

SF4062: UPDATING MINNESOTA'S BOATER EDUCATION PROGRAM

As the Minnesota Legislature considers SF 4062, it is critical to keep the boater education expansion provision. Expanding boater education is widely supported by key stakeholders, including boat dealers, lake associations, law enforcement, marinas, marine manufacturers, resorts and more.

What Will Boater Education Language In SF 4062 Accomplish?



Expand Minnesota's existing youth (12-17) boater education course requirement to include all operators ages 12+ born on or after July 1, 1987.



Require boat rentals to provide customers a summary of Minnesota boating regulations and complete a short exam before operating a boat.

Key Facts about Minnesota's Growing Boating Community

- Minnesota ranks second in the U.S. for registered watercraft and first per capita.
- In the last two years, Minnesota has seen registration of 16,000 new motorized watercraft.
- Minnesota is one of a handful of states that does not require boater education beyond youth.
- 2021 had 18 boating fatalities on Minnesota waters, among the most on record since 2005.
- US Coast Guard statistics confirm 77% of boating deaths occurred on boats where the operator had no safety instruction. That number drops to 12% when the operator received a nationally approved boating safety education certificate.
- In the 1990's, the average nonfatal boating accidents was 148. After implementing youth boater education requirements, the average nonfatal boating accidents from 2010-2019 was 71.

How Does SF 4062 Compare To Other Minnesota Recreation Product Education And Safety Trainings?

- Minnesota's recreation products - including firearms, ATVs, and snowmobiles - require robust education and safety training beyond youth, with boats being the exception.
- Safety coursework is accessible to all Minnesotans through convenient online access, at the cost of \$24.95, or via paper form, which is free of charge, and provided on request by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

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Frequently Asked Questions



If someone is born after 07/01/1987 but took the test as a youth (12-17) for the youth operator's permit, would they need to retake the course? No, they would not need to retake the course. The permit they received previously would be valid for operation.



Will this create a new user fee? No, currently the boater education safety course (required for youth 12-17) is available for free via paper version from DNR or can be completed online for a \$24.95, like other recreational products.



Is the course only online or will there be other options? The Minnesota boater safety education course is available online or through free paper packets that may be requested through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The online course is administered by a third party vendor which hosts all education courses for Minnesota recreational products.



Will stakeholders (boat dealers, marinas, resorts, lake associations, etc.) have input on the content or implementation of the course expansion? Yes, the bill language requires DNR to work with stakeholders on content and implementation practices. There is widespread recognition that various businesses in different locations have various needs which may be accommodated.



Is there standard safety included in the education course? Yes, the course is required to be approved the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). All states have boater education programs certified by NASBLA, the leading organization that works to develop public policy for recreational boating safety. NASBLA is comprised of recreational boating authorities of all 50 states and U.S. territories.



Will there be Minnesota specific information in the course? Yes, this is a key opportunity for stakeholders to help the DNR focus targeted messages to all Minnesota boaters. It is important for Minnesota messaging on aquatic invasive species (AIS), user conflict reduction, lake ecology, towed water sports and impacts of wakes.



How will this impact a business that rents boats? Under SF 4062, all rental companies – for watercraft or personal watercraft – must provide a summary of the statutes and regulations and instructions for safe operation to the renter. In addition, the renter must take a short boater safety exam in a form approved by the commissioner in order to leave the premises.

As A Minnesota Boater, How Do I Comply To The Expanded Education Course?

