



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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HAWAII BOATERS HAVE A YEAR TO COMPLETE BOATING EDUCATION COURSE

Operators of motorized vessels in state waters must show proof of certification by Nov. 10, 2014

Honolulu – The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) is reminding Hawaii boaters they now have a year's time to take a boating safety course approved by the National Association of Boating Law Administrators and the State of Hawaii.

Gov. Neil Abercrombie signed Hawaii Administrative Rule Chapter 13-244 on Oct. 30, 2012. This law provided for a two-year period before the rule could be enforced to allow the DLNR time to develop multiple compliance methods and give the boating community time to make use of those methods to become compliant.

Hawaii boaters now have 12 months to take a boating safety course approved by the National Association of Boating Law Administrators and the State of Hawaii to comply with HAR 13-244-15.5, which became effective on Nov. 10, 2012.

Enforcement of the new rule will begin on the second anniversary of the rule's effective date, on Nov. 10, 2014. After that date in 2014, boaters will be required to show proof of successful completion of an approved boating safety course.

"Our primary goal in pursuing and formalizing the Mandatory Education rule was safety," said William Aila, Jr., DLNR chairperson. "The use of the ocean continues to diversify. People are venturing far from shore to enjoy our waters. All boaters should be well versed in the state current boating laws to prevent accidents and loss of life."

"In Hawaii, approved boating safety courses must include Hawaii-specific information that can help our boaters survive at sea after an accident or better yet, help boaters avoid trouble so their sea voyages are safe and enjoyable. It is our hope that boaters will not perceive mandatory education as a burden but rather as a way to ensure safety for our 'ohana and enhance their enjoyment of our waters," said Aila.

The Mandatory Education Rule, HAR 13-244-15.5 is a part of the administrative rules under DLNR's Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR) and will be enforced by DLNR's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement.

Any person violating this rule shall be fined not less than \$50 and not more than \$1000 or sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not more than thirty days, or both, for each violation; the court may also prevent an individual from operating a vessel in State waters of the State for up to 30 days.

Information about the mandatory education rule and how to sign up for courses is posted on the DOBOR web site at <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dobor/mandatory-boating-safety-education-ga/>

The public may also contact DOBOR offices on each island.

The division has worked with boating safety partners to provide Internet and classroom courses, is nearing completion on a home study course and plans to issue its own proof of compliance cards. People who have previously taken NASBLA boating courses may be able to take an abbreviated course just on state-specific information to comply with the new rule.

Mandatory education for boaters has been endorsed as a method to reduce boating related fatalities by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, National Safe Boating Council, and the National Transportation Safety Board.

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Footnote:

- A study released in 2007 (Boating Education Requirements Do Make a Difference) by the National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) showed that states with the longest history of mandatory education had the lowest boating fatality rates.
- The study also indicated that the longer boating education requirements are in place, the lower the fatality rates become.
- The states with no boating education requirements in place have the highest average fatality rates.
- The states that have had boating education requirements in place for more than 20 years have an average fatality rate of 3.89 persons per 100,000 registered boats.
- Hawaii is mentioned in the study as a state that has some form of mandatory education (for all thrill craft operators only) with a fatality rate of 10.46 per 100,000 recreational vessels.
- Hawaii ranked fifth on the list of highest fatality rates in the year the study was finalized.
- In 2011, Hawaii had a fatality rate of approx 44 per 100,000 vessels, second worse in the nation. In 2012, Hawaii had a fatality rate of approx 37 per 100,000 vessels.