



Boating Program



Talking Points

SPRING ABOARD

- The annual Spring Aboard campaign informs and motivates boaters to prepare for the boating season by providing information on how to enroll in a boating knowledge or skills based education course.
- U.S. Coast Guard statistics indicate that of the accidents where the level of operator education was known, 70% of boating fatalities occurred on boats where the operator had never received boating education instruction.*
- Last year, 24 recreational boating fatalities occurred in Washington state. Only one operator had record of receiving boating education instruction. Paddlers accounted for 13 of the 24 fatalities.**
- Boating education is about more than avoiding accidents. Educated boaters are more confident boaters and they are able to enjoy the boating experience much more.
- To qualify for a Washington State Boater Education Card, boaters are required to complete a state-approved course which meets the national boating education standards.
- Boat operators born before Jan. 1, 1955, are exempt from the Washington requirement but may choose to get a card if they plan to go boating in Canada or Oregon, which require proof of having completed a boating education course. The Washington State Boater Education Card is valid in those two areas.
- As of Feb. 28, 2021, more than 404,712 people have a Washington State Boater Education Card.
- Forty-nine states and U.S. territories require proof of completing of a boating education course for operators of some powered vessels.
- When required by law, the minimum fine for not carrying a valid Boater Education Card in Washington state is \$99.

Source: *U.S. Coast Guard Recreational Boating Statistics 2019

** Washington State Recreational Boating Accident Data 2020



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