

**Division of Boating and Waterways**  
**August 2021**

**REPORT:** Boating Education and Outreach, Interpretation and Education Division

**PRESENTER:** Melissa Miranda, Boating Education and Outreach Manager

**SUBJECT:** California Boater Card

---

On Sept. 18, 2014, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. signed into law [Senate Bill 941](#), which prohibits the operation of motorized vessels in California without a valid operator card developed and issued by the Division of Boating and Waterways. Possession of the card requires operators to take a boating safety education course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and the Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW), pass the corresponding exam, and apply and pay for the California Boater Card (CBC). As of January 1, 2021, boaters 40 years of age and younger are required to carry a California Boater Card while operating any motorized vessel on state waterways.

The Division began accepting applications in November of 2017 and has been issuing cards since February 2018. To date, the Division has received over 140,000 applications and has issued over 111,000 cards. From August 2020-August 2021, 48,748 applications were processed and 38,413 California Boater Cards were issued. One of the reasons for the lower number of cards issued versus applications received is applicants are able to apply for the card prior to completing the education requirement. Once the education is verified, applicants are then emailed a temporary card while their official card is processed and mailed.

The first rulemaking package for the California Boater Card, which established the fee for the card, was approved on December 16, 2019 and is now part of the [California Code of Regulations](#). A second rulemaking package has been drafted and is in the beginning stages of the review process. This package will include how to apply for a California Boater Card, division standards for boating safety courses and exams, and explanation of exemptions.

A third annual program report was posted to the DBW website on April 1, 2021 as required by legislation.

Boater engagement for the CBC program is coordinated through the DBW media campaign and contract with Uncommon. Outreach includes digital advertising, social media, and print advertisements. CBC Marina posters are also strategically located at launch ramps and boating facilities throughout the state. Outreach will continue throughout the boating season with a focus on online advertising to accurately reach the target demographic.