contact their organization for guidance on cancellation, as there are often "walk-ins" who do not call in advance. Contact the regional boating education coordinator prior to any cancellation.

Team teaching is strongly recommended for the Boat Virginia Courses. It enables a group of instructors to provide a variety of teaching methods and better hold the interest of the students. In addition, by working as a team, instructors not actively teaching can assist with the certificate preparation, "fine tune" a lesson plan, or provide assistance to students who may have literacy issues.

Course Content

The minimum hours of instruction for student certification are six to eight hours. This includes formal classroom instruction, demonstrations, and the final examination. The content of the Boat Virginia course includes discussion of all topics in the textbook. There is an accompanying Boat Virginia video and power point that adds significantly to the course presentation. Additional films, videos, and publications can be an excellent source of supplemental information to classroom discussion; however, they should not be used to replace actual instruction.

End of Class Exam and Wallet Card

Final Exam - Students who attend the entire course may take the end of course exam; any student who misses a session may be required to attend another class. The final exam consists of sixty multiple choice questions given at the end of class. The final exam may be given as an open book or closed book. The instructor may choose to require all students to take the test open book or give each student the option of an open book or closed book. An open book test is preferable, as it allows students to review the materials as they complete the test. The following is the scoring criteria:

- Minimum grade for open-book tests is 90%
- Minimum grade for closed-book tests is 70%

Instructors are provided with a grading key to aid in grading the students. Upon completion of the exam, each student's test and answer sheet will be collected and the answer sheet later destroyed. Once graded, students should be advised of their test score and questions missed.

Wallet Card – If the student passes the final exam, they will be issued a wallet card. This card will contain their name, date of birth, date of course completion, instructor signature, class name (Boat Virginia), and activity code (B101 for Boat Virginia).

USPS and USCG Auxiliary Classes – Additional 10 Question Exam

Instructors teaching a USPS or USCG Auxiliary class must cover fully the Virginia boating laws and regulations and also provide the student with a 10 question state specific exam. This exam will be provided to instructors upon request. A passing score of 90% for an open book exam or a 70% for a closed book exam is required for this 10 question state specific exam.

Course Documentation

The documentation for each course should be submitted electronically through the online event management system. If the instructor does not have internet access, they may provide the information to their regional coordinator to submit the data through the online event management system or use the old paper Training and Activity Data (TAD) and Student Data Forms. For either process, information about the course and students is required. This data should be submitted no more than 30 days after the course completion. Failure to complete paperwork in a timely manner may be grounds for revocation of volunteer instructor status.

Course Information – The following information should be submitted for each class:

- Instructor Number, hours, and mileage for each instructor who assisted in the class
- Class End Date
- Location of the Class (County FIPS number – automatically submitted for electronic reports)
- Course Taught (Boat Virginia – B101; USCG Aux – B113; USPS – B225) – put this information in the remarks section for the class report
- Hours of the Class (not instructor hours – hours students were present in the classroom)

- Number of Students registered (automatically calculated for online event management program)
- Number of Students who passed (automatically calculated for online event management program)

Student Information - The following information should be submitted for each student:

- Student Name
- Student Address
- Student Date of Birth
- Pass or Fail (for paper records, only submit names of people who successfully passed the final exam)

Instructor Information - The following information should be submitted for class:

- All instructors who assisted in teaching the class and the logistics of the class
- Volunteer hours dedicated to teaching the class and the logistics of the class (including classroom set-up and reporting requirements)
- Mileage incurred by volunteer instructors for the course

Administration of Equivalency or Challenge Exams

Section

4

As required in the boating safety education requirement, a challenge exam is available for very experienced boaters. The purpose of this exam is to give very experienced boaters the option to “challenge” the Boat Virginia Classroom Course. Boaters desiring to take the challenge exam should have a comparable amount of boating knowledge as if they took a classroom boating safety course. Because the purpose of this exam is to challenge the boating knowledge of the participants, there is no study guide for this exam although participants can be directed to the Virginia Watercraft Owner’s Guide.

Setting up Exams

Regional Coordinators should schedule a challenge exam date at least once a quarter in geographically strategic areas. Regional Coordinators may designate proctors for the exam. Proctors must be active state instructors. All exam dates and locations will be scheduled through the regional coordinator.

The challenge exam dates will be posted online along with our classroom and internet courses. Participants must sign-up at least three days in advance of the exam, walk-ins will not be permitted.

Responsibilities of Proctor

Who can serve as proctor - The regional coordinator will designate challenge exam proctors for each region. In addition, from time to time the Richmond boating safety education office (in coordination with the Regional Coordinator) may authorize other persons to serve as proctor.

Administration of the test - Participants are allowed 3 hours to complete the exam. The passing score is 80%. Participants cannot use any reference material of any sort in the closed book examination. The challenge exam is different than the end of course exam for Boat Virginia courses and the Boat Virginia exam cannot be used to meet this requirement. The US Coast Guard Auxiliary and US Power Squadrons end of course exam may not be used as a challenge exam either. If a person fails the test, the proctor should refer them to the next scheduled challenge exam, class, or to the DGIF website for details on where to find the next challenge exam or class. A person may only take the challenge exam twice. If they are unsuccessful in passing the test on either try, they must then be referred to a NASBLA course.

Accommodations - Reasonable attempts should be made to accommodate special needs of equivalency exam participants. During the instructions at the beginning of the exam, you may offer to assist anyone who may need assistance in reading the test to let one of the instructors know. If you are not able to accommodate the participant due to lack of manpower, ask the participant to reschedule on a day when additional testing assistance is available.

Reporting Requirements - Proctors should report the results as outlined in the previous section for classroom courses. Student information is collected regardless of whether or not the student passes or fails. The activity code for the Challenge Exam will be B499.

Boating Safety Education Contacts



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Everette.tucker@dgif.virginia.gov

Step by Step Plan for Setting up Boating Safety Classes

Appendix

B

Phase 1: Preparation 45 days prior to course

- A. Secure training facility
- B. Establish a chief instructor
- C. Submit course information on online event management system or send course information to regional coordinator
- D. Request necessary supplies (use form from appendix F) from regional coordinator
- E. Publicize the course (see appendix D for details)
 - a. Use course announcement posters available from regional coordinator
 - b. Request public service announcements through the local radio/TV stations and newspapers. Information should include course date, time, location, and a daytime telephone number or valid e-mail address of the contact person.

Phase 2: Preparation – 1 week prior to course

- A. Confirm reservations for facility
- B. Confirm attendance of support trainers/personnel
- C. Confirm availability and delivery of training aids and course materials

Phase 3: Preparation – Date of course

- A. Arrive at class site at least 30 minutes before state time. Set up classroom before arrival of first student.
- B. Check all audio-visual equipment for function (it is desirable to do this at an earlier date).
- C. Take roll of all students, conduct introductions, and begin instruction.
- D. Make sure each student information is correct – check online roster or student data forms
- E. Issue student wallet card at end of course
- F. Ensure all tests are returned

Phase 4: Reports – Filed within 30 days

- A. Make sure to capture the hours and mileage for all course instructors. If using paper forms, be sure the instructor signs the forms.
- B. Online report submissions will automatically be sent to the regional coordinators for approval. Paper reports should be submitted as soon as possible to the regional coordinator. Do not mail reports to the Richmond office
- C. See that training materials and equipment are returned as soon as possible.

Guidelines for Reporting Classroom Information

Appendix



The best way to manage the reports for the classroom is to utilize the online event management program. A separate guide is available for utilizing this system. If you utilize the online system, there is no need to submit paper reports.

If you need to utilize paper records for classroom information, please use the guidelines below.

- Write in BLOCK letters when completing the form. Do not use dashes in the boxes. Do not use “slashes” through the numbers 0 or 7. The scanner does not recognize these symbols.
- Use ONLY new forms: Student Data for all student training and Training Activity Data form for all instructor training, course instruction, or Boating Education programs.
- Be sure to mark students who passed the course as certified on the student data form.
- See the back of the Training and Activity form for the activity and FIPS codes.
- Turn in only student forms from the class if they became certified – do not turn in student forms for students who did not pass the course.
- Print only in the blocks provided. Do not make any marks outside the blocks.
- Leave the spaces blank if there is no information for that specific space.
- Please review the Student Data forms before leaving class to insure it is completely and clearly filled out.

Thank you for efforts to maintain quality records and data.

Guidelines for Course Advertisement



Generic Public Service Announcement for Instructor Use

Make Sure You're Onboard -Take a Boating Safety Education Course

In 2007, the Virginia General Assembly enacted a law establishing a boating safety education compliance requirement. The requirement applies to all operators of a motorboat with a motor of 10 horsepower or greater or personal watercraft on the public waters of the Commonwealth. Only NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators) approved classroom courses or Department of Virginia Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) approved Internet courses are considered to comply with the new law.

The requirement for boating safety education is being phased-in over several years according to the following schedule:

Personal Watercraft (PWC) "Jet-Ski"

- Age 20 or younger, July 1, 2009
- Age 35 or younger, July 1, 2010
- Age 50 or younger, July 1, 2011
- ALL ages by July 1, 2012

Motorboat 10hp and greater

- Age 20 or younger, July 1, 2011
- Age 30 or younger, July 1, 2012
- Age 40 or younger, July 1, 2013
- Age 45 or younger, July 1, 2014
- Age 50 or younger, July 1, 2015
- ALL ages by July 1, 2016

Many classroom courses are offered throughout Virginia. A complete list of all of the approved classroom and online courses can be found on the VDGIF website <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/boating/education>, by clicking on "Class Locator" to find an approved classroom course nearest you or click on "Online Courses" for an approved online course. The website is updated weekly.

VDGIF is working with the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCGA), the United States Power Squadrons (USPS) and other approved course providers so that classroom-based and internet-based boating safety education courses are available across the Commonwealth throughout the year, including providing testing opportunities for an equivalency exam. The only currently accepted venues for meeting state requirements are:

Approved Classroom Providers –

VDGIF offers a six to eight hour course on responsible boating entitled, Boat Virginia that provides basic boating skills including legal requirements; navigation rules; preparation/trailering; accidents; weather; water sports. There is no charge for the state course.

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCGA) and United States Power Squadron (USPS) offers a variety of boating courses that are NASBLA approved and meet the state's education requirement. Classes include 6-13 lessons on topics such as boat construction, boating vocabulary, boat handling, legal requirements, navigation rules, piloting, basic knots, and trailering. There may be a materials charge for these courses. For information about a course, call 1-800-245-2628 or contact a local Auxiliary or Power Squadron member.

Approved Online Providers -

Only the boating safety education courses listed on the VDGIF website are accepted by VDGIF as meeting the Virginia boater education compliance requirement. These comprehensive courses take approximately three to four hours to complete and most have a charge associated with them. Virginia allows online testing however many other states do not. If you intend to operate a boat or PWC in another state that requires proof of boater education, you should consider taking a classroom course as all states accept a classroom course card/certificate.

Equivalency Exam – VDGIF has an equivalency exam based on the information included in the Boat Virginia course. The exam is intended to provide experienced and knowledgeable boaters with the opportunity to meet the boating safety education compliance requirement without having to take and successfully complete a boating safety education course. Monitor the VDGIF website for latest information on the Equivalency/Challenge Exam or to see the class schedule.

For those PWC and motorboat operators who have successfully completed a boater safety course in the past and your card/certificate bears the NASBLA approval seal, you are likely to be in compliance with the Virginia boating safety education compliance requirement. However, to be sure, you should consider contacting the course provider that issued the card for guidance.

Boaters who lose or misplace the Virginia Boater Education card they were issued at completion of a classroom Boat Virginia course can obtain a replacement card by contacting VDGIF. Recognizing that some boaters may prefer to replace the standard issue Virginia Boater Education card with a more rugged version, VDGIF has developed a hard plastic, credit card styled wallet card, called the Lifetime Boater Education Card. Both the replacement card and the Lifetime Boater Education card will be available to the boating public at a nominal fee.

Regardless of the type of card you were issued (e.g. Virginia Boater Education card or Lifetime Boater Safety Education card) boaters should be aware that it is a requirement that they keep the card with them when operating a motorboat or PWC.

Boaters interested in learning more about the boating safety education compliance requirement and its application in the Commonwealth of Virginia are urged to visit the VDGIF website - www.dgif.virginia.gov or call 804-367-1000.



Virginia Safe Boating Course

TO BE HELD AT:

COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE COST:

COURSE DATE:

COURSE TIME:

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!

**REGISTRATION
DEADLINE:**

CONTACT:

PRESENTED BY:

**Sponsored by the Virginia Department of
Game and Inland Fisheries
804-367-1278(V/TDD) www.dgif.virginia.gov**

**Virginia Boating Safety Education Compliance Requirement Phase-in Schedule
Must meet the requirements as follows:**

PWC (Personal Watercraft/Jet Skis)

PWC, age 20 or younger, July 1, 2009
PWC, age 35 or younger, July 1, 2010
PWC, age 50 or younger, July 1, 2011

MB (Motorboats)

MB, age 20 or younger, July 1, 2011
MB, age 30 or younger, July 1, 2012
MB, age 40 or younger, July 1, 2013
MB, age 45 or younger, July 1, 2014
MB, age 50 or younger, July 1, 2012

PWC, ALL ages by July 1, 2012

20

MB, all ages by July 1, 2016

Instructor Recognition Program

Appendix



As the Boating Safety Education Budget allows, the agency will provide recognition for those instructors who have participated in boating safety activities (including classes, instructor trainings and/or meetings, or other public outreach events).

Instructor hours will be archived through the online event management system and through paper records as well (Training Activity Data Forms) into the DGIF instructor database. Annually, the total hours for each instructor will be compiled for use in planning purposes and for evaluating our incentive program. Note that not every instructor will receive an award every year.

The Incentive Award Plan is as follows:

<u>Total Number of Service Hours</u>	<u>Service Award</u>
8	Polo Shirt
16	Hat
60	award item to be determined
120	award item to be determined
300	award item to be determined
600	award item to be determined
900	award item to be determined
1200	award item to be determined
1500	award item to be determined
2000	award item to be determined
2500	award item to be determined
3000	award item to be determined
3500	award item to be determined
4000	award item to be determined
4500	award item to be determined

SUPPLY REQUEST FORM

Appendix

F

All requests for materials and program information should be made using the supply request form through the regional coordinators, including requests for marine dealer visit materials.

Note, course support and promotional materials are all available for Boat Virginia courses. The materials available for other courses or promotional events are: Virginia Watercraft Owners Guide, 1/3 page information about the boating safety education requirement and business-sized tyvek information about the boating safety education requirement.

Please follow the guidelines below

- Always include your instructor number
- Date of Course – so that we can prioritize fulfillment of supply requests. Please allow 2 weeks to process your order
- Please include your street address as materials will be delivered via UPS. UPS will NOT deliver to a PO Box.
- Include your current e-mail address in case we need further clarification of your request
- Fill in the number needed beside each item.
- To avoid stockpiling of materials, no more than 75 of one type of item per boating course will be fulfilled (except Watercraft Owners Guide). If your class will be larger than 75 people, please make a note of this and we will supply materials as needed.
- Forward your request via e-mail to your regional coordinator who will review and approve your request before sending it to Richmond to be fulfilled.