

---

**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5145**

---

**State of Washington**

**59th Legislature**

**2005 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Swecker, Oke, Fraser, Johnson, Spanel, Rockefeller, Kohl-Welles, Delvin, Keiser, Haugen, Kastama, Kline, Hargrove, Regala, Franklin, Thibaudeau, Rasmussen and Shin)

READ FIRST TIME 02/22/05.

1 AN ACT Relating to a boating safety education program; amending RCW  
2 79A.60.010; adding new sections to chapter 79A.60 RCW; creating a new  
3 section; and prescribing penalties.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** It is the intent of the legislature to  
6 establish a boating safety education program that contributes to the  
7 reduction of accidents and increases the enjoyment of boating by all  
8 operators of all recreational vessels on the waters of this state.  
9 Based on the 2003 report to the legislature titled "Recreational  
10 Boating Safety in Washington, A Report on Methods to Achieve Safer  
11 Boating Practices," the legislature recognizes that boating accidents  
12 also occur in nonmotorized vessels in this state, but, at this time  
13 there is no national educational standard for nonmotorized vessels.  
14 Therefore, the commission is hereby authorized and directed to work  
15 with agencies and organizations representing nonmotorized vessel  
16 activities and individuals operating nonmotorized vessels to decrease  
17 accidents of operators in these vessels. It is also the intent of the  
18 legislature to encourage boating safety education programs that use  
19 volunteer and private sector efforts to enhance boating safety and

1 education for operators of nonmotorized vessels to work closely with  
2 the state parks and recreation commission in its efforts to reduce all  
3 boating accidents in this state.

4 **Sec. 2.** RCW 79A.60.010 and 2003 c 39 s 45 are each amended to read  
5 as follows:

6 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in  
7 this section apply throughout this chapter.

8 (1) "Accredited course" means a mandatory course of instruction on  
9 boating safety education that has been approved by the commission.

10 (2) "Boat wastes" includes, but is not limited to, sewage, garbage,  
11 marine debris, plastics, contaminated bilge water, cleaning solvents,  
12 paint scrapings, or discarded petroleum products associated with the  
13 use of vessels.

14 ((+2)) (3) "Boater" means any person on a vessel on waters of the  
15 state of Washington.

16 ((+3)) (4) "Boater education card" means a card issued to a person  
17 who has successfully completed a boating safety education test and has  
18 paid the registration fee for a serial number record to be maintained  
19 in the commission's data base.

20 (5) "Boating educator" means a person providing an accredited  
21 course.

22 (6) "Carrying passengers for hire" means carrying passengers in a  
23 vessel on waters of the state for valuable consideration, whether given  
24 directly or indirectly or received by the owner, agent, operator, or  
25 other person having an interest in the vessel. This shall not include  
26 trips where expenses for food, transportation, or incidentals are  
27 shared by participants on an even basis. Anyone receiving compensation  
28 for skills or money for amortization of equipment and carrying  
29 passengers shall be considered to be carrying passengers for hire on  
30 waters of the state.

31 ((+4)) (7) "Certificate of accomplishment" means a form of  
32 certificate approved by the commission and issued by a boating educator  
33 to a person who has successfully completed an accredited course.

34 (8) "Commission" means the state parks and recreation commission.

35 ((+5)) (9) "Darkness" means that period between sunset and  
36 sunrise.

1        ~~((6))~~ (10) "Environmentally sensitive area" means a restricted  
2 body of water where discharge of untreated sewage from boats is  
3 especially detrimental because of limited flushing, shallow water,  
4 commercial or recreational shellfish, swimming areas, diversity of  
5 species, the absence of other pollution sources, or other  
6 characteristics.

7        ~~((7))~~ (11) "Guide" means any individual, including but not  
8 limited to subcontractors and independent contractors, engaged for  
9 compensation or other consideration by a whitewater river outfitter for  
10 the purpose of operating vessels. A person licensed under RCW  
11 77.65.480 or 77.65.440 and acting as a fishing guide is not considered  
12 a guide for the purposes of this chapter.

13        ~~((8))~~ (12) "Marina" means a facility providing boat moorage  
14 space, fuel, or commercial services. Commercial services include but  
15 are not limited to overnight or live-aboard boating accommodations.

16        ~~((9))~~ (13) "Motor driven boats and vessels" means all boats and  
17 vessels which are self propelled.

18        ~~((10))~~ (14) "Motor vessel safety operating and equipment  
19 checklist" means a printed list of the safety requirements for a vessel  
20 with a motor installed or attached to the vessel being rented,  
21 chartered, or leased and meeting minimum requirements adopted by the  
22 commission in accordance with section 3 of this act.

23        (15) "Muffler" or "muffler system" means a sound suppression device  
24 or system, including an underwater exhaust system, designed and  
25 installed to abate the sound of exhaust gases emitted from an internal  
26 combustion engine and that prevents excessive or unusual noise.

27        ~~((11))~~ (16) "Operate" means to steer, direct, or otherwise have  
28 physical control of a vessel that is underway.

29        ~~((12))~~ (17) "Operator" means an individual who steers, directs,  
30 or otherwise has physical control of a vessel that is underway or  
31 exercises actual authority to control the person at the helm.

32        ~~((13))~~ (18) "Observer" means the individual riding in a vessel  
33 who is responsible for observing a water skier at all times.

34        ~~((14))~~ (19) "Owner" means a person who has a lawful right to  
35 possession of a vessel by purchase, exchange, gift, lease, inheritance,  
36 or legal action whether or not the vessel is subject to a security  
37 interest.

1        ~~((15))~~ (20) "Person" means any individual, sole proprietorship,  
2 partnership, corporation, nonprofit corporation or organization,  
3 limited liability company, firm, association, or other legal entity  
4 located within or outside this state.

5        ~~((16))~~ (21) "Personal flotation device" means a buoyancy device,  
6 life preserver, buoyant vest, ring buoy, or buoy cushion that is  
7 designed to float a person in the water and that is approved by the  
8 commission.

9        ~~((17))~~ (22) "Personal watercraft" means a vessel of less than  
10 sixteen feet that uses a motor powering a water jet pump, as its  
11 primary source of motive power and that is designed to be operated by  
12 a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on, or being towed behind the  
13 vessel, rather than in the conventional manner of sitting or standing  
14 inside the vessel.

15        ~~((18))~~ (23) "Polluted area" means a body of water used by boaters  
16 that is contaminated by boat wastes at unacceptable levels, based on  
17 applicable water quality and shellfish standards.

18        ~~((19))~~ (24) "Public entities" means all elected or appointed  
19 bodies, including tribal governments, responsible for collecting and  
20 spending public funds.

21        ~~((20))~~ (25) "Reckless" or "recklessly" means acting carelessly  
22 and heedlessly in a willful and wanton disregard of the rights, safety,  
23 or property of another.

24        ~~((21))~~ (26) "Rental motor vessel" means a motor vessel that is  
25 legally owned by a person that is registered as a rental and leasing  
26 agency for recreational motor vessels, and for which there is a written  
27 and signed rental, charter, or lease agreement between the owner, or  
28 owner's agent, of the vessel and the operator of the vessel.

29        (27) "Sewage pumpout or dump unit" means:

30        (a) A receiving chamber or tank designed to receive vessel sewage  
31 from a "porta-potty" or a portable container; and

32        (b) A stationary or portable mechanical device on land, a dock,  
33 pier, float, barge, vessel, or other location convenient to boaters,  
34 designed to remove sewage waste from holding tanks on vessels.

35        ~~((22))~~ (28) "Underway" means that a vessel is not at anchor, or  
36 made fast to the shore, or aground.

37        ~~((23))~~ (29) "Vessel" includes every description of watercraft on  
38 the water, other than a seaplane, used or capable of being used as a

1 means of transportation on the water. However, it does not include  
2 inner tubes, air mattresses, sailboards, and small rafts or flotation  
3 devices or toys customarily used by swimmers.

4 ~~((+24))~~ (30) "Water skiing" means the physical act of being towed  
5 behind a vessel on, but not limited to, any skis, aquaplane, kneeboard,  
6 tube, or any other similar device.

7 ~~((+25))~~ (31) "Waters of the state" means any waters within the  
8 territorial limits of Washington state.

9 ~~((+26))~~ (32) "Whitewater river outfitter" means any person who is  
10 advertising to carry or carries passengers for hire on any whitewater  
11 river of the state, but does not include any person whose only service  
12 on a given trip is providing instruction in canoeing or kayaking  
13 skills.

14 ~~((+27))~~ (33) "Whitewater rivers of the state" means those rivers  
15 and streams, or parts thereof, within the boundaries of the state as  
16 listed in RCW 79A.60.470 or as designated by the commission under RCW  
17 79A.60.495.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 79A.60 RCW  
19 to read as follows:

20 (1) The commission shall establish and implement by rule a program  
21 to provide required boating safety education. The boating safety  
22 education program shall include training on preventing the spread of  
23 aquatic invasive species. The program shall be phased in so that all  
24 boaters not exempted under section 4(3) of this act are required to  
25 obtain a boater education card by January 1, 2016. To obtain a boater  
26 education card, a boater shall provide a certificate of accomplishment  
27 issued by a boating educator for taking and passing an accredited  
28 boating safety education course, or pass an equivalency exam, or  
29 provide proof of completion of a course that meets the standard adopted  
30 by the commission.

31 (2) As part of the boating safety education program, the commission  
32 shall:

33 (a) Establish a program to be phased over eleven years starting  
34 July 1, 2005, with full implementation by January 1, 2016. The period  
35 July 1, 2005, through December 31, 2007, will be program development,  
36 boater notification of the new requirements for mandatory education,

1 and processing cards to be issued to individuals having taken an  
2 accredited course prior to January 1, 2008. The schedule for phase-in  
3 of the mandatory education requirement by age group is as follows:  
4 January 1, 2008 - All boat operators twenty years old and younger;  
5 January 1, 2009 - All boat operators twenty-five years old and younger;  
6 January 1, 2010 - All boat operators thirty years old and younger;  
7 January 1, 2011 - All boat operators thirty-five years old and younger;  
8 January 1, 2012 - All boat operators forty years old and younger;  
9 January 1, 2013 - All boat operators fifty years old and younger;  
10 January 1, 2014 - All boat operators sixty years old and younger;  
11 January 1, 2015 - All boat operators seventy years old and younger;  
12 January 1, 2016 - All boat operators;

13 (b) Establish a minimum standard of boating safety education  
14 accomplishment. The standard must be consistent with the applicable  
15 standard established by the national association of state boating law  
16 administrators;

17 (c) Adopt minimum standards for boating safety education course of  
18 instruction and examination that ensures compliance with the national  
19 association of state boating law administrators minimum standards;

20 (d) Approve and provide accreditation to boating safety education  
21 courses operated by volunteers, or commercial or nonprofit  
22 organizations, including, but not limited to, courses given by the  
23 United States coast guard auxiliary and the United States power  
24 squadrons;

25 (e) Develop an equivalency examination that may be taken as an  
26 alternative to the boating safety education course;

27 (f) Establish a fee of ten dollars for the boater education card to  
28 fund all commission activities related to the boating safety education  
29 program created by this act, including the initial costs of developing  
30 the program. Any surplus funds resulting from the fees received shall  
31 be distributed by the commission as grants to local marine law  
32 enforcement programs approved by the commission as provided in RCW  
33 88.02.040;

34 (g) Establish a fee for the replacement of the boater education  
35 card that covers the cost of replacement;

36 (h) Consider and evaluate public agency and commercial  
37 opportunities to assist in program administration with the intent to  
38 keep administrative costs to a minimum;

1 (i) Approve and provide accreditation to boating safety education  
2 courses offered online; and

3 (j) Provide a report to the legislature by January 1, 2008, on its  
4 progress of implementation of the mandatory education program.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 79A.60 RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7 (1) No person shall operate or permit the operation of motor driven  
8 boats and vessels with a mechanical power of fifteen horsepower or  
9 greater unless the person:

10 (a) Is at least twelve years of age, except that an operator of a  
11 personal watercraft shall comply with the age requirements under RCW  
12 79A.60.190; and

13 (b)(i) Has in his or her possession a boater education card, unless  
14 exempted under subsection (3) of this section; or

15 (ii) Is accompanied by and is under the direct supervision of a  
16 person sixteen years of age or older who is in possession of a boater  
17 education card, or who is not yet required to possess the card as  
18 provided in the program phase in section 3(2)(a) of this act.

19 (2) Any person who can demonstrate they have successfully  
20 completed, prior to the effective date of this act, a boating safety  
21 education course substantially equivalent to the standards adopted by  
22 the commission shall be eligible for a boater education card upon  
23 application to the commission and payment of the fee, without having to  
24 take a course or equivalency exam as provided in section 3(1) of this  
25 act. Successful completion of a boating safety education course could  
26 include an original or copy of an original certificate issued by the  
27 commission, the United States coast guard auxiliary, or the United  
28 States power squadrons, or official certification by these  
29 organizations that the individual successfully completed a course  
30 substantially equivalent to the standards adopted by the commission.

31 (3) The following persons are not required to carry a boater  
32 education card:

33 (a) The operator of a vessel engaged in a lawful commercial fishery  
34 operation as licensed by the department of fish and wildlife under  
35 Title 77 RCW. However, the person when operating a vessel for  
36 recreational purposes must carry a boater education card;

1 (b) Any person who possesses a valid marine operator license issued  
2 by the United States coast guard when operating a vessel authorized by  
3 such coast guard license. However, the person when operating a vessel  
4 for recreational purposes must carry a boater education card;

5 (c) Any person who is legally engaged in the operation of a vessel  
6 that is exempt from vessel registration requirements under chapter  
7 88.02 RCW and applicable rules and is used for purposes of law  
8 enforcement or official government work. However, the person when  
9 operating a vessel for recreational purposes must carry a boater  
10 education card;

11 (d) Any person at least twelve years old renting, chartering, or  
12 leasing a motor driven boat or vessel with an engine power of fifteen  
13 horsepower or greater who completes a commission-approved motor vessel  
14 safety operating and equipment checklist each time before operating the  
15 motor driven boat or vessel, except that an operator of a personal  
16 watercraft shall comply with the age requirements under RCW 79A.60.190;

17 (e) Any person who is not a resident of Washington state and who  
18 does not operate a motor driven boat or vessel with an engine power of  
19 fifteen horsepower or greater in waters of the state for more than  
20 sixty consecutive days;

21 (f) Any person who is not a resident of Washington state and who  
22 holds a current out-of-state or out-of-country certificate or card that  
23 is equivalent to the rules adopted by the commission;

24 (g) Any person who has purchased the boat or vessel within the last  
25 sixty days, and has a bill of sale in his or her possession to document  
26 the date of purchase;

27 (h) Any person, including those less than twelve years of age, who  
28 is involved in practicing for, or engaging in, a permitted racing event  
29 where a valid document has been issued by the appropriate local, state,  
30 or federal government agency for the event, and is available for  
31 inspection on-site during the racing event;

32 (i) Any person who is not yet required to have a boater education  
33 card under the phased schedule in section 3(2)(a) of this act; and

34 (j) Any person born before January 1, 1955.

35 (4) Except as provided in subsection (3)(a) through (i) of this  
36 section, a boater must carry a boater education card while operating a  
37 vessel and is required to present the boater education card to a law  
38 enforcement officer upon request.



1 (5) Failure to possess a boater education card required by this  
2 section is an infraction under chapter 7.84 RCW. The penalty shall be  
3 waived if the boater provides proof to the court within sixty days that  
4 he or she has received a boater education card.

5 (6) No person shall permit the rental, charter, or lease of a motor  
6 driven boat or vessel with an engine power of fifteen horsepower or  
7 greater to a person without first reviewing with that person, and all  
8 other persons who may be permitted by the person to operate the vessel,  
9 all the information contained in the motor vessel safety operating and  
10 equipment checklist.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 79A.60 RCW  
12 to read as follows:

13 The boating safety education certification account is created in  
14 the custody of the state treasurer. All receipts from fees collected  
15 for the issuance of a boater education card shall be deposited in the  
16 account and shall be used only for the administration of sections 3 and  
17 4 of this act. Only the state parks and recreation commission may  
18 authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to  
19 allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is  
20 not required for expenditures.

--- END ---