

Division of Boating and Waterways

August 2020

REPORT: Boating Education and Outreach, Interpretation and Education Division

PRESENTER: Melissa Miranda, Boating Education and Outreach Unit Manager

SUBJECT: Boating Safety Course

Summary

The Division of Boating and Waterways offers a free, NASBLA approved home study course called the California Course for Safe Boating. This is an introductory safe boating course and is one of 13 approved courses that meet the education requirement for the California Boater Card program. The Boating Education and Outreach Unit within the Interpretation and Education Division oversees the home study course program.

Each home study course includes the written course and an exam packet with Scantron to record exam responses. To complete the course, the exam responses must be recorded on the enclosed Scantron and mailed to DBW for scoring. Scantrons are processed and scored by the Boating Education and Outreach Unit. A certificate of completion and congratulatory letter is mailed to each successful test taker. The certificate can then be used as verification of course completion for the California Boater Card. Unsuccessful testers are also notified through the mail. The course can also be viewed as an e-publication online and an exam packet can be ordered through DBW.

From August 2019 to August 2020, about 13,500 courses have been distributed at outreach events, through DBW's Online Ordering site, or through safe boating partners such as the Coast Guard Auxiliary and US Power Squadrons. Aquatic centers also use the course in classrooms or as a pre-requisite to college boating courses. Additionally, about 1,500 exam packets have been requested via mail. From August 2019 to August 2020, 4,294 DBW home study course exams were received and scored with a pass rate of 96.2%.

An option for taking the exam online is currently in the final stages of testing. The online exam was approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and was built by the State Parks IT team. The implementation of this new online option will help streamline and modernize the boating safety course.