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Frequently Asked Questions about Suffolk County's New Boater Education Law

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“Suffolk County Waters” means what?

If it flows in, through or by Suffolk County, it counts. And the certificate needs to be on the board, and apply to the skipper at the helm, if/as/when the boat is stopped by law enforcement.

What penalties ensue?

First offense? \$250.00. Second offense? \$500.00. After that, you are guilty of a misdemeanor and the fine is \$1,000.00 per offense. You may also find yourself a guest of the local constabulary, for a year...

Any exemptions?

Well, yes. Boating Safety instructors certified by New York State are exempt. Boating Safety Instructors of the U.S. Power Squadrons are exempt. All members of the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and U.S. Navy are exempt. Police officers, fire, and rescue personnel acting pursuant to assigned duties are exempt. Persons licensed to operate vessels by the U.S. Coast Guard, the Merchant Marine, or Canadian Coast Guard are also exempt.

Basic Course Requirements

The kind of course that the State is looking for (from an approved instructor, Bunky, not your uncle) has these basic characteristics:

- **Introduction to Boating** – Types of power boats; sailboats; outboards; paddle boats; houseboats; different uses of boats; various power boating engines.
- **Boating Law** – Boat registration; boating regulation; hull identification number; required boat safety equipment; operating safely and reporting accidents; federal boat law; state boating laws; personal watercraft requirements.
- **Boat Safety Equipment** – Personal flotation devices (life jackets); fire extinguishers; sound-producing devices; visual-distress signals; dock lines and rope; first aid kit; anchors and anchor

lines; other boating safety equipment.

- **Safe Boating** – Bow riding; alcohol and drug abuse; entering, loading, and trimming a boat; fueling portable and permanent tanks; steering with a tiller and a wheel; docking, undocking and mooring; knots; filing a float plan; checking equipment, fuel, weather and tides; using charts; choosing and using an anchor.
- **Navigation** – The U.S. Aids to Navigation system; types of buoys and beacons; U.S. Coast Guard navigation rules; avoiding collisions; sound signals; PWC “tunnel vision.”
- **Boating Problems** – Hypothermia; boating accidents and rescues; man overboard recovery; capsizing; running aground; river hazards; strainers: emergency radio calls; engine problems; equipment failures; carbon monoxide (CO); other boating and PWC problems.
- **Trailing, Storing and Protecting Your Boat** – Types of trailers; trailer brakes, lights, hitches, tires, and bearings; loading, balancing, and towing a trailer; towing (and backing) a trailer; boat launching and retrieving; boat storage.
- **Water-skiing and River Boating**–Water-skiing safety guidelines and hand signals; water-skiing with a PWC; navigating rivers; and other boating tips.

Where to find such classes?

Start here: http://www.d1south.org/pages/boating_safety.php, put in your zip code and click “submit.”

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Photo courtesy of the US Coast Guard

Click here to read: [Get a Jump on Next Summer! Take a Boating Class](#)

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at [DSO-HR](#) and we will help you “get in this thing...”