



Standard Evaluator Recognition Program
National On-Water Skills Standards
National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation - USCG
On-Water Skills Standards Grant III (SAIL, POWER, HUMAN)
August, 2015



The National On-Water Skills Standards: Standard Evaluator Recognition Program has been designed to support the recreational boating community of curriculum developers and instructors in their implementation of the National On-Water Skills Standards within their training programs. The Standards' application throughout the country will ensure that boaters experience a higher level of safety and enjoyment on our nation's waterways. The Standard Evaluator Recognition Program has been developed as part of the US Coast Guard's priority strategy to finish, organize and, in particular, to ensure USE of the Standards in the field, by making available a pool of qualified subject matter experts who can directly influence application of the National On-Water Skills Standards in programs around the country.

Background

- The US Coast Guard adopted a Strategic plan for the National Recreational Boating Safety program in 2012. Objective 3 of the plan called for an **increase in the number of boaters who successfully obtain the skills taught in an advanced and/or on-water, skills-based education course**. The National On-Water Skills Standards development initiative began in 2012 as a direct result of that plan. Its purpose is to increase the quality and availability of on-the-water skills based training by developing and making freely available to boating instructors and course designers National Standards for skills-based outcomes that entry-level boat operators should be able to demonstrate upon completion of on-the-water instruction in POWER, SAIL and HUMAN-propelled recreational boat operation.
- As part of the initiative, National Validation Programs have been conducted to field-test the standards, in order to gather information about the effectiveness of the skills-based standards at differentiating safe from unsafe recreational boat operation at the entry-level. Each program involved gathering information during a number of different evaluation sessions taking place at a variety of venues across the country.
- The National Validation Programs engage boating instructors from around the country to act as subject matter experts in the detailed evaluation of the effectiveness with which the standards described the skills associated with safe entry-level boat operation. To ensure consistent evaluation across different sessions, each instructor is formally trained as a Standard Evaluator as part of his or her participation in an evaluation session.
- As a result of their involvement in a National Validation Program, the Standard Evaluators have a detailed understanding of and experience with applying the National On-Water Skills Standards in the field. These subject matter experts are therefore in a unique position to provide support to course designers in their work to operationalize the National On-Water Skills Standards within their educational programs.

Program Description

- Individuals are recognized as **National On-Water Skills Standard Evaluators** after their completion of a 13-hour **training program**, designed to prepare them with the knowledge and skills to effectively understand and apply the National On-Water Skills Standard in the field. As part of the training program, participants:
 - Engage in 1 hour of preparation reading. In preparation for face-to-face training, Standard Evaluators read general information about the purpose and outcome of the National On-Water Standards initiative and standard validation session, the Coast Guard's vision of a National System of Standards, an overview of the 4-version process being used to develop the standards, an overview of the National Validation Program design, and information about their role and responsibilities as a Standard Evaluator. This information also includes the National On-Water Skills Standards and rubrics under development, along with the detailed research protocol being used to standardize the data collection process across different testing sessions.





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- Participate in a 4-hour Standard Evaluator Orientation & Training Session. This training session is delivered as part of the Standard Evaluation sessions taking place at a particular venue. The first two hours of the training involve classroom work to review project goals and objectives, examine the content of the Standard and Rubrics Checklist, and confirm the Evaluator's role and responsibilities during the session. The second two hours involve a practicum in which Standard Evaluators go out on the boats that will be used during the field-testing sessions, to provide them opportunities to practice using the Checklist in conjunction with the equipment that will be used to validate the Standard. The session concludes with the Standard Evaluators calibrating their approaches to using the Checklists to ensure a productive understanding of the Standard's content, the rubrics, and the process for making observations on the Standard.
- Engage in a minimum of 8 hours evaluating the application of the Standard in the field. Standard Evaluators engage in multiple Standard Evaluation sessions over two days to understand the Standard's effectiveness at differentiating safe from unsafe entry-level recreational boat operation. This process involves detailed observations of beginner-level boat operators engaging in the skills identified within the Standard, in order to understand the content of the Standard and its accuracy at describing entry-level skills-based recreational boat operation. In between applications of the Standard, Standard Evaluators deepen their learning about the Standard by comparing insights resulting from their observations.

Recognition

Individuals who complete the above 13-hour skills training program, and are also certified recreational boating instructors, receive a Certificate of Completion and are nationally recognized by the National On-Water Skills Standards Program as domain specific (SAIL, POWER, HUMAN) Standard Evaluators. Their names are provided to the US Coast Guard and included within a national registry database of National On-Water Skills Standard Evaluators.

As recognized Standard Evaluators, these individuals are ready, willing and able to provide support to on-water instruction course designers who desire coaching on the use of the National On-Water Skills Standards within their programs. More specifically, as a result of participating in this program, Standard Evaluators can use their unique knowledge and experience* to:

- Review existing entry-level recreational boating instructional program content in parallel to observing course participant demonstration of the On-Water Skills contained within the relevant Standard;
- Identify potential gaps and make recommendations to develop the full profile of skills contained in the On-Water Skills Standard;
- Advise on the level of course participant knowledge acquired through instruction by observing demonstration of a recreational boating skills; and
- Advise on the level of knowledge and skills integration within the course, through direct observation of a course participant operating a boat underway.

Recognition as a National On-Water Skills Standard Evaluator is valid for a five-year period from the completion of the Standard Evaluator training program. Renewal as a Standard Evaluator is done by application and is based on continued experience with Standards education. Renewal may be additionally required when substantial modifications are made to the National On-Water Skills Standards.

*Additional training is necessary to prepare National On-Water Skills Standard Evaluators to design curriculum for skills or knowledge standards, or evaluate the paper curriculum of a classroom/on-line knowledge program.





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Responsibilities

To be included within the National Registry of Recognized Standard Evaluators, you would be responsible to:

- *Maintain up-to-date familiarity and understanding of the National On-Water Skills Standard for which you are a Recognized Standard Evaluator.* The On-Water Standards were under development when you completed your training program. As they continue to be developed, you would be responsible to stay up-to-date on the current status and version of the On-Water Skills Standard over time.
- *Maintain up-to-date recreational boating instructor certification.* You would be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date instructor certification credential from a nationally recognized recreational boating education organization.
- *Remain focused on coaching, advising and evaluating On-Water skills-focus instructional programming.* Your unique knowledge and experience with the On-Water Skills Standard has prepared you to provide coaching and evaluation support to curriculum and course designers rather than to function in the role of a course designer or curriculum developer. Remain in the role of coach, advisor and evaluator unless you had other credentials associated with course and curriculum design.
- *Be available to travel.* You would be responsible to travel to different venues when requested to engage in the role of Standard Evaluator. You would manage the number and length of trips.
- *Follow general principles associated with the On-Water Standards initiative.* The On-Water Skills Standards were developed according to a fundamental belief in the importance of being on the water during learning and the evaluation of learning. Therefore, when engaging in Standard Evaluator activities, you would be responsible to:
 - *Adhere to the strategy of watching behavior on the water and backtracking to paper.* The approach to On-Water Standard Evaluation requires direct observation of the outcome performance of skills demonstrated by students who complete the instruction. The observation of the outcome informs feedback on the On-water instruction.
 - *Be a model for use of a life jacket.* During any work on or near the water, the Standard Evaluator wears a life jacket.
 - *Focus on skills demonstration as a means of understanding knowledge acquisition.* Although the primary focus is on the instruction of skills (observable behavior) associated with recreational boat operation, acquisition of recreational boating knowledge can also be observed during actual performance on the water operating a boat underway.
- *Follow administrative responsibilities associated with the role of a Standard Evaluator.* You would need to:
 - Keep biographical information on the database up to date. The bio will include such information as level(s) of instructor certification (e.g., instructor, evaluator, master trainer, etc.), and experience with developing standards and designing courses.
 - Keep the Grant Management Team informed of changes to credentials associated with instruction in recreational boat operation (e.g., new certifications, certification expiration, etc.).
 - Understand that renewal as a Standard Evaluator is done by application and is based on continued experience with Standards education. Renewal may be additionally required when substantial modifications are made to the National On-Water Skills Standards.
- *Manage your own organizational infrastructure needed to engage in the business of providing services.* You would be responsible to establish and maintain the administrative, financial, marketing, and other organizational aspects associated with providing services as a Recognized Standard Evaluator.

