



**United States Power Squadrons®
District 27**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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By JB Bagby

RALEIGH, NC - The North Carolina General Assembly recently passed Session Law 2009-282 (Senate Bill 43) which was signed into law by Governor Purdue on July 10th. The act becomes effective on May 1, 2010, at which time the state of North Carolina will require that persons under 26 complete a boater safety education course prior to operating a boat in state waters. Only a few states have enacted mandatory boating education laws, including our neighbor to the north, Virginia. According to the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators as of January 21 “. . . 47 states/territories have some type of mandatory education. However, only eight states/territories have full mandatory boating education for all of their boating citizens.”

The NC law states, “No person shall operate a vessel with a motor of 10 horsepower or greater on the public waters of this [NC] State unless the operator has met the requirements for boating safety education.”

The law specifies that the operator is in compliance if he “. . . passes the boating safety course instituted by the Wildlife Resources Commission under G.S. 75A 16.1 or another boating safety course that is approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and accepted by the [NC] Wildlife Resources Commission;” and “Passes a proctored equivalency examination that tests the knowledge of information included in the curriculum of an approved course;”

Organizations that offer public safe boating courses that are NASBLA approved, administer a proctored examination, and who issue certificates of completion include units of the United States Power Squadrons, United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, and the Wildlife Resources Commission. To find a power squadron in your area that teaches an approved course, see <http://www.usps.org/cgi-bin-nat/eddept/cfind.cgi>

You will be currently excluded if you can provide proof that you are at least 26 years of age. However, previous versions of the House Bill had a sliding age group and time-scale that required all age groups to comply with the basic provisions of this law by 2016. So standby and

be prepared. There are several other ways that an operator could be considered in compliance with the current law. Among the criteria are requirements that one:

“Possesses a valid or expired license to operate a vessel issued to maritime personnel by the United States Coast Guard; Operates the vessel under onboard direct supervision of a person who is at least 18 years of age and who meets the requirements of this section; Demonstrates that he or she is not a resident, is temporarily using the waters of this State for a period not to exceed 90 days, and meets any applicable boating safety education requirements of the state or nation of residency; and Possesses a State approved nonrenewable temporary operator’s certificate to operate a vessel for 90 days that was issued with the certificate of number for the vessel, if the boat was new or was sold with a transfer of ownership.”

The act also includes the rules for operating a Personal Watercraft. The law states, “...no person under 16 years of age shall operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this State, and it is unlawful for the owner of a personal watercraft or a person who has temporary or permanent responsibility for a person under the age of 16 to knowingly allow that person to operate a personal watercraft.” There are only two exceptions to this part of the law. Persons at least 14 years of age accompanied on the water craft by one who is 18 and otherwise in compliance with the law, or the person possesses on his or her person while operating the watercraft, identification showing proof of age and a boating safety certification card.

To find a local power squadron that teaches approved safe boating courses, enter your ZIP Code at the following link: <http://www.usps.org/cgi-bin/nat/eddept/cfind.cgi>

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

http://www.ncwildlife.org/fs_index_05_boating.htm, On the page, under Registration, Instructor-Led Courses, Wildlife Resources Commission, select your county in the Scroll List and select "Request List".

What are Power Squadron public boating courses like?

http://www.usps.org/e_stuff/public_ed.htm

Where are NC and SC power squadrons?

District 27 has 20 squadrons in NC and northern SC. At the below link, select "Squadrons" on the left panel.

<http://www.usps.org/localusps/d27/>