**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE
BOATING LAW ADMINISTRATORS**

NASBLA Policy

Basic Boating Education Course Approval

FINAL APPROVED
ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 13, 2016
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Section 8: Basic State- or Territory-Specific Boating Knowledge and Continuing Education

Scope: *This is the minimum state-, territory-, or district-specific content to be considered by a course provider working individually with a state to meet state conformity assessment requirements of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. A state may also require additional content.*

8.0 Basic State or Territory Continuing Education and Specific Boating Knowledge

8.1. Continuing Education

8.1.1. The course will outline the need for additional boating safety education and staying informed of changes in boating safety requirements.

8.2. State- or Territory- Specific Boating Knowledge
The course will contain (as part of the text or a separate handout) state- or territory- specific information in regard to boating laws/regulations and local boating conditions. The course will include the following topics as applicable:

8.2.1. Boat Registration and Titling Requirements

8.2.1.1. The course will describe:

8.2.1.1.1. that all motorized boats and many other boats are required to be registered according to state or territory requirements that describe:

8.2.1.1.1.1. number of years registration decals are valid

8.2.1.1.1.2. expiration date of registration, and

8.2.1.1.1.3. decal placement.

8.2.1.1.2. requirements for hull identification number,

8.2.1.1.3. the required certificate of number (registration documentation), and external display of numbers,

8.2.1.1.4. the requirements for federally documented vessels,

8.2.1.1.5. reciprocity regulations, and

8.2.1.1.6. registration requirements in the boat's state or territory of principal use.

8.2.2. Boating Equipment

8.2.2.1. The course will describe laws for required wearing of PFDs/life jackets for :

8.2.2.1.1. children,

8.2.2.1.2. certain types of boats and seasons, and

8.2.2.1.3. special boating activities such as personal watercraft, skiers and others being

towed.

8.2.2.2. The course will describe additional state-required equipment such as:

8.2.2.2.1. anchor,

8.2.2.2.2. engine cut-off lanyard,

8.2.2.2.3. bailing devices, and

8.2.2.2.4. signaling and emergency communication devices.

8.2.3. Marine Environment and Noise

8.2.3.1. The course will describe the environmental laws and regulations concerning:

8.2.3.1.1. littering (e.g., garbage and plastic),

8.2.3.1.2. waste discharge,

8.2.3.1.3. no discharge zones,

8.2.3.1.4. waste management plans,

8.2.3.1.5. display of information placards (where applicable), and

8.2.3.1.6. aquatic invasive species.

8.2.3.2. The course will describe:

8.2.3.2.1. the proper procedure for disposal of human waste from recreational boats and

8.2.3.2.2. how to identify no discharge zones and pumpout station locations.

8.2.3.3. The course will describe:

8.2.3.3.1. procedures for the prevention of spills and improper disposal of toxic substances such as fuels, oils, and cleaning products into the marine environment and

8.2.3.3.2. the associated fines for non-compliance.

8.2.3.4. The course will describe laws on mufflers and noise levels.

8.2.4. Age and Education Requirements

8.2.4.1. The course will describe special requirements for:

8.2.4.1.1. mandatory education,

8.2.4.1.2. licensing,

8.2.4.1.3. rental operation, and

8.2.4.1.4. proficiency test certifications.

8.2.4.2. The course will describe requirements for children such as:

8.2.4.2.1. age and horsepower restrictions and

8.2.4.2.2. adult supervision requirements.

8.2.5. Safe Boat Operation

8.2.5.1. The course will describe laws further defining careless, reckless, unsafe, and negligent operations such as:

8.2.5.1.1. becoming airborne, platform-dragging, and

8.2.5.1.2. towed sports considerations such as operating at less than specified distances behind a water skier.

8.2.5.2. The course will describe boat speed limits and operation in zoned and restricted areas.

8.2.5.3. The course will describe laws on operating under the influence of drugs and alcohol such as:

8.2.5.3.1. implied consent and

8.2.5.3.2. BAC levels.

8.2.6. Law Enforcement and Accident Reporting

8.2.6.1. The course will describe law enforcement officer authority.

8.2.6.2. The course will describe boat accident reporting requirements including:

8.2.6.2.1. how, when, and where to file the report.

8.2.6.3. The course will describe a state approved boating accident report form or U.S. Coast Guard form.

8.2.7. Other State- or Territory- Laws and Safety Information

8.2.7.1. The course will describe other laws or regulations as required by the state or territory approving authority.

See www.nasbla.org for a description of the process for review of Section 8 and its relationship to NASBLA approval.

Section 9 - Course Format and Assessment Requirements

Section 9.1 – Boat Operator Knowledge Course Designs

Section 9.1.1. - All courses submitted for NASBLA conformity assessment must be in a format that can be easily reviewed by NASBLA. All distance learning and home-study programs must be presented to students in paragraph format. Instructor-led courses may be in either paragraph format or instructor outlines.

Section 9.1.2. - Professionalism must be maintained throughout the course in regards to grammar, accuracy of general boating language and terminology, and spelling. The Associated Press Stylebook (latest

version) shall serve as the recognized editorial resource unless a course provider, as part of the course conformity assessment process, presents another nationally recognized source deemed acceptable by NASBLA, and to the individual states in which the provider is seeking authorized use.

Section 9.2 – Boat Operator Knowledge Assessments

In order to receive NASBLA approval, all assessments, whether administered as part of a course of study or as independent exams, must be submitted for review.

Section 9.2.1 – The assessment must be well designed and comprehensive in covering the designated national boating education standard Well-designed comprehensive assessments evaluate boat operator knowledge equally well as an independent exam or as an exam at the end of a course.

Section 9.2.2 – Each assessment submitted for review must be accompanied with a plan that explains how the test administrator will seek to maintain assessment integrity. The plan must address security issues commensurate with the purpose of the exam and perceived opportunity to commit assessment fraud. (See NASBLA application Appendix C for additional details on the examination plan)

Section 9.2.3 – If a classroom or home study course presents more than one assessment to the same student, the subsequent assessments will be constructed such that at least 50 percent of the questions or situations differ from the previous assessment or will use a different NASBLA Test Form (latest available versions). A question or situation will be considered to be the same as another if it has substantially the same stem, the same set of distractors as the question it is replacing, or it assesses essentially the same situational awareness as previously presented.

Section 9.2.4 – A critical step in the NASBLA conformity assessment process is the inclusion and review of a well-designed and comprehensive assessment using professional assessment procedures. The NASBLA assessment standards for written items are as follows:

ASSESSMENT STANDARD 1

Each item in the assessment will be a four-option multiple-choice question composed of a premise (or stem); a key (or correct alternative); and three distractors (or incorrect alternatives).
   A. A premise that states an opinion of an author or source, rather than reflecting a fact or principle, should use the statement, "According to. . . ."
   B. The alternatives must be in a logical order if one exists. Alternatives beginning with the same words should follow each other.
   C. A test item must be a grammatical and logical completion of the premise or a concise reply to the question asked.
   D. Avoid overlapping alternatives.
   E. Alternatives must not combine options such as 'all of the above', 'none of the above', 'a and b', or '(1) or (2).'
   F. When possible, avoid developing questions using negative words, i.e.: no, not, never. Also, NEVER use double negatives.
   G. Avoid repeating information in all the alternatives that can be included in the premise.

H. Alternatives should not be distinguishable from the correct answer based on length.
I. Each test item must be linked to a NASBLA Standard.
J. The test should include clearly written directions to the candidates on how to respond to the questions.
K. The correct answer for the test items should be equally distributed (or as nearly so as possible) among each of the options, i.e. 25% of the answers should be option a, 25% should be option b, 25% should be option c, and 25% should be option d.
L. There should be no more than three items in a row with the same option as the correct answer.

ASSESSMENT STANDARD 2

Each test item must be documented in at least one reference from the NASBLA Recognized Reference. References may be submitted for approval to the Education Committee.

NASBLA Recognized Reference List for Test Items

1. Navigation Rules
2. 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 46 CFR, 50 CFR
3. Federal Requirements for Recreational Vessels
4. The Refuse Act, 1899, The Act of Prevent Pollution from Ships (Marpol Annex V)
5. ASTM Standard F1739-96 "Standard Guide for Performance of a Water Rescuer"
6. U.S. Coast Guard Boating Accident Statistics/Reports
7. Information contained on U.S. Coast Guard websites (e.g., "Influence of Drugs & Alcohol on Boat Operation")
8. American Red Cross
9. State statutes and administrative rules.
10. Other Courses/Texts
    a. America's Boating Course
    b. Boating Fundamentals – A Manual for Safe Boating
    c. Chapman Piloting: Seamanship and Boat Handling (63rd and future editions)
    d. Personal Watercraft Rider's Handbook
    e. Essentials of Sea Survival
    f. Annapolis Book of Seamanship

ASSESSMENT STANDARD 3

The aggregate of assessments must consist of at least 50 questions. Test weights for assessments based on *ANSI/NASBLA 103-2016: Basic Boating Knowledge – Power* or as described in Assessment Standard 4 shall be developed in accordance with the following assessment plan:

Standard ANSI/NASBLA 103-2016	Test Weight
1.0 The Boat	
Section 1.1 - Boat Capacities	2%
Section 1.2 Personal Watercraft (PWC)	0%

Standard ANSI/NASBLA 103-2016	Test Weight
2.0 Boating Equipment	
Section 2.1 - Personal Flotation Device (Wearable Life Jackets and Throwable Devices) Types and Carriage	2%
Section 2.2 – Personal Flotation Device Availability and Sizing	2%
Section 2.3 – Wearing Life Jackets	4%
Section 2.4 - Personal Flotation Device Serviceability	2%
Section 2.5 – Fire Extinguisher Equipment	2%
Section 2.6 – Back-Fire Flame Control Device	0
Section 2.7 – Ventilation Systems	0
Section 2.8 – Navigation Light Equipment	2%
Section 2.9 - Sound Signaling Equipment	0
Section 2.10 – Visual Distress Signal Equipment	2%
3.0 Trip Planning and Preparation	
Section 3.1 - Checking Local Weather and Water Conditions	2%
Section 3.2 - Checking Local Information	2%
Section 3.3 - Filing a Float Plan	2%
Section 3.4 - Boat Preventative Maintenance	2%
Section 3.5 – Launching and Retrieving from a Trailer	2%
Section 3.6 - Fueling Procedures	2%
Section 3.7 - Pre-Departure Checklist and Passenger Communication	2%
4.0 Safe Boat Operation	
Section 4.1 - Operator Responsibilities	8%
Section 4.2 - Influence of Drugs and Alcohol on Boat Operation	6%
Section 4.3 – Navigation Rules (see below)	
- Rule of Responsibility – Rules 2(a) and 2(b)	2%
- Proper Lookout – Rule 5	4%
- Safe Speed – Rule 6(a)	4%
- Collision Avoidance Rules	4%
- Inland Rules	0%
- Restricted Visibility - Rules 19(a) – (e)	2%
Disclaimer	0%
Section 4.4 - Aids to Navigation	4%
Section 4.5 - Docking and Mooring	2%
Section 4.6 – Anchoring	2%
Section 4.7 – Carbon Monoxide	2%
Section 4.8 – Propeller Intervention and Awareness	2%

Standard ANSI/NASBLA 103-2016	Test Weight
5.0 Emergency Preparedness	
Section 5.1 - Rendering Assistance	2%
Section 5.2 – Capsizing/Falls Overboard	6%
Section 5.3 – Cold Water Immersion	2%
Section 5.4- Fire Emergency Preparedness	2%
Section 5.5 - Running Aground Prevention and Response	2%
6.0 Other Water Activities	
Section 6.1 –Water-Jet Propelled Watercraft	6%
Section 6.2 - Water Skiing, Towed Devices and Wake Sports	2%
Section 6.3 - Diving and Snorkeling	0
Section 6.4 - Hunting and Fishing	2%
Section 6.5 –Small Boats	2%
Total (out of 50 questions)	100%

In order to receive NASBLA approval, any assessment offered for boater certification in a state must conform to the assessment plan adopted by the Boating Law Administrator of that state.

ASSESSMENT STANDARD 4

The state specific portion of the assessment must contain A MINIMUM OF 10 state specific assessment questions written to the NASBLA item writing standards covering NASBLA Policy Section 8.2 (State Specific Information). It is recommended that the state-specific questions be in addition to the 50 questions covering the designated national standard.

However, if an assessment of 60 or more questions is not feasible, the state may choose to replace some of the 50 questions required by Assessment Standard 3 with state-specific questions. In this case, the state-specific questions will not only address course content defined by NASBLA Policy Section 8.2, but also address course content defined in the designated national standard. For example, a question addressing NASBLA Section 4.2 (Influence of Drugs and Alcohol on Boat Operation) may be made into a state-specific question by ensuring that is also addresses NASBLA Standard 8.2.5.3 (state-specific laws on operating under the influence of drugs and alcohol such as implied consent and BAC levels).

The resulting assessment must have at least 50 questions, including 10 or more state-specific questions, and conform to the standard weighting of the assessment plan adopted by the Boating Law Administrator of that state.

Developing a passing score for each assessment should not be arbitrarily determined. Using court approved testing techniques (e.g., Angoff method, Ebel method) for establishing a passing score is recommended, but not required. *The minimum passing score will be determined by each state in which the course is approved.* In addition, the decision as to what happens when a student scores below the state established threshold will be determined by the states.

Section 9.3 – Online Assessment Requirements

Research supports online courses providing high-quality interactive eLearning content in lieu of timers.

A) Effective 2018, states have the option to choose online courses that provide interactive content requiring successful completion before advancing to the next session. Implementing this option will eliminate the requirement for course timers [9.3.1 (b)] if interactive content replaces 50% or more of the material presented with the expectation that an average student will spend a minimum of 3 hours to complete all required content. In order to eliminate course timers, interactivity must be presented at eLearning Levels 3 or 4[1] and must be incorporated in a variety of ways and dispersed throughout the course. As with all approved courses, each state may determine whether or not it will authorize NASBLA-approved courses built with this interactive approach as meeting any state requirements.

B) For the purpose of this policy, "Chapter" is defined as a module, section, unit or any other segmentation or packaging of materials within a course. "Assessment" is defined as a chapter review, practice quiz, final examination, chapter test or any other form of evaluation of the student's progress.

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[1] The eLearning industry has identified four levels of interactivity to help the communication amongst eLearning stakeholders. (Pappas, Christopher. (2015). "ELearning Interactivity: The Ultimate Guide for ELearning Professionals." ELearning Industry RSS. ELearning Industry, 18 Apr. 2015. Web. 05 Aug. 2016.)

Level 3 interactivity is characterized by active learning, a moderate-level of control of the course environment by which the learner actively participates and makes decisions. Instructional designs often seen at this level include interactive live-action or animated video, customized audio, branching scenarios, or complex drag and drop interactions. At Level 3, the content is not passive (i.e., it is more than clicking 'next'), but instead involves decision and application based practice. In Level 4, users have a great deal of control over their own experience. Instructional designs at this level may include gamification, simulations, or avatars. At Level 4, the content is not so much presented, rather it is experienced through interaction with a variety of realistic situations.

Levels 3 and 4 offer another learning design called varied practice. Like the spaced and interleaved practices discussed before, varied practice taps into yet a different part of the brain to "improve the ability to transfer learning from one situation and apply it successfully to another". Varied practice can be designed in eLearning courses by using situational, scenario-based or problem-solving activities, for example. Research shows that the combination of interleaving and varied practice encourages higher cognitive processing in the learner. Referring to Bloom's taxonomy, the learning is characterized not by knowledge or comprehension levels but by the application, analysis, evaluative and creation levels. As stated above, by designing varied practice into the eLearning course, learners may be able to apply their knowledge of boating safety in the water.

Section 9.3.1 – (a) Online courses must have an assessment at the end of each chapter. (b) A student will proceed through all of the credited time course content pages in each chapter prior to taking each end-of-chapter assessment to receive credited time for taking the course.

Section 9.3.2 – Students who fail an end-of-chapter assessment will be required to review the entire chapter again before re-taking the end-of-chapter assessment.

Section 9.3.3 – Once a student has completed an end-of-chapter assessment, the content pages for that chapter will be available for additional review by the student at any time. However, content pages will not be made available to the student via any means while the student is taking any assessment.

Section 9.3.4 – All assessments will adhere to the NASBLA Terms and Conditions requirements.

Section 9.3.5 – All assessments will be graded automatically and the student shall be provided with his/her score online with feedback provided for both correct and incorrect responses.

Section 9.3.6 – If an online assessment provides responses following each question, no feedback will be given until an answer has been submitted. Once an answer is submitted, it cannot be changed by the student.

Section 9.3.7 – In an online course, the course provider will not provide links which allow a student to reference the course materials during any assessment.

Section 9.3.8 – If the state permits, a student may opt to take a challenge exam prior to beginning the course. The challenge exam will be written to the NASBLA Assessment Standards. The number of questions, passing score and any applicable fees will be determined by the state for which the course is valid and approved. A student may only take the challenge exam once and, if he/she fails the challenge exam, then the student must take the full course.

Section 9.3.9 – For assessments offered online, the assessment questions will be randomly selected from a pool of questions such that the resulting assessment meets the weights specified in NASBLA Assessment Standard 3. The number of questions in the pool from which the random selection draws will be at least four times the number of questions presented on the assessment. Furthermore, the questions in the assessment pool must be distributed according to the weights specified in NASBLA Policy Section 9.2.3: Assessment Standards 3 and 4.

Section 9.3.10 - If an online course presents more than one assessment to the same student, the assessment presentation algorithm will ensure that no two assessments have more than 50 percent of the same questions on the assessments. A question will be considered to be the same as another question if it has substantially the same stem and the same set of distractors as the question it is replacing.

Section 10 - Online and other Electronic Course Delivery and Presentation

Section 10.1 – Organization of Course Content

Section 10.1.1 – Content within the courses will be presented in a narrative fashion utilizing a consistent style throughout the course in terms of headings, titles, labels and font. "Narrative" is defined as a sequential description of information contained within the designated national boating education standard that can be written in paragraph form or provided to the student through narration within audio, video, or interactive elements.

Section 10.1.2 – A table of contents (or site map for online courses) will be available to show the organization of the course content. In an online course, students will know that they have already viewed the course content upon receiving a cue (i.e. color change, check mark, etc.) that a particular task/section has been completed.

Section 10.1.3 – Courses must be organized into multiple chapters.

Section 10.1.4 - The course will be designed such that any advancement through the course is initiated by the action of the student (for example, by the student clicking on a "next" button or successfully completing an end-of-chapter assessment). There will be no automatic advancement provided.

Section 10.1.5 – If animations or video clips are used within a course, the student must be able to re-play the instructional segments of the animation or video.

Section 10.2 – Minimum Initial Study Time for an Online Course

Section 10.2.1 - Online courses will be organized so that the minimum time for the course content to be delivered to and completed by the student is at least three (3) hours (See Exception in Section 9.3 (A)] . Course content is defined as that material meeting the specified national boating education knowledge standard plus State-Specific Requirements of Section 8. Course content does not include course assessments.

Section 10.2.2 - Courses not meeting the interactivity exception in Section 9.3 (A) shall be required to use course timers. Each page of the online course content will have a minimum time that a student is required to remain on that page ("credited time") which the course provider will set when the online course is presented for review and will retain through the approved period. The sum of the credited times over all content pages will equal or exceed three (3) hours. The student may not progress to the next page until the credited time has expired, however, students may stay on a page longer than the credited time.

Section 10.2.3 – If a student exits or logs off a page before completing its credited time, he/she will be required to complete the remaining time on that page when he/she returns before progressing to the next page.

Section 10.2.4 – If a student leaves an assessment without completing it, the course will be designed to give the student the option of returning to continue taking the assessment at the point in which he/she stopped or of treating the abandonment as a failing score. The passing score and number of questions (beyond the minimum 50 questions as required in Testing Section 9.2.4) on all assessments will be established by the Boating Law Administrator of each state.

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