

Shopping for a *Safer Boating Skills Course*?

The new National On-Water Standards (NOWS) are American National Standards that identify *best practices* course providers should follow when delivering skills-based instruction in recreational boat operation. Please consider the following when shopping for a beginner-level powerboat, human-propelled craft (such as kayaks, stand up paddleboards, canoes, rowboats, etc.), or sailboat safety skills course.

Does the course...

- Include the NOWS logo to the right on its website or course materials?** Indicates the course provider has self-assessed and declared the course aligns with NOWS.
- Include a Declaration of Conformity statement?** Describes the course's level of conformity with the relevant NOWS.
- Include general information about course delivery?** Provides information about instructor credentials, student/instructor ratio, approach to student feedback, boats, and safety equipment, safety protocols, etc.
- Teach skills consistent with those in the NOWS?** Indicates best practice standards for what skills entry-level boat operators should be able to perform.
- Take place primarily on the water using experiential learning?** Students spend most of their learning time in the boat/craft, which is on the water.
- Involve instructors working directly with students?** Instructors are with students on the water as they learn to operate the boat/craft.
- Combine what you need to DO (boat operation skills) with what you need KNOW (such as navigation rules) to operate a recreational boat?** Both are essential for having fun and safely operating a recreational boat/craft.

