

New Missouri Boating Law

A new law passed in Missouri will require boaters born after January 1, 1984, to successfully complete a boater education course prior to operating a vessel on Missouri lakes. The new law affects Missouri residents beginning January 2005, and out-of-state boaters visiting Missouri will have until January 2006 to comply with the new requirement. Boat operators successfully completing the Missouri course will be required to carry a boater certification card with them while they are operating a vessel.

The new law does not apply to the following:

- A person holding a valid master's, mate's, or operator's license issued by the United States Coast Guard.
- A person who operates a vessel only on a private lake or pond that is not classified as waters of the state.
- A person who is participating in an event or regatta approved by the Missouri State Water Patrol.
- A person who is a nonresident who has proof of a valid boating certificate or license issued by another state if the boating course is approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA).
- A person who is currently serving in any branch of the United States Armed Forces, Reserves, or Missouri National Guard, or any spouse of a person currently in such service.
- A person who has successfully completed a boating safety education course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA).

There are several opportunities for boaters to take a boater education course. The Missouri State Water Patrol provides courses throughout the state and boaters can locate and sign up for an approved course on the Water Patrol's Web site at www.mswp.dps.mo.gov. Also available on the Missouri State Water Patrol's web site are links to an internet course and instructions for ordering a home study course. For out-of-state boaters wanting to rent a vessel, boat rental companies will provide a temporary boating certification examination. Out-of-state boaters passing the examination will be issued a one-time temporary permit that will allow them to operate a rental vessel for up to thirty days.

Watch the Missouri State Water Patrol homepage at www.mswp.dps.mo.gov for updates on Boating Safety Courses in your area. For more information, call the Missouri State Water Patrol at 573-751-3333.