



# News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
Dec. 1, 2017

**Contact:**  
[Adeline Yee](#)  
Information Officer  
(916) 651-8725

## **Division of Boating and Waterways Now Accepting California Boater Card Applications**

*SACRAMENTO, Calif.* – California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) is now accepting applications for the California Boater Card. The card verifies that its holder has successfully taken and passed an approved boater safety education course. Once issued, the California Boater Card remains valid for an operator's lifetime.

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 boater card developed and issued by DBW. The new mandatory boating safety education law will go into effect Jan. 1, 2018. The law will be phased in by age. The first group required to take the exam are boaters 20 years of age and younger. Each year after January 2018, a new age group will be added to those who are required to possess a valid card. By 2025, all persons who operate a motorized vessel on California waters will be required to have one. The cost of the lifetime card is \$10, and all the money goes toward developing and operating the program. By law, DBW cannot profit from the program.

“California and U.S. Coast Guard accident data show that states with some form of boating safety education have fewer accidents and fatalities than states without any boater education requirements,” said DBW Acting Deputy Director Ramona Fernandez. “This new law will help make boating safer for all families on California’s waterways.”

California is one of the last states to implement some sort of mandatory boating education requirement. Repeatedly, recreational boating accident data shows that many operators involved in accidents have not taken a boating safety course. For example, last year’s statistics showed that more than 800 California recreational vessels were involved in reported accidents, resulting in 50 deaths. Only one of the boat operators involved in the fatal accidents had taken an approved boating safety course.



Applying for the California Boater Card is easy. Boaters have an option to apply before or after taking an approved boating safety course. You can find the list of options at [www.CaliforniaBoaterCard.com](http://www.CaliforniaBoaterCard.com). A toll-free telephone support line is also available at (844) 421-8333.

There is good news for boaters who have already taken an approved course between Jan. 1, 2015 and Dec. 31, 2017 - Persons who have passed an approved examination during this timeframe will have until Dec. 31, 2018 to apply for their California Boater Card to receive the "grandfathering" exemption regardless of their age. Older courses will not be accepted since they may not include recent state or national changes to navigation law.

Boating safety course providers must be approved not only by the state of California, but by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. Courses may be classroom, home study or online.

It is important to note there are exemptions to the new law. For example, those operating a rental vessel or possess a current commercial fishing license do not need to obtain a California Boater Card. For more information on the new mandatory boating safety education law, including a current list of approved California boating courses and exemptions to the law, please visit [www.CaliforniaBoaterCard.com](http://www.CaliforniaBoaterCard.com).

###

Subscribe to California State Parks News via e-mail at [info@parks.ca.gov](mailto:info@parks.ca.gov) or via [RSS feed](#).

**Division of Boating and Waterways Mission**

*DBW is a division within California State Parks. The division provides safe and convenient public access to California's waterways and leadership in promoting safe, enjoyable and environmentally sound recreational boating.*

**California State Parks Mission**

*To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation.*

