

Division of Boating and Waterways
August 2020

REPORT: Boating Education and Outreach, Interpretation and Education Division

PRESENTER: Melissa Miranda, Boating Education and Outreach Manager

SUBJECT: California Boater Card

On Sept. 18, 2014, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. signed into law [Senate Bill 941](#), which prohibits the operation of motorized vessels in California without a valid operator card developed and issued by the Division of Boating and Waterways. Possession of the card requires operators to take a boating safety education course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and the Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW), pass the corresponding exam, and apply and pay for the California Boater Card (CBC).

The Division began accepting applications in November of 2017 and has been issuing cards since February 2018. To date, the Division has received over 80,000 applications and has issued over 62,000 cards. From August 2019-August 2020, 43,450 applications were processed and 33,561 California Boater Cards were issued. One of the reasons for the lower number of cards issued versus applications received is applicants are able to apply for the card prior to completing the education requirement. Once the education is verified, applicants are then emailed a temporary card while their official card is processed and mailed.

DBW received a loan of \$4 million from the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund to develop and establish the program. The Fiscal year 19/20 budget allotted \$1 million to the program.

The first rulemaking package for the California Boater Card, which established the fee for the card, was approved on December 16, 2019 and is now part of the [California Code of Regulations](#).

A second annual program report was posted to the DBW website on April 1, 2020 as required by legislation.

Digital advertising began in May 2020 for the California Boater Card program and the number of applications for cards increased immediately following the initial push. Social media, digital advertisements and print advertisements will continue throughout the boating season. CBC Marina posters are strategically located at launch ramps and boating facilities throughout the state. There was also a CBC insert included in all 750,000 vessel registration notices sent out by the Department of Motor Vehicles in 2019.