

RECIPROCITY LEADS TO SAFER AND BETTER BOATING

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In the United States 48 out of 56 states, territories and trusts have now implemented some form of boater education or licensing requirement in an effort to reduce boating accidents, injuries, and fatalities. These education efforts fall into four general types:

1. **Boater education required for all those born on or after a specific date.**
2. **Boater education required for certain ages, usually preteens, teens and/or young adults.**
3. **Boater education required only for operators of Personal Water Craft or boats of a certain horsepower.**
4. **Boater education required for all boaters in the state, phased in over a specified time period ranging from three to 10 years, depending on the state.**

Encouraging boater education is the most effective thing states can do to ensure safety on state waters, but varying requirements do create some confusion. Imagine the chaos on state highways if drivers risked having to get another license, take another drivers education course or pass another test in order to drive their car on another state's highways. Fortunately most states now recognize as proof of competence a certificate for having taken a boating education course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard. Other states simply require that visiting boaters meet their home state requirements.

Still, in some of our nation's states and territories, visiting boaters may encounter restrictions, such as minimum age requirements for operating a vessel alone or requirements that they possess a state agency-issued certificate. Eight states and territories currently have no boating education requirements. Boaters from these states, visiting another state that has boating education requirements may be unnecessarily inconvenienced.

And reciprocity is more than just a state issue. Canada now requires that all Canadian operators of recreational boats fitted with a motor have proof of competency and proof of age on board at all times. Visitors to Canada are exempt for 45 days; for longer visits the Canadian government will accept proof of competency acquired in the visitor's home country. An agreed upon, national U.S. standard would make reciprocity between the two countries more clear. (For further details see the Canadian Office of Boating Safety website at http://www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety/debs/obs/quick/quick_visitor.htm)

How can we bring national continuity and equity to boating education and acknowledge reciprocal agreements? NASBLA encourages all states to accept completion of any 6-8 hour NASBLA-approved boating safety course as proof of competence for recreational boating. As John Johnson, NASBLA Executive Director, puts it, "The only way to be part of the national reciprocity that is recognized state-to-state is to adhere to the National (NASBLA) Standards recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard as THE standard in boater education."

We need to start thinking about the end-user—the recreational boater—and not just our own states regulatory concerns. States that don't may be discouraging tourism. On the other hand, those with little or no boating education requirement may leave their citizens subject to regulatory complications when they leave their home state.

"Obviously, if a boater up in Maine travels to Florida he's facing a whole different set of issues on the water," says Virgil Chambers, Executive Director of the National Safe Boating Council. "But we believe that every boater needs a boating safety course and that a NASBLA-approved course recognized by the Coast Guard is what every boater should have."

The safety impact of a boater education requirement is well-documented. In most cases, states who have enacted a boater education requirement had a lower accident/fatality rate.

It is further identified that the faster a state puts a boater education requirement in place, and the longer it's been in place, the lower the state's accident rate. NASBLA-approved/Coast Guard recognized boater education courses establish the basis of a good foundation of knowledge. If there are individual state roadblocks to making that the standard, then let's work collectively to knock them down.

RICHARD MOORE, NASBLA PRESIDENT, IS RECOGNIZED BY THE NSBC

Richard Moore was recognized by the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) for his leadership and commitment to boating safety during the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Awards banquet held at the 50th Annual Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas, on September 28, 2009. The NSBC presented Mr. Moore with a Navy Colt Model 1851 black powder .44 Revolver in recognition of his leadership as NASBLA President during this past year. Mr. Moore began his professional career in resource protection and boating law enforcement in January 1990. He has served as the boating law administrator for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission since 2002.

Throughout his career Mr. Moore has been an advocate for education and legislation which promotes boating safety. He has held leading roles at both the state and national levels as a member of NASBLA's Education Committee, NASBLA's Boating Accident Investigation, Review and Analysis Committee, member of NASBLA's Executive Board, member of the National Boating Safety Advisory Council, president of the Southern States Boating Law Administrators Association, and president of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. Mr. Moore has been instrumental in developing legislation for several boating safety initiatives in the state of Florida.



Richard Moore (left), NASBLA President, received the Navy Colt Model 1851 from Jim Richards, NSBC Vice Chair, and Virgil Chambers, NSBC Executive Director.

TWO GREAT CONTESTS – ONE GREAT YEAR FOR "WEAR IT!"

This year, the North American Safe Boating Campaign encouraged boaters to get into the action with two contests – the "Be a Survivor: Wear It!" contest and the "Float Yourself" Floato Contest.

The "Be a Survivor: Wear It!" contest was once again sponsored by West Marine®, the world's largest boating supply and accessory store. This year's winner was Brandon Duffey from DeWitt, Iowa. Brandon told the story of a day of kayaking on the water that quickly turned to a tale of survival. Brandon was kayaking alone one afternoon when the weather got bad and capsized his kayak. The waves were over 3' high and the water was only 40° F. Because Brandon was wearing his life jacket, he was able to stay with his boat and call 911 from his cell phone. Without his life jacket, Brandon may have not been able to share his truly remarkable story. Congratulations to Brandon and the other entrants in this year's "Be a Survivor: Wear It!" contest.

The introduction of a second contest – the "Float Yourself" Floato Contest – had a great response for its first year.

This on-line contest allowed users to add their face to humorous photos featuring characters wearing life jackets. The online photo contest was aimed at promoting life jacket safety and overall safe boating practices. The first-prize winner was "Sea Vester the Viking" submitted by J. Brian Becker. "Sea Vester" received over 8,500 votes!

Both of these contests are part of the campaign to promote safer boating and life jacket wear. Due to their success in 2009, the campaign intends to continue both contests this upcoming year. Keep an eye out for them for your chance to join in on the fun!



AND NOW COMMENTS FROM OUR CHAIR



As we all know, 2009 has been a year of choppy seas for our nation's economy. The nation's recreational boating community and industry has found itself in a position of adjusting to many challenges so that when the seas are once again calm, they will be ready to welcome and share the recreational boating lifestyle.

Several studies are showing that America's recreational boaters, while maybe scaling back in some respects during 2009, have continued to enjoy their time on the water, in many cases closer to their homes. Thus our message of the importance of an educated and safe boater has remained constant. The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) has continued to provide excellent resources and programs to ensure that the nation's recreational boaters understand the importance of education and safety as they enjoy their sport.

The NSBC's "Wear It!" campaign continues to add states and organizations that are using the campaign and tailoring it to their specific state needs. Visit <http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com/wear-it-map.htm> and click on the map to see what your state is up to.

NSBC membership and many partners, who have put time and hard work into the recreational boating history book project, will be pleased to know that the book draft is in its final stages. Last minute details and publishing specifics are nearly complete. The documentation of the evolution of boating safety over the last 50 years will be available in 2010 for all to reflect upon and share with future generations of recreational boaters.

The 2010 International Boating & Water Safety Summit will be held in Daytona Beach, Florida March 28 – March 31st. The NSBC and the National Water Safety Congress will once again be your co-hosts. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us there.

With the holiday season fast approaching, I hope you will find time to slow down a bit, relax and enjoy your family and friends...maybe even go boating!

See you all in 2010!

Sincerely,

Veronica McCann Floyd, Chair-NSBC

Consultant – Brunswick Corporation

WE KNOW THAT YOU HAVE AN OPINION AND WE WANT TO HEAR IT!

The North American Safe Boating Campaign is already planning ahead for the 2010 campaign, but we need your help! Each year, we ask people like you to share your opinions and insights about the campaign, our web site, and the resources that we offer for your own campaign efforts.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the Campaign Evaluation – it's quick, painless, and you'll even receive a free "Wear It!" dry bag for helping us out! We want to make sure that the campaign is doing its best to bring you the information and resources that are going to help your campaign – please don't hesitate to tell us what you need!

To fill out the Evaluation, please visit www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com and click on "Campaign Evaluation."



Congratulations to our previous Top-Sider Trivia winner, Johnathan Ricketts! Mr. Ricketts received a pair of shoes courtesy of Sperry Top-Sider for being the first person to send a correct answer to the National Safe Boating Council. Remember, the first person to send a correct answer to office@safeboatingcouncil.org will receive a pair of Sperry Top-Sider Shoes. Good luck!

"THE _____ WAS A MAJOR 17TH CENTURY IMPROVEMENT IN THE DESIGN OF THE SEXTANT, ALLOWING THE NAVIGATOR TO "SHOOT THE SUN" WITHOUT LOOKING DIRECTLY INTO THE SUN'S RAYS." (THANKS TO CAPT. DICK OF AVALON, NJ FOR THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA QUESTION.)

LAST ISSUE'S QUESTION WAS: "NEPTUNE, IN ROMAN MYTHOLOGY, IS THE GOD OF THE SEA. HE MARRIED THE SEA NYMPH AMPHITRITE AND THEY HAD A SON, ALSO A WELL-KNOWN ROMAN GOD. WHO WAS THEIR SON AND WHAT WAS UNUSUAL ABOUT HIM?"

THE ANSWER: Triton, he was a merman - half man and half fish.

For reference and citation information, please contact outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org.

To learn more about Sperry Top-Sider, please visit their website at: www.sperrytopsider.com

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WEB SITE DIRECTORY

For general information about the NSBC visit:
www.safeboatingcouncil.org

For information about the Campaign visit:
www.safeboatingcampaign.com

For kids' boating information visit:
www.boatingsidekicks.com