

# Boater Certification Card

As you may or may not know, beginning in the year 2008, you may be required to have a boater education certification card depending on your year of birth. This card is similar to a driver's license, in that you must carry it with you at all times while piloting a boat with a motor greater than 15 MPH (this includes personal watercraft, commonly called jet ski's). For more information visit [www.parks.wa.gov/boating](http://www.parks.wa.gov/boating) or call 1.360.902.8844.

## Boating Safety Mandatory Education Frequently Asked Questions

**How can I get my Boating Safety Education Card?** You must first complete the application (select link at right). Follow the directions on the application and mail the application, a copy of your course completion certificate and \$10 to the address given on the application.

**When will I receive my Boating Safety Education Card?** Once your application and supporting documents are received, it takes approximately six weeks to process your application and send out the Boating Safety Education Card.

**How much does a Boating Safety Education Card cost?** \$10.

**What boats fall under the Boating Safety Education Card requirements?** The law applies to all motorboats that have a motor with 15 horsepower or greater. All operators on other boats are not required to have a Boating Safety Education Card. This includes manually powered boats such as canoes, kayaks, rowboats, drift boats, sail-only boats, etc.

**Is the Boating Safety Education Card a license?** No. Once you apply for and receive your Boating Safety Education Card it is good for life and cannot be taken away from you.

**What do I do if my card is lost or damaged?** You can get a replacement card for \$5. See the application form for directions on applying for a replacement card.

**What do I need to do to qualify for a Boater Safety Education Card?** You must take a course that is approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Select course options or class schedule link at right.

**Do all boaters need a card?** No. RCW 79A.60.64 states that people born before Jan. 1, 1955, are exempt from needing a Boater Safety Education Card. Many older boaters are still getting cards anyway because they boat in Canada and Oregon. Canada and Oregon do not exempt people born before Jan. 1, 1955.

**Is my Boater Safety Education Card good in other states and Canada that have mandatory boating education requirements?** Yes. All states that have mandatory boater education requirements will accept a Washington Boater Education Card. Through an agreement between Canada and NASBLA, we have reciprocity for United States boater education cards that are issued by states that meet NASBLA requirements.

**Is my Oregon Boater Education Card valid in Washington?** Yes. If you are visiting Washington for less than 60 consecutive days, your Oregon card is valid. If you become a Washington resident, your Oregon Boater Education Card can be used to obtain a Washington Boater Education Card. This is also true for other state's cards that meet the reciprocity requirements.

**When will I be required to have my Washington Boater Education Card in my possession when operating a boat?** The card requirement is being phased in from 2008 to 2014. All operators of boats having motors of 15 horsepower or greater are required to have their Boater Safety Education Card with them when operating a boat as follows:

Year	Age Group
2008	12 years to 20 years old
2009	25 years and under
2010	30 years and under
2011	35 years and under
2012	40 years and under
2013	50 years and under
2014	60 years and under
After 2014	All boat operators except those exempted elsewhere in RCW 79A.60.640

**Do I have to wait to get my card until the year it is required?** No. If you have taken an approved course, you may apply for your card now. The Washington State Boating Programs encourages boaters to get their cards as soon as possible.

**Who is exempt from having a Boater Safety Education Card?** Exemptions are listed in RCW 79A.60.640. The following people are exempt from carrying a card:

Group	Exemption
People born before 1/1/1955	No card needed.
Operators of commercial fishing boats	When operating a recreational vessel must have valid commercial license or Boating Safety Education Card.
Operators with U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) marine operator license	When operating a recreational vessel must have valid USCG operator license or Boating Safety Education Card.
Operators of exempt vessels	When operating a recreational vessel must have Boating Safety Education Card.
Operators of rented, leased or chartered vessels	When operating a livery vessel, must have a copy of the Commission-approved educational checklist in lieu of Boating Safety Education Card.
An operator who is a resident of another state or country	Does not need card for first 60 consecutive days. After this must have Washington Boater Education Card.
An operator who is a resident of another state or country who has a valid card from that state or country	Does not need card for first 60 consecutive days. After this must have Washington Boater Education Card.
A person purchasing a vessel	For the first 60 days after purchasing a vessel, the bill of sale showing date of purchase is valid in lieu of a Washington Boating Education Card.
A person not yet required to have a card	No card needed until date of phasing in. See above table on phase-in dates.