

Boating Education Information Template

The following information can be printed into any useful format (information sheet, brochure, etc.) after being translated into any language that would help get the boating safety message out to the limited English proficient boating audience in your state/territory. Photos or other graphics can also be inserted as needed or wanted. Please note that this information is meant to provide minimal safety information and should never replace the information that can be learned in a NASBLA-approved basic boating safety course.

Boat Registration:

Boats are required to be licensed or registered with (name of agency). Boats are required to display the registration number on both sides of the forward half of the craft. For information on how to obtain a boat license and where to put the registration decal, contact the (name of agency).

Operator Age:

There are age restrictions for children who operate motorboats. (State specific information...) Please check (name of agency) for more information before allowing a child to drive a motorboat.

Required Equipment:

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs or Lifejackets)

All boats must have a U.S. Coast Guard –approved life jacket that is properly fitted for each person on board. The life jacket must be worn or located where it can be easily retrieved within a reasonable amount of time in an emergency. Life jackets must be in good condition and of the proper size and type for the person it is intended for. It's a smart idea for everyone to always wear a life jacket when in a boat. There just isn't time to put one on before an accident happens.

Additionally, there must also be at least one U.S. Coast Guard –approved Type IV throwable device immediately available. In most cases this will be a buoyant seat cushion. If someone falls out of the boat or is in trouble in the water, throw the cushion to the person and tell them to hang on to it until they can be rescued.

(List state specific information about PFD wear requirements for children).

Boat Lights:

Boats are required to have lights between sunset and sunrise and during periods of restricted visibility. Non-motorized boats must carry a least a white light, such as a flashlight, to display in time to avoid collision with other watercraft. Motorboats, when moving, must have a red and green bow light and a white stern light that is visible from 360 degrees around the boat. If your motorboat is anchored, you need to display only the 360 degree light.

Hazardous Waters:

Whether boating in the ocean or on a river, it is important to know the weather conditions and to be familiar with the waterway. In addition, **never boat alone.**

Boat Capacity:

Boat capacity should not exceed either the stated maximum weight or the maximum number of people. The maximum weight is the combined weight of passengers, gear and motors (including

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ballast tanks or devices). In many states, it is a violation to exceed capacity, since it can lead to a boat being swamped and capsizing.

Skiing, Tubing and Boarding:

Towing devices behind a boat should be done at a slow speed and only good swimmers wearing life jackets should be on the skis, board or tubes. Turns should be made gradually and away from shore boats or other objects, to reduce the chance of a collision. All persons being towed need to know the universal towing signals for communicating with the boat operator. There must also be an observer, in addition to the boat operator, in the boat. (List state specific information...)

Proper Lookout

Boat operators should be experienced enough to recognize lights, waterway markers and boats as well as other hazards, and maintain a proper lookout for danger at all times.

Emergency Procedures:

Cold Water Immersion & Hypothermia:

If you fall into cold water, do not panic. Air trapped in clothing can provide buoyancy as long as you remain still in the water. Do not remove your clothes or shoes unless it is necessary for flotation, as they provide added thermal protection. Make sure you have a life jacket on. Not only will it keep you afloat, but it will also minimize heat loss. Get back in the boat or on top of the boat because it will be easier for rescuers to see your boat than you in the water. You want to get as much of your body out of the water since it will cool faster in cold water than in cold air. If you can't get out of the water, curl your knees toward your chest to minimize heat loss.

Capsizing:

If your boat swaps, do not panic. Stay with the boat. Do not swim for shore unless there is absolutely no chance of rescue and you are certain you can make it. Always wear your life jacket to reduce panic and improve your chance of surviving an accident.

Swimming Safety:

It is always best to swim at a beach or pool where lifeguards are on duty. Children should receive swimming lessons and also be watched very closely while they are in the water, even if there are lifeguards. Avoid swimming in ponds, rivers and water-filled gravel pits.

Children and Water:

Always watch children around water even when they are not swimming. Water is fascinating to them and they do not realize it can also be dangerous.

Boating Under the Influence:

Drinking and operating a boat is as dangerous as drinking and operating a car. Alcohol slows reaction time, impairs your judgment, and reduces peripheral vision, night vision and your ability to focus. Stressors such as the wind, motion, sun and noise will also contribute to the alcohol impairment and amplify its effects. Drinking and boating is dangerous and potentially deadly. (Include state law regarding BUI.)