

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

State Specific Education Requirements Course Supplement



Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Boating Division
P.O. Box 280, 333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, CT 06371-0280
(860) 434-8638

DEP.BOATING.DIVISION@CT.GOV

State boating regulations and laws are in addition to federal regulations taught in most boating courses. This supplement should answer any questions you may have regarding state laws. Any other questions or comments should be directed to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Boating Division (860) 434-8638. The final exam for the course will include 10 questions prepared by the Boating Division and refer to Connecticut laws and regulations. Annual updates reflecting changes in Boating laws can be found in the *Connecticut Boater's Guide*. This publication is available at www.ct.gov/dep/boating

NOTICE TO PRIVATE PROVIDERS

The Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection Boating Division must approve all boating courses that lead to certification in Connecticut. To obtain this approval, your course must be taught by a qualified instructor for a period of no less than 8 hours. No home-study, internet, or mail order courses are currently approved in Connecticut. Some courses are approved as combination boating and PWC courses and lead to a CPWO. If you have any questions call DEP Marine Headquarters at (860) 434-8638. In an effort to assure quality boating education throughout the state, we randomly select student's names to complete a survey. Students will be required to understand this state specific information in addition to your boating course.

SAFE BOATING CERTIFICATE (SBC) / CERTIFICATE OF PERSONAL WATERCRAFT OPERATION (CPWO)

The SBC will allow a boater to operate any recreational vessel **except** a personal watercraft (PWC).

The CPWO will allow the boater to operate **any** recreational vessel including PWC.

Safe Boating Certificate requirements (as applied to boats): Any resident of the state, person owning real property or a boat required to be registered or numbered in the state must obtain a *Safe Boating Certificate (SBC)* or *Certificate of Personal Watercraft Operation (CPWO)* before operating any vessel. Out of state boat owners may use Connecticut waters for no more than 60 days in a calendar year without obtaining a SBC or CPWO.

Certificate of Personal Watercraft Operation (as applied to personal watercraft): Any person operating a PWC in state waters must possess a Connecticut CPWO or equivalent certification issued by a state which has a reciprocal agreement with Connecticut.

Currently Connecticut has reciprocal agreements with Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island.

To obtain a SBC/CPWO an individual must successfully complete an approved boating course, pass a proctored, written examination and submit an application to the DEP with a fee of \$50.00 **OR** successfully pass an equivalency exam (\$50.00 fee) administered by the DEP and make application with the \$50.00 application fee. Any holder of a SBC or CPWO must have that certificate in their possession whenever operating a vessel.

AGE RESTRICTIONS

A SBC/CPWO may be issued to any applicant regardless of age. However, no person less than 12 years of age shall operate a motor powered vessel (boat) exceeding 10hp unless accompanied onboard by a person at least 18 years of age who has been issued a SBC/CPWO.

No person under 16 years of age may operate a PWC without a CPWO and the onboard supervision of a person who is at least 18 years of age and in possession of a CPWO.

SBC EXEMPTIONS

Persons under 16 years of age may operate a boat (NOT PWC) without a certificate when under the onboard supervision of a person over 18 years of

age who has held a SBC/ CPWO for at least two years.

Any person enrolled in a safe boating course approved by the Commissioner of DEP may operate a boat (NOT PWC) without a SBC/CPWO when under the direct onboard supervision of a boating instructor holding valid instructor credentials issued by the DEP.

The SBC or CPWO is valid for the life of the person to whom it is issued. Anyone holding a current Master, Mate or Pilot license issued by the US Coast Guard may operate a recreational vessel (not a personal watercraft) without a SBC.

NO PERSON (UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES) SHALL OPERATE A PWC WITHOUT HAVING IN HIS OR HER POSSESSION A CERTIFICATE OF PERSONAL WATERCRAFT OPERATION.

LIMITED DURATIONAL CERTIFICATE

After completing an approved safe boating class and successfully passing the written proctored exam, any individual that qualifies for a SBC or CPWO may bring a completed application, \$50.00 fee, and supporting documents to any DEP processing office and receive a Limited Durational Certificate. This certificate may be used instantly until your official certificate arrives in the mail.

If an individual chooses to obtain their SBC/CPWO through the mail they cannot operate until they are in possession of the official certificate. Presenting a course diploma to law enforcement is not and cannot be used as proof of possessing a SBC/CPWO and will result in the issuance of an infraction.

DUPLICATE CERTIFICATES

Should your SBC or CPWO become lost, stolen or destroyed you may obtain a duplicate for a fee of \$20. Forms are available through the DEP.

VESSEL REGISTRATION

Connecticut law requires all vessels with motors, regardless of size, and sailboats 19.5 feet or longer powered by sail alone, to be registered and numbered.

Vessels registered in other states or documented by the US Coast Guard and wanting to use Connecticut waters for more than 60 days in a calendar year must obtain a certificate of decal. They must display the current validation stickers on both sides of the vessel but do not have to display CT registration numbers.

All vessel registrations are handled by the Dept. of Motor Vehicles and expire on April 30th of the following year. Connecticut vessel numbers stay with the vessel as long as it is registered in Connecticut. The Certificate of Number (registration certificate) must be on-board the vessel at all times. Vessel numbering is in compliance with federal law when the Connecticut validation sticker is placed 2" to the right of the assigned vessel numbers on both sides of the vessel. No other numbers and only current validation stickers may be displayed. Any change of address must be reported in writing within 15 days.

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFD)

Towed sports and PWC - In addition to federal laws regarding PFD's. Connecticut requires any person on water-skis, tubes being towed, or on a PWC to be wearing a USCG approved PFD (no inflatable pfd's).

All manually propelled vessels - From October 1st to May 31st - any person onboard **must** wear an approved wearable PFD.

Children – Any child under the age of 13 **must** wear a USCG approved wearable PFD whenever onboard a recreational boat that is underway except when the child is in an enclosed cabin or below decks. (NOTE: Inflatable PFD's are not approved for children under the age of 16)

MUFFLER & NOISE LEVELS

Every motorboat **must** be equipped with an effective muffling device. Some muffler cutout devices may be approved by the Commissioner of the DEP. Connecticut noise levels are as follows:

STATIC TEST:

Engines manufactured before Jan. 1, 1993 – 90 dBA (decibels read on A scale)

Engines manufactured on or after January 1, 1993 - 88 dBA.

OPERATION TEST:

No person should operate or let anyone else operate a vessel that exceeds a noise level of 75 dBA.

A law enforcement officer may direct a suspected offender through one of the tests to determine noise levels. Fines for refusing the test are substantial.

No person shall sell a boat that does not operate in compliance with the established noise levels.

SPEED REGULATIONS

“Slow-No-Wake” means that a vessel shall not produce more than a minimum wake and shall not attain speeds greater than 6 miles per hour over the ground unless a higher minimum speed is necessary to maintain steerageway when traveling with a strong current. In no case shall the wake produced by the vessel be such that it creates a danger of injury to persons, or will damage vessels or structures of any kind.

No person shall operate a **motorboat** at a speed in excess of ‘Slow- No-Wake’ when within 100 feet of shore, piers, floats, and anchored or moored vessels. An exception is made for vessels that are taking off or landing water-skiers.

No person shall operate a **PWC** at a speed in excess of ‘Slow- No-Wake’ when within 200 feet of shore, piers, floats, and anchored or moored vessels. An exception is made for vessels that are taking off or landing water-skiers.

No person shall operate or allow the operation of a vessel in excess of ‘Slow-No-Wake when within 100 feet of markers placed to designate a restricted swim area or boating access area authorized by the DEP.

In Connecticut, many bodies of water have speed restrictions. These can be found posted on the water or in the *Connecticut Boaters Guide*.

Under crowded conditions or in reduced visibility, every vessel must go at a safe speed with careful regard for existing circumstances and conditions. Actions such as speeding in confined or restricted areas, “buzzing” or “wetting down” others or skiing at prohibited times or in restricted areas, can be construed as reckless or negligent operation.

DIVING AND UNDERWATER OPERATIONS

In Connecticut, divers and underwater swimmers must display the “Diver-Down” flag. No person shall operate a vessel or allow a person on skis to pass within 100 feet of this flag. If the flag is on a float or tube, it may accommodate up to four divers. If the flag is being flown from a boat, the number of divers is limited to the legal capacity of the boat.

OPERATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

No person may operate a boat when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. An operator must be free from physical and mental disabilities that might interfere with the control of the boat. Water-skiing under the influence is also illegal.

A person shall be considered under the influence of intoxicating liquor if the ratio of alcohol in the blood is .08 per cent or more. If you are under the age of 21 it is .02 per cent.

ACCIDENT REPORTING

All operators of vessels involved in an accident must remain at the scene and assist any other vessel or person involved in the accident if it is possible to do so without endangering their own vessel or the people aboard. The operator must also provide his or her name, address, and vessel identification to the other operator or owners of the damaged property.

The operator of a boat involved in a boating accident that results in any of the circumstances noted below shall immediately notify the nearest Law Enforcement agency. Within 48 hours after the accident, the operator must submit to the Department of Environmental Protection a “State Boating Accident Report”:

- The death of any person, from whatever the cause.
- The disappearance of any person on board.
- The injury of any person sufficient to require medical attention.

Any accident in which the total damages to all property affected is more than \$500.00 must be reported by the operator within 5 days after the accident on the “State Boating Accident Report” form. This form is available at www.ct.gov/dep/boating .

WATER SKIING

Water skiers are required to wear a PFD (ski belts and inflatables are not acceptable) while being towed at all times. Water skiing is a minimum three-person sport, the operator, the skier and an observer at least 12 years old to monitor the actions of the skier. Rear view mirrors **may not** be used in place of an observer. The skier and observer must communicate using appropriate hand signals.

Water skiing behind a **boat** is prohibited from ½ hour after sunset to sunrise and whenever visibility is less than 100 yards.

Water skiing behind a **PWC** is prohibited between sunset and sunrise and whenever visibility is less than 100 yards.

No person shall tow a water skier or tuber from a PWC unless the PWC has:

- a capacity label affixed by the manufacturer indicating a carrying capacity of at least three persons (check the *Connecticut Boater’s Guide* for exact measurements),
- handholds at or near the rear of the seat suitable for use by a rearward facing observer, and
- an observer at least 12 years of age facing the skier at all times. The operator, skier and observer must obey all other water-ski rules.

Towing a person on an inner tube without handholds is prohibited, as are self-propelled water skis or surfboards, and remote control devices that pull water skiers.

FOLLOWING TOO CLOSELY

Every vessel overtaking another vessel shall keep out of the way of the overtaken vessel. Any person operating a vessel shall not follow another vessel more closely than is reasonable and prudent and shall have regard for prevailing circumstances and conditions so as not to create a risk of collision.

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (PWC)

All persons aboard a PWC must wear a Coast Guard approved PFD at all times. (not an inflatable).

No person shall operate a PWC between sunset and sunrise or during periods of reduced visibility.

No person operating a PWC may jump the wake of another vessel in such a manner that the watercraft completely leaves the water when within 100 feet of the vessel creating the wake.

No passenger is permitted to ride in front of the PWC operator.

In order to legally ride a PWC any passenger must be able to hold securely hold onto the person in front of them or the handholds on the PWC and is able to keep both feet planted on the deck of the PWC.

No person shall operate a PWC equipped with a “kill switch” unless the device is attached via a lanyard to the operator in such a manner that it will shut off the machine should the operator become ejected.

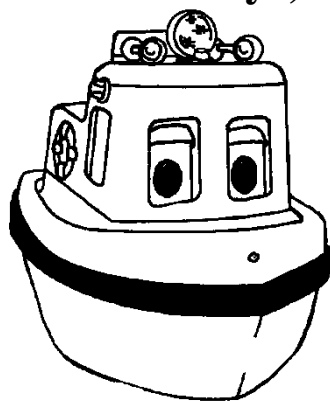
SPECIAL RULE

Upon approaching a stationary law enforcement vessel displaying flashing blue lights or a fire rescue vessel using flashing red or yellow lights, a person operating a vessel shall immediately reduce speed to Slow-No-Wake when passing within 200 feet.



'Boating in Connecticut'

Rudder says,



**"Always wear your life jacket
when you're on a boat!"**