

## FLORIDA BOATER SAFETY EDUCATION TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE STUDY GUIDE

- Florida law states that every vessel operator born in 1988 or after, is required to possess proof of boater safety education along with a photo ID while on board.
- Children under 6 years old must wear a PFD (personal floatation device) while aboard any vessel less than 26 feet long, all vessels, not just PWC (personal watercraft).
- No one under age of 14 may operate a personal watercraft (PWCs).
- The PWC operator, passengers, and anyone being towed behind (skiers, tubers, etc.) must wear approved floatation devices (PFD). Everyone! Any age!
- Falling overboard and drowning (due to not wearing a PFD) is the primary cause of boating fatalities.
- Consuming alcohol before or during vessel operation is extremely dangerous as it slows your judgement and physical reaction time.
- Florida law considers a blood alcohol level of .08 as "under the influence".
- Because PWCs are small and fast, they can be difficult to see on the water. It is critical to understand they take time to stop and do not have brakes.
- Reckless operation of a PWC is dangerous and illegal in Florida. Some examples of reckless operation are spraying other vessels, weaving between other vessels, playing "chicken" with other vessels, jumping boat wakes, etc.
- Keeping a safe distance between you and other vessels is critical to safely operating a vessel.
- PWCs REQUIRE throttle application to steer. If the engine shuts off, you will lose the ability to steer, and the PWC will continue for some distance in the last direction it was heading. It will NOT come to an abrupt stop. **YOU MUST USE THROTTLE TO TURN QUICKLY.**
- Safety lanyards (shutoffs) are required by law on all PWCs. Their main function is to shut the engine off should the operator fall overboard
- When re-boarding a capsized (flipped) PWC, it should be rolled as shown on the manufacturer's label on the rear of the PWC.

- If you are in an accident, everyone involved is responsible for reporting it, unless there is no injury and damage is less than \$1,000.
- If you are crossing paths with another vessel (give way vessel) you must always slow down or change your course.
- Primary cause of boating accidents is careless operation. To avoid a collision, the most critical part of boating is to stay alert AT ALL TIMES.
- If you are operating a vessel at a speed that endangers life or property of others, then it is considered illegal operations in Florida.
- When you are being overtaken by another vessel, you are required to maintain your speed and direction.
- When meeting another vessel head on, neither has the right of way and both must change course to avoid a collision.
- RED and GREEN buoys (or markers) mark the edge of a channel. Keep the RED buoy on your right when returning from sea.
- "Slow speed, minimum wake" means your vessel should operate slowly, **while completely settled in the water.**
- All vessels, including PWCs, are required to have a sound producing device (whistles, horn, bell, etc.).
- In shallow areas or sea-grass beds, stop and walk or pole your vessel from the area to avoid damaging the environment.
- Pay attention to the weather while on the water. A common indicator of approaching bad weather is the buildup of tall, dark clouds.
- When you see a red flag with a white diagonal stripe, this indicates there are divers or snorkelers in the water. Stay at least 300 feet away when in open water, and slow to idle speed if you must come within 100 feet when in a narrow channel or river.