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Boaters reminded of state-mandated safety classes

The boating season is not far away, and boaters are reminded that NJ State

Law requires boaters to take an approved boating safety course. Whereas most boaters have taken a course and obtained their NJ Marine Police certificates, many are still not aware of the law.

According to District Lt. Don Baker of the United States Power Squadrons, who is the New Jersey State Marine Police liaison, he receives several calls every week from boaters who have misinformation regarding the requirements. Many boaters have a “boating” endorsement on their drivers license, and when they go to the Motor Vehicle Bureau to renew their license, they are told that the endorsement now requires them to produce their NJ Marine Police Boating Safety Certificate proving that they completed an approved boating safety course. This is when they learn that they will not be able to operate a power boat in New Jersey until they take a boating safety course. Others are learning about the law from fellow boaters.

The winter months are the time to take a course, and the Power Squadrons in New Jersey, Staten Island, the Bronx and Manhattan are offering approved courses that can be located on the Internet at <http://www.usps.org/cgi-bin/fclass.cgi?4> where registration can be done online. Some courses are starting in January and early February.

Most states now require boaters to take a safety course and Coast Guard statistics indicate that such laws have dramatically reduced boating fatalities. In 1974 there were approximately 6 million registered pleasure boats in the United States and 1754 fatalities. In 2008, there were now approximately 13 million registered boats, and fatalities had dropped to 701.

The United States Power Squadrons is a 501c3 non profit educational organization and the largest in the world with approximately 40,000 members who teach boating courses from the basic safety course through celestial navigation.

The law and New Jersey State Marine Police Safety Booklet can be viewed online at <http://www.state.nj.us/lps/njsp/maritime/index.html>

Read more: <http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2011/01/10/1809956/some-boaters-reminded-of-state.html#ixzz1AwRJThhT>