

National On-Water Standards Program

Our ultimate goal (What are we trying to accomplish?)

Raise the level of enjoyment and safety boaters experience on our nations' waterways.

Mission Statement (Why we exist and how will we accomplish our purpose)

Our mission is to advance the overall level of quality, availability, and consistency of On-Water Skills-based instruction in recreational boat operation through the development, integration, and application of National On-Water Standards within the *National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation*.

Scope (What is included in this work?)

The US Coast Guard's National Boating Safety Advisory Council (NBSAC) developed a strategic plan in 2012 designed to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities that take place each year in recreational boating accidents. In the plan, NBSAC referenced a significant lack of on-water instruction in recreational boat operation and set one of the plan's objectives to fill that gap. The National On-Water Standards Program is the direct result of that strategic objective.

The work involved bringing together a diverse group of subject matter experts from across the SAIL, POWER, and HUMAN-propelled domains of the recreational boating community to develop and agree upon a consensus-based set of on-water, skill-based standards for entry-level recreational boat operation. These on-water standards were designed to be integrated with classroom and other standards and included within the comprehensive National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation.

The standards developed are for:

- **Entry-level** - designed for *beginner level* boat operators who are at the start of their learning to operate a recreational boat. They were not designed for intermediate or advanced level instruction, or instruction that develops skills for special or unique situations such as nighttime, offshore, bad weather or racing.
- **Skills-based** - identify specific skills (*behaviors, actions*) students can demonstrate or execute as a result of instruction. Execution includes understanding why skill is required, when to apply it, and the steps needed to apply it successfully.
- **On-water instruction** - instruction that takes place within the natural situation, context, or environment the boat operates. The standards are used to design courses that fill the historical gap associated with a lack of availability of on-water training and create synergy with on-land education (e.g., in classroom; on-line).

Purpose, Mission, and Scope

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National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation - USCG On-Water Standards Grants

- **For Recreational Boat Operation** - boats or watercraft used for recreational purposes that employ energy produced by SAIL (wind), POWER (engine), or HUMAN (manual). They are not designed for commercial applications in which no on-water courses or instruction in recreational boat operation are provided (e.g., boat rentals or guided tours).
- **Integrated** – included within one comprehensive, synergetic, consensus-driven *National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation* that compliments aligns and integrates previous and new standards work.

The National On-Water Standards were developed for individuals, groups, and organizations currently providing or planning to provide on-water instruction in recreational boating in the domains of POWER, SAIL and HUMAN-propelled boat operation. They are freely available for voluntary application in public or private settings for the design and delivery of instructional courses and programs in entry-level recreational boat operation that take place on the water, aimed at skills development. They are available to anyone from the general public who is interested in knowing what experts say are the fundamental skills beginner-level boat operators should be able to demonstrate that help them engage in safe and enjoyable recreational boat operation.