



NOWS Program in a Nutshell

Following is a summary the NOWS Program and the outcomes it produced. Please note that the American National Standards and related support materials have been updated since the original program. For more information, [click here](#) and visit the NOWS Program Website.

Program Overview

- Goal: Produce American National Standards that help raise overall level of quality, availability, and consistency of On-Water, skills-based instruction in entry-level recreational boat operation across the nation.
- The largest collaboration initiative in the history of On-Water, skills-based instruction in entry-level recreational boat operation.
- An eight-year program (2011 - 2018) funded in part by US Coast Guard's Office of Boating Safety non-profit grant program.
- Lead by a team of 26 experts from all major recreational boating education providers.
- Involved:
 - Over 3,000 people, including 900 recreational boating instruction experts
 - 7 national validation surveys to confirm the content of the standards
 - 4 National Validation Programs using evidence-based research protocols to field-test standards
 - Standards content field-tested over 600 times at 27 venues involving over 160 certified instructors working with over 220 beginner/entry-level recreational boat operators
- Produced the most comprehensive set of field-tested resources available for On-Water, skills-based instruction in entry-level recreational powerboat, human-propelled craft, and sailboat operation.

Resources produced for On-Water Instruction in Safer Boating

The NOWS Program produced:

- **4 American National Standards.** Define the *standard of care* for *what* entry-level recreational boating skills to instruct and *how* best to instruct them.
 - Powerboating skills standard – 35 skills associated with safe entry-level powerboat operation
 - Human-propelled craft skills Standard – 27 skills associated with safe entry-level human-propelled craft operation (such as kayaks, stand up paddleboards, canoes, and rowboats)
 - Sailing skills Standard – 36 skills associated with safe entry-level sailboat operation (dinghies & keelboats)
 - Instructional Approach Standard – 14 characteristics and 42 assessment criteria for on-water entry-level skills-based instruction (applies to powerboating, human-propelled craft, and sailing instruction)
- **4 Comprehensive Technical Support Documents.** One for each American National Standard, these comprehensive *How to guides* help education providers understand and use NOWS American National Standards and instructional resources to design and deliver on-water instruction.
- **4 NOWS Self-Assessment Checklists.** Give education providers tools they can use to self-assessment courses to ensure alignment with national standards.
- **3 Performance Development and Assessment Rubrics.** Define over 1,100 safety-related behaviors for recreational boat operation education providers can use to develop and assess student performance.
 - 517 behaviors related to Powerboat operation
 - 247 behaviors related to Human-propelled craft operation
 - 368 behaviors related to Sailboat operation
- **3 Student Performance Assessment Checklists.** Field-tested tools instructors can use to evaluate student performance on the American National Standards. Included scripts assessors use to guide students through skills demonstrations and rubrics to calibrate instructor assessment of students throughout the process.
- **NOWS Self-Assessment and Declaration Logo.** An insignia (logo) course providers who complete a NOWS Self-Assessment and Declaration process can use to promote following NOWS American National Standards.
- **Registry of Recognized Standard Evaluators.** On-line database of people with unique knowledge and experience with the American National Standards available to support education provider's use of the standards.