

## **The National Boating Education Standards**

**NASBLA accredited boating education courses and texts will address at least the following minimum standards.**

**The Boat** ( all types of recreational watercraft.)

### **Standard 1.1 - Boat Capacities**

The course will describe how to determine acceptable loading based on locating and determining a boat's gross load capacity (total weight and # persons) from the boat capacity plate and horsepower recommendations.

### **Standard 1.2 - Boat Registration Requirements**

The course will describe:

1. that all motorized boats and many other boats are required to be registered (check state requirements),
2. requirements for hull identification number,
3. the required certificate of number (registration documentation), and external display of numbers,
4. the requirements for federally documented vessels,
5. reciprocity regulations, and
6. registration requirements in the boat's state of principal use.

## **Boating Equipment**

### **Standard 2.1 - Personal Flotation Device Types and Carriage**

The course will describe the types of Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFDs) and their respective uses, advantages, and disadvantages. The course will also describe the number and types of PFDs that must be carried on the boat according to applicable regulations.

### **Standard 2.2 – Personal Flotation Device Sizing and Availability**

The course will communicate that PFDs must be readily accessible and correctly sized for the persons using them.

### **Standard 2.3 – Wearing Personal Flotation Devices**

**The course must inform boat operators of the advisability of wearing PFDs at all times.**

The course must emphasize the need for boat operators to be alert to changing boating conditions and to inform all persons on board they should be wearing PFDs in dangerous conditions such as high boat traffic, severe weather, dangerous water conditions, dangerous local hazards, distance from shore, operation at night, boating alone, etc. The course will address the difficulty of putting PFDs on in the water.

### **Standard 2.4 - Personal Flotation Device Serviceability**

The course will describe the characteristics of serviceable (good) PFDs and when to replace PFDs due to excessive wear or damage. Special attention must be given to the maintenance of inflatable PFDs as per manufacturer recommendations.

### **Standard 2.5 - Fire Extinguishers**

The course will describe the legal requirements for fire extinguishers on recreational boats, the kind of fire extinguishers needed for different types of fires, the importance of placing fire extinguishers in a readily accessible location, and the need for regular inspection of fire extinguishers.

### **Standard 2.6 - Back-Fire Flame Control Device**

The course will describe the purpose and maintenance of a back-fire flame control device (a required device on all enclosed engines with a carburetor).

### **Standard 2.7 – Ventilation Systems**

The course will discuss the ventilation system requirements for different types of boats.

### **Standard 2.8 – Navigation Light Equipment**

The course will cover the navigation light requirements for recreational boats from applicable sections of Navigation Rules (Part C) as summarized in Federal Requirements and Safety Tips for Recreational Boats. (Also see standard 5.3.7)

### **Standard 2.9 - Sound Signaling Equipment**

The course will describe the types and use of sound producing devices required on recreational boats. (Also see standard 5.3.6)

**Also see Standard 5.3.10 – Visual Distress Signals**

## **Trip Planning and Preparation**

### **Standard 3.1 - Checking Local Weather And Water Conditions**

The course will describe how to make informed boating decisions based on forecasted local weather and water conditions. It will also describe dangerous weather conditions such as strong wind, storms, lightning, hurricanes, fog, and their importance in trip planning.

### **Standard 3.2 - Checking Local Hazards**

The course will describe how to obtain information about local hazards that may impede the operation of a recreational boat.

### **Standard 3.3 - Filing a Float Plan**

The course will describe the importance of notifying someone of your boating plans and the basic information that should be included.

### **Standard 3.4 - Boat Preventive Maintenance**

The course will communicate the need for regular inspection and maintenance of the boat and its key components (e.g., through-hull fittings, motor, electrical system, fuel system).

### **Standard 3.5 – Transporting and Trailering**

The course will describe procedures to prevent trailering accidents and resulting injury and property damage. The course will cover safe trailering procedures including: 1) safe towing preparation, 2) road handling factors when pulling a trailer, 3) launching a boat, and 4) retrieving a boat from the water.

### **Standard 3.6 - Fueling Procedures**

The course will provide information on proper procedures for fueling, ventilation during fueling, and protection of the marine environment during fueling.

### **Standard 3.7 - Pre-Departure Checklist & Passenger Communication**

The course must describe the importance of using a pre-departure checklist and conducting an onboard safety discussion with passengers. Passengers should be informed about the location of PFDs, fire extinguishers, flares, first-aid kit, discharge and management of waste procedures, anchoring procedures, emergency radio operation (if applicable), storm/rough weather procedures, line handling, emergency boat operation, and falls overboard procedure.

## **Marine Environment**

### **Standard 4.1 – Environmental Laws and Regulations**

The course will describe the environmental laws and regulations concerning littering (e.g., garbage and plastic), waste management plans, and display of information placards (where applicable) and aquatic nuisance species.

### **Standard 4.2 - Human Waste Disposal**

The course will describe the proper procedure for disposal of human waste from recreational boats and how to identify no discharge zones and pumpout station locations.

### **Standard 4.3 – Disposal of Toxic Substances**

The course will describe procedures for the prevention of spills and improper disposal of toxic substances such as fuels, oils, and cleaning products into the marine environment and the associated fines for non-compliance.

## **Safe Boat Operation**

### **Standard 5.1 - Operator Responsibilities**

The course will describe a boat operator's ultimate responsibility for safety and all activity aboard the boat. This responsibility extends to other water users and includes: controlling boat speed, obeying no wake/limited wake restrictions, refraining from careless, reckless, or negligent operations on the water, controlling boat noise, observing and operating in accordance with homeland security measures, and other general boater courtesy.

### **Standard 5.2 - Influence of Drugs and Alcohol on Boat Operation**

The course will describe the effects of drinking alcohol or using drugs while boating, and the boating laws pertinent to operating a boat while under the influence.

### **Standard 5.3 - Navigation Rules of the Road**

The course will describe safe boating operation and good seamanship, including at least the following navigation rules:

5.3.1 - Definitions relevant to understanding the navigation rules [Navigation Rule 3]

5.3.2 – Rule of responsibility (to act in a reasonable and prudent manner consistent with the ordinary practices of recreational boating) [Navigation Rule 2]

5.3.3 – Proper lookout [Navigation Rule 5]

5.3.4 – Safe speed [Navigation Rule 6]

5.3.5 – Collision avoidance rules [Navigation Rules 7, 8, 11-18]

5.3.6 – Operation within narrow channels [Navigation Rule 9]

5.3.7 – Sound signals [Navigation Rules 32-37]

5.3.8 – Navigation light display and recognition [Navigation Rules 20-25]

5.3.9 – Restricted visibility [Navigation Rule 19]

5.3.10 – Visual distress signals [Navigation Rules 36-37]

5.3.11 – Rendering Assistance [Chapter 23]

#### **Standard 5.4 - Aids to Navigation**

The course will describe the Federal U.S. Aids to Navigation (USATONS) and the Uniform State Waterway Marking System (USWMS). The course must provide information about regulatory/informational markers (identified by orange bands on the top and bottom of each buoy) used to advise of situations, dangers, or directions indicating shoals, swim areas, speed zones, etc.

#### **Standard 5.5 - Docking and Mooring**

The course will describe common practices for docking and mooring a boat relative to boat size, type of boat, location, weather, and current.

#### **Standard 5.6 - Anchoring**

The course will describe the selection of anchors, related ground tackle, and their use for different types of boats in various boating conditions. The course must describe procedures for anchoring, use of anchors as safety devices in emergency situations, and the hazards of stern anchoring.

#### **Standard 5.7 - Carbon Monoxide**

### **Emergency Preparedness**

#### **Standard 6.1 - Rendering Assistance**

The course will explain that, according to the Navigation Rules, boat operators are required to render assistance to a boat in distress to the extent they are able. (Also see standard 5.3.11)

#### **Standard 6.2 - Capsizing Emergencies**

The course will describe how to prevent and respond to capsizing emergencies. These responses will include at least the following: donning lifejackets, taking a head count, staying with the craft when appropriate, signaling for assistance, using improvised floating aids, and initiation of procedures to recover people in the water.

#### **Standard 6.3 - Falls Overboard Emergencies**

The course will describe procedures for preventing and responding to falls-overboard, including the proper response of persons on board for retrieval of a person in the water.

### **Standard 6.4 - Hypothermia Prevention**

The course will describe the conditions under which hypothermia is likely to occur as well as its signs, symptoms, and prevention.

### **Standard 6.5 - Fire Emergency Preparedness**

The course will describe procedures to prevent and respond to boating fires such as proper use of fire extinguishers and basic knowledge of fire suppression principles.

### **Standard 6.6 - Running Aground Prevention and Response**

The course will describe how to prevent and respond to running aground for recreational boats.

### **Standard 6.7 - Accident Reports**

The course will describe what kinds of boating accidents require an accident report as well as how, when, and where to file the report.

### **Standard 6.8 - Boating Accident Report Form**

The course will include a sample accident report form, which can be included in the textbook or as a separate handout.

## **Other Water Activities**

### **Standard 7.1 – Personal Watercraft and other Jet Propelled Watercraft**

The course will state that a Personal Watercraft is defined as a boat and must observe all boating regulations. It must describe the unique characteristics of Personal Watercraft (PWC), including at least the following topics:

- 7.1.1 – Operational characteristics of PWCs , including steering, stopping and stability of PWC
- 7.1.2 – Off- throttle steering
- 7.1.3 – PWC load capacities as per manufacturer recommendations
- 7.1.4 – Re-boarding a PWC
- 7.1.5 – The purpose and use of a Lanyard/Cut (Shut) off switch
- 7.1.6 – The purpose and use of a fuel reserve tank
- 7.1.7 – Laws and regulations
- 7.1.8 – Accident prevention
- 7.1.9 – Noise control
- 7.1.10 – Hours of operation

### **Standard 7.2 - Water Skiing**

The course will describe procedures to follow when pulling water-skiers or operating in the vicinity of water-skiing or other activities using towed devices.

### **Standard 7.3 - Diving and Snorkeling**

The course will describe how to recognize a diver down flag and the legal requirements for operating a boat in the vicinity of snorkeling or scuba diving activities.

## **Standard 7.4 - Hunting & Fishing**

The course will inform people who fish and hunt from boats that they are boaters and need to follow safe boating practices. Information must be provided about accident risks unique to this group of recreational boaters.

### **Boating Education Practices**

#### **Standard 8.1 - Continuing Education**

The course will outline the need for additional boating safety education and staying informed of changes in boating safety requirements.

#### **Standard 8.2 - State Specific Boating Information**

The course will contain (as part of the text or a separate handout) state specific information in regard to boating laws/regulations and local boating conditions. The course will include the following topics as applicable:

- 8.2.1 - registration and titling requirements such as number of years registration decals are valid, expiration date of registration, decal placement.
- 8.2.2 - laws for required wearing of PFD's for children, certain types of boats, and for special boating activities such as personal watercraft, skiers and others being towed.
- 8.2.3 - additional equipment requirements such as anchor, lanyard, bailing devices, visual distress signals.
- 8.2.4 - mufflers and noise levels.
- 8.2.5 - requirements for waste discharge, no discharge zones, and litter laws.
- 8.2.6 - special requirements for mandatory education, licensing, rental operation, and proficiency test certifications.
- 8.2.7 - age/horsepower restrictions and adult supervision requirements for children.
- 8.2.8 - laws further defining careless, reckless, unsafe, and negligent operations such as becoming airborne and operating less than specified distances behind a water skier.
- 8.2.9 - boat speed limits and operation in zoned and restricted areas.
- 8.2.10 - laws on operating under the influence of drugs and alcohol such as implied consent and BAC levels.
- 8.2.11 - law enforcement officer authority and boater responsibility to comply.
- 8.2.12 - boat accident reporting requirements.
- 8.2.13 - a state approved boating accident report form.
- 8.2.14 - other laws or regulations as required by the state approving authority.

#### **Recommended Boating Safety Information**

The following items contain recommended course content but are not considered part of the minimum standards for boater education courses.

#### **R1 – Boat Types and Uses**

The course should describe the common types of recreational boats, common hull designs, and their performance in various types of boating situations.

**R2 - Boating Terms**

The course should describe commonly used boating terms in addition to those terms required to follow the Navigation Rules. (see also standard 5.3.1).

**R3 - Boat Theft Prevention**

The course should contain information that addresses actions the boat owner can take to deter or prevent boat theft.

**R4 - Communication Procedures**

The course should describe the protocol and use of VHF marine radios and other equipment for contacting the Coast Guard or other rescue personnel in the event of a boating emergency.