

# MINNESOTA Boater Education: The Time Is Now

Key advocates in the boating and lakes and rivers communities have come together to seek implementation of a mandatory boater education program for motorized boat operators in Minnesota. **In the Land of 10,000 Lakes, we have more than 825,000 registered watercraft, and it is vital to keep users safe on the water and be good stewards of the water.**

Our waterways are Minnesota's most cherished natural resource. With record levels of recreation participation on those lakes and rivers and streams, it is more important than ever that we protect and maintain the safety, cleanliness and health of our aquatic ecosystems. Through a more formal boater education approach throughout Minnesota, we seek to unite the many stakeholder groups and create a strong civic partnership that will provide for recreational enjoyment, public safety, a strong lake-based economy and the long-term health of our waterways.

## Who does it impact?

**Minnesota Boat Operators:** Expands from current youth operator requirement to eventually include all boaters through a phased-in approach based on a born-on date.

**Out-of-State Boat Operators:** Boaters operating a privately owned watercraft.

**Rental Boat Operators:** Individuals without boater education completed from their home state.

## How do I become compliant?

**Minnesota Boat Operators:** Take and pass the online boater education safety course through the MN DNR platform, just like hunting safety or other recreational vehicles. In-person courses may become available for those interested.

**Out-of-State Boaters:** Meet the boater education requirements in your home state if operating in Minnesota waters less than 60 days. If over 60 days, follow Minnesota boater requirements.

**Rental Boat Operators:** Review summary of boater statutes and regulations provided by rental company. Take short, state approved, exam administered by rental company and initial the appropriate safety checklist.

## What will the education course look like?

**Coursework accessible online** for users, just as youth operator course is now.

**Stakeholders will work with MN DNR** to use the best available science and most recent safety guidelines to write and prioritize curriculum through a public engagement process.

**Relevant Minnesota boating specific information** will be available.

**Nationally recognized course** so Minnesota boaters can have reciprocity when boating in other states.

## Why now?

**Minnesota is one of a handful of states** that does not require boater education for boaters.

**According to U.S. Coast Guard data,** boater education courses dramatically improve a boater's chance for a safe and fun time on the water.

**An opportunity to deliver key messages** tailored for boaters using Minnesota's many lakes and rivers.

**Creates further awareness on the threat of aquatic invasive species** and puts additional responsibility on boaters to prevent the spread.

