
SENATE BILL 5145

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

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 01/14/2005. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to a boater 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 boater 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 programs that use volunteer and
19 private sector efforts to enhance boating safety and education for

1 operators of nonmotorized vessels to work closely with the state parks
2 and recreation commission in its efforts to reduce all boating
3 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 boater education test and has paid the
18 registration fee for a serial number record to be maintained in the
19 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 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 education
22 program shall include training on preventing the spread of aquatic
23 invasive species. The program shall be phased in so that all boaters
24 not exempted under section 4 (2) and (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 course, or pass an equivalency exam, or provide proof of
29 completion of a course that meets the standard adopted by the
30 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 approved course prior to January 1, 2008. The schedule for phase-in of
3 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 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; and any surplus funds resulting from the fees received
31 shall be distributed by grants to local marine law enforcement programs
32 approved by the commission as provided in RCW 88.02.040;

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

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

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

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

5 (1) No person shall operate or permit the operation of motor driven
6 boats and vessels under mechanical power of ten horsepower or more
7 unless the person:

8 (a) Is at least sixteen years of age; and

9 (b)(i) Has in his or her possession a boater education card or a
10 certificate of accomplishment; or

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

16 (2) Upon payment of the ten dollar fee to the commission, the
17 following persons are eligible to receive a boater education card
18 without having to take a course or equivalency exam as provided in
19 section 3(1) of this act:

20 (a) The operator of a vessel engaged in a lawful commercial fishery
21 operation as licensed by the department of fish and wildlife under
22 Title 77 RCW is not required to carry a boater education card.
23 However, the person when operating a vessel for recreational purposes
24 must carry a boater education card.

25 (b) Any person who possesses a valid marine operator license issued
26 by the United States coast guard is not required to carry a boater
27 education card when operating a vessel authorized by such coast guard
28 license. However, the person when operating a vessel for recreational
29 purposes must carry a boater education card.

30 (c) Any person who is legally engaged in the operation of a vessel
31 that is exempt from vessel registration requirements under chapter
32 88.02 RCW and applicable rules and is used for purposes of law
33 enforcement or official government work. However, the person when
34 operating a vessel for recreational purposes must carry a boater
35 education card.

36 (d) Any person who can demonstrate they have successfully completed
37 a boating safety course substantially equivalent to the standards

1 adopted by the commission prior to the effective date of this act shall
2 be eligible for a boating safety card upon application to the
3 commission and payment of the fee. Successful completion of a boating
4 safety course could include an original or copy of an original
5 certificate issued by the commission, the United States coast guard
6 auxiliary, United States power squadrons, etc. or official
7 certification by these organizations that the individual successfully
8 completed a course substantially equivalent to the standards adopted by
9 the commission.

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

12 (a) Any person at least sixteen years old renting, chartering, or
13 leasing, or operating a motor driven boat or vessel with an engine ten
14 horsepower or greater who completes a commission-approved motor vessel
15 operation and safety equipment checklist each time before operating the
16 motor driven boat or vessel;

17 (b) Any person who is not a resident of Washington state and who
18 does not operate a motor driven boat or vessel greater than ten
19 horsepower in waters of the state for more than sixty consecutive days;

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

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

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

31 (f) Any person who is not yet required to have a boater education
32 card or certificate of accomplishment under the phased schedule
33 developed by the commission under section 3 of this act.

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

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

6 (6) No person shall permit the rental, charter, or lease of a
7 vessel with an engine of ten horsepower or greater to a person without
8 first reviewing with that person, and all other persons who may be
9 permitted by the person to operate the vessel, all the information
10 contained in the motor vessel safety operating and 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
14 within the state treasury. All receipts from fees collected for the
15 issuance of a boater safety education card shall be deposited in the
16 boating safety education certification account and shall be
17 appropriated only to the state parks and recreation commission to be
18 used only for the administration of sections 3 and 4 of this act. The
19 account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but
20 an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

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