

USPS Public Boating Course

America's Boating Course, 3rd Edition - 2010

Information, Registration, and Assessment Overview

Note: elimination of "paper" reports for class completions was effective July 2007.

The USPS Public Boating Course

America's Boating Course, 3rd Edition (ABC3): USPS' ABC3 is the sole basic public safety boating course supported by USPS and approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) for use through 2011. It has been approved by most states, and is offered in either an 8-hour (Chapters 1-4) format and a 12-hour (Chapters 1-4 plus Chapter 5) format. Chapters 1-4 focus on Federal laws and state licensing requirements, and Chapter 5 introduces the student to the use of charts and piloting. The classroom version of ABC3 is presented by USPS Certified Instructors only. The ABC3 student manual is "Copyright 2008 United States Power Squadrons Reprint 2010" to distinguish it from prior editions.

Student and Instructor materials to support the ABC3 course (Student Manual, Instructor Manual, Instructor CD with PPT, bonus CDs for the student, assessments, answer sheets, diplomas) continue to be obtained from the on-line catalog on the USPS Education Department Home Page.

Examinations: Testing and verification of student comprehension is through four end-of-chapter reviews and a 50-question final multiple choice examination at class end. Education on state boating laws is specific to the state's laws and assessed typically by a 10-question multiple choice test in addition to the 50-question NASBLA approved exam. Those completing Chapter 5 may receive an endorsement so stating on their diploma. Minimum passing score for all ABC3 related exams is 80%. All multiple choice examinations are closed book, proctored by USPS members as arranged by the Exam Administrator, and scored by designated personnel other than the instructors. Two ABC3 final examinations are provided. Those not passing the initial assessment may, after additional study, retake the second exam. State-specific test questions are provided by the respective states and may include additional evaluation direction.

Successful completion of the final examination leads to issuance of an ABC3 wallet card and diploma.

Course Completions: There is one report, submitted electronically, that records completion of each public boating class or seminar. The report is made through *the HQ 800 System* or *Boating Course Assistant* version 7 (BCA 7) software. Both programs are easily accessed from the USPS Education Department web site. While each is unique with various additional aids to administration, they integrate the necessary information from the Student Registration form (ED46) and Course Answer sheet (ED26) into a data record which is uploaded to USPS Headquarters in Raleigh, NC. Both allow for pre-registering by students, a feature that aids compilation of data for reporting purposes.

Boating Class Summary (ED 27): This report provides the student statistics from course completion reports to the respective district and squadron educational departments, and state boating law administrators. ED-27 reports are produced by the HQ 800 System from squadron information submitted to HQ from either of the two software programs.

The two software programs, HQ 800 System and BCA7 were introduced in the winter of 2010, expanding on electronic systems in use in recent years to accommodate reporting of the full spectrum of USPS courses and seminars now offered to the public.

Looking ahead to 2012: The ABC3 student manual and instructor manual will be re-printed for 2012 and NASBLA re-certification obtained for another 3 years. The forthcoming 2012 re-certification will include brand new student assessments and will include testing and focus on safety issues specific to NASBLA education standards. The current answer key used to score student exams will be maintained; that is, the a-b-c-d foils will be structured such that the squadron ED-26 overlays currently in use will still score the forthcoming 2012 assessments. Squadrons should plan their fall 2011 classes and inventory orders such that they may order the 2012 re-prints in late 4Q2011 in preparation for the new year. Additional details will be presented at the Fall Governing Board meeting in Greensboro, NC.

Support Common to Both Software Programs by HQ 800 System

Announcing and advertising your USPS public boating course: All public boating courses are to be listed on-line on the USPS website. This serves several purposes. First, it announces to the general public the date, time, location, and point of contact for each class. Next, the new features of the on-line registration system will automatically send email notifications of the boating class schedules and completion results to the designated state Boating Law Administrator (BLA) or their representative. This feature meets the reporting requirements contained within just about all of the Memorandum of Understanding between USPS and the States.

Pre-registering students: The on-line registration process for potential students to pre-register for squadron public boating classes supports the student who chooses to do contact on-line, and provides the host squadron with information that helps prepare the student for the course. The process requires that squadron boating class information be listed in the on-line HQ800 database. Squadrons enter their class information into the database using the USPS Education Department Home page, then select "Manage Public Programs," select "Register Boating Courses (HQ800), and enter course data. When entering course data, check the "allow on-line registration" and consider checking "offer 6 month memberships" box. Once activated, students may fill in the pre-registration form with all their personal data, greatly simplifying the process of entering the data into the course completion report.

Supports on-line searches: When "GOOGLE" and other on-line search engines are used to seek terms such as "*safe boating classes*" or "*public boating education*", the courses listed in the HQ800 System are provided. The BOAT U.S. course listing extracts the USPS information for publication on their site.

Summary Information for the Educational Departments: The cumulative reports from squadron submissions are used to manage stock levels to support squadron efforts, track trends in USPS Boating Safety Education, and may be used locally to manage course schedules and inter-squadron teaching efforts.