



Purpose, Mission and Scope

National On-Water Standards Program

National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation -
USCG On-Water Standards Grants

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Our Purpose (why do we exist?)

Raising the level of enjoyment and safety boaters experience on our nations' waterways

Mission Statement (how will we accomplish our purpose?)

The mission of the On-Water Standards initiative is to advance the overall level of quality, availability and consistency of On-Water Skills-based instruction in recreational boat operation through the development, integration and application of National On-Water Standards within the *National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation*.

Mission Scope (what is included in this work?)

The US Coast Guard's National Boating Safety Advisory Council (NBSAC) developed a strategic plan in 2012 designed to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities that take place each year in recreational boating accidents. In the plan, NBSAC referenced a significant lack of On-Water instruction in recreational boat operation and set one of the plan's objectives to fill that gap. The On-Water Standards initiative is the direct result of that strategic objective.

The work involves bringing together a diverse group of subject matter experts from across the SAIL, POWER and HUMAN-propelled domains of the recreational boating community to develop and agree upon a consensus-based set of On-Water, skill-based standards for entry-level recreational boat operation. These On-Water standards will also be integrated with Classroom and other standards and included within the comprehensive National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation.

The Standards under development will be:

- **Entry-level** - designed for *beginner level* boat operators who are at the start of their learning to operate a recreational boat. They are not designed for intermediate or advanced level instruction, or instruction that develops skills for special or unique situations such as nighttime, offshore, bad weather or racing.
- **Skills-based** - identify specific skills (*behaviors, actions*) students can demonstrate or execute as a result of instruction. Execution includes understanding why skill is required, when to apply it, and the steps needed to apply it successfully.
- **On-Water** - instruction that takes place within the natural situation, context or environment the boat operates. The standards will be used to design courses that fill the gap associated with the current lack of availability of On-Water training, and create synergy with on-land education (e.g., in classroom; on-line).

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- **For Recreational Boat Operation** - boats or watercraft used for recreational purposes that employ energy produced by SAIL (wind), POWER (engine), or HUMAN (manual). They are not designed for commercial applications in which no On-Water courses or instruction in recreational boat operation are provided (e.g., boat rentals or guided tours).
- **Integrated** – included within one comprehensive, synergetic, consensus-driven *National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation* that compliments aligns and integrates previous and new standards work.

The National On-Water Standards are being developed for individuals, groups and organizations currently providing, or planning to provide On-Water instruction in recreational boat operation in the domains of POWER, SAIL and HUMAN-propelled boat operation. They will be made freely available for voluntary application in public or private settings for the design and delivery of instructional courses and workshops in entry-level recreational boat operation. They will also be available to anyone from the general public who is interested in knowing what the experts say are the fundamental skills beginner-level boat operators should be able to demonstrate that help them engage in safe and enjoyable recreational boat operation.