

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

TEXAS
BOATER
EDUCATION
PROGRAM



OUTDOOR ADVENTURES
ON THE WATER

THE TEXAS BOATER EDUCATION PROGRAM

State law requires that certain boat operators attend a boater education course. However, the majority of attendees are safety-conscious adult boaters who want to increase their knowledge of safe boating techniques.

MANDATORY BOATER EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Anyone born on or after September 1, 1993 must successfully complete a Boater Education course. This law is in effect for any vessel over 15 horsepower, wind-blown vessels over 14 feet, and all personal watercraft (jet-skis). Individuals in violation of the Texas Water Safety Act may also be required by law to complete the training.

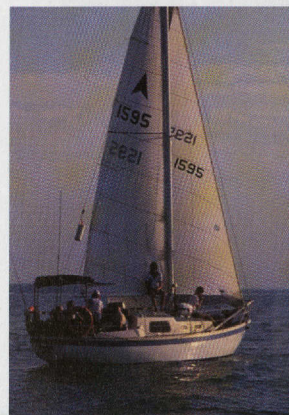
Persons subject to the mandatory education law must have a picture identification card and a boater certification card issued by the department in their possession while on board any boating vessel. To be exempted from the education law, person(s) must be born before September 1, 1993.

COURSE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is designed for persons of all ages and boating interests be it sailing, skiing, fishing, paddle boating, cruising, personal watercraft, etc. The goal of the program is to reduce boating accidents and violations while promoting legal, courteous and responsible boating practices. Boating safety and responsibility are stressed throughout the course. Additional topics include ethics and courtesy, accident prevention, general information about boats, safe operating procedures, required safety equipment, boating laws and general boating safety concerns.

TEXAS BOATER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS

Courses are offered in three different formats: traditional, home study or Internet. Traditional instruction is provided by highly trained volunteers, including instructors from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power/Sail Squadrons, American Sailing Association, law enforcement officers, professional educators and TPWD staff. Home study and online Internet coursework is provided by an approved agent of the state of Texas.



BECOMING A BOATER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR

If you are an adult with boating and/or teaching experience and are interested in providing safe boating instruction to the citizens of the state of Texas and sharing safe boating techniques, we need you as a volunteer instructor! To become a volunteer instructor, you must have the following qualifications:

- Be at least 21 years of age
- Complete the basic boater education course
- Complete a Boater Education Instructor course
- Be interviewed by a Texas game warden
- Complete application and free background check

The Boater Education Instructor Course is a free, one-day training workshop conducted by TPWD staff or volunteer "area chiefs" to qualify instructors to teach the mandated Boater Education course. Some of the subjects taught in the hands-on work-shop include: U.S. Rules of Navigation, Texas Water Safety Act, Lateral Buoy System, State Uniform Buoy System,

For additional information about the Boater Education program, please call us at (800) 792-1112, ext. 9-4999.

Personal Watercraft Operation, Organization of TPWD, Effective Teaching Techniques, etc. The required game warden interview is normally conducted at this time.

COST AND LOCATION OF COURSES

Classroom courses are located throughout the state of Texas. In addition, a person may take a home-study or Internet certification course approved by the department. A list of approved courses is available on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website's Boater Education page.

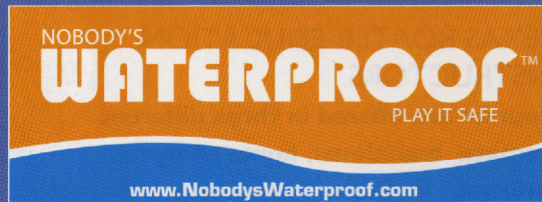
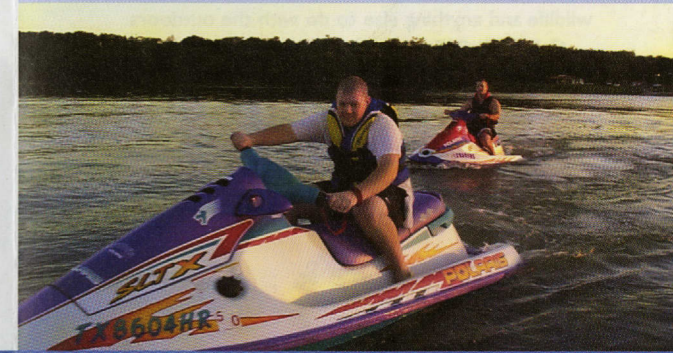
Approved Internet courses and the TPWD classroom course taught by certified volunteer instructors is \$20. Partner organizations like the Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadrons also have approved courses that offer certification but may have different fees. Additional fees may also be required by course providers that offer other options such as a home-study course or courses that offer more hands-on experience.

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FIND COURSE LOCATIONS:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Headquarters, Austin: (800) 792-1112, ext. 9-4999.

The TPWD website lists all scheduled classroom courses by city and date. It also provides information concerning the home study and online options.

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/boatered

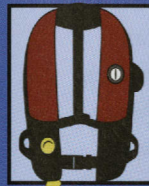


NOBODY'S WATERPROOF – PLAY IT SAFE!

Find out how friends and family can have a great time while playing it safe on the water by going to www.NobodysWaterproof.com or www.tpwd.state.tx.us/boat today.

Here are a few tips to help you play it safe!

1. Always wear a life jacket.



These days they come in really cool styles and colors. And they float, even when you don't. Everyone SHOULD wear one, and children under 13 years of age must wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket while underway in boats under 26 feet.

2. Boat safety.

Know where you are on the water and be aware of your surroundings at all times. Use proper lighting at night, know how to read and follow buoy signs, slow down and enjoy the scenery to avoid accidents involving excessive speed, and have a proper lookout when you are having fun with water sports like skiing and wakeboarding.

3. Have proper equipment onboard.

Make sure it works correctly! Some equipment is required by state law, such as a fire extinguisher, throwable flotation device, proper lighting, and a whistle or horn.

4. Know when to say when!



A keg is not a personal flotation device. Many drowning accidents involve alcohol, which significantly affects your coordination and judgment—even more so when you're boating or swimming. Avoid alcohol on the water, and stay hydrated by drinking lots of water.

5. Never swim alone.

Most drowning victims don't yell for help; instead, they panic and slip quietly underwater. Ask friends and family to keep an eye on one another in and around the water, and learn to recognize the signs of someone in trouble.

6. It's not kid stuff!

To operate a Personal Water Craft (PWC), the operator must meet one of the following requirements:

- Born on or after September 1, 1993 and passed a boater education class or equivalency exam prescribed by TPWD or
- Born before September 1, 1993 or

- Persons requiring boater education who have not completed it must be accompanied by a person 18 years of age (who can legally operate) or older, or
- At least 13 years of age and have passed a boater education course or equivalency exam provided by the department.

To operate a vessel alone in Texas, a boater must be a minimum of 13 years of age to operate a vessel of 15 horsepower or more, a wind-blown vessel over 14 feet in length, and/or the operator must meet the requirements stated above.

7. The 50-foot rule: maintain a safe speed!

Your PWC may not be operated within 50 feet of another boat, person, platform or shore unless you're operating at headway, or no wake speed. Watch your wake and don't jump wakes of another boat—you risk a ticket and an accident!

8. Play during the day!

Operation of a PWC is not permitted in Texas at night.

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the full-color pages of

TEXAS

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

We'll bring you stories on state parks, fishing in our many freshwater lakes and saltwater bays, Texas' abundant wildlife and anything else to do with the outdoors.

Call (800) 937-9393, Monday through Friday,
between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.



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