



# Boating Safety Program Guidelines

The following guidelines are meant as recommendations and not formal policy. Organizational Members are expected to use these sections as a framework upon which they will develop specific guidelines or policy relevant to their local personnel and equipment resources as well as environmental conditions and project specific requirements.

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**SCIENTIFIC BOATING SAFETY ASSOCIATION  
BOATING SAFETY GUIDELINES**

**SECTION 1.00  
OVERVIEW**

**1.10 PURPOSE**

The purpose of these boating standards is to provide recommendations and a guide to Organizational Members (OMs) wishing to set up, or formalize their boating safety programs. These guidelines will help ensure that boating is conducted in a manner that will maximize safety and to set forth standards for training and certification that will allow a working reciprocity between organizational members.

Note: The terms “Boating Manual, Boating Safety Committee and Boating Safety Officer” are used here as generic descriptions. Organizations may use any terms they wish to describe a document that spells out boating guidelines, policy or standards (section 1.20); a group of two or more knowledgeable persons who fill the requirements of section 2.20; and the person who has operational control of the program (section 2.30).

**1.20 CONTENTS**

The SBSA Boating Program Guidelines establishes minimum recommendations for the operation of all non-UNOLS boats by Organization Members (OM).

The Organizational Members’ SBSA Boating Program Guidelines should include:

- 1 Policy that pertains to all vessels operating under the auspices of the OM.
- 2 Guidelines for obtaining and maintaining boat operator authorization.
- 3 Administrative procedures.
- 4 Operational procedures.

**1.30 APPLICABILITY**

The provisions of these guidelines can be followed whenever OM personnel are using a boat under OM auspices, regardless of ownership of the boat.

Specific examples of boat operations under OM auspices include: persons engaged in research, earning academic credit, employees acting within the scope of their employment; students engaged in any research operation including those receiving or providing boat operation instruction or involved in boat checkouts.

Boats used under OM auspices should include:

- 1 Boats owned, supported, or administered by the OM, regardless of ownership.
- 2 Privately owned boats used by the OM for scientific or educational purposes.
- 3 Any other vessels used by the OM for scientific or educational purposes.
- 4 In case of joint operations, the lead institution will ensure that all applicable safety standards are met.

**SECTION 2.00  
RESPONSIBILITY**

**2.10 BOATING SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

If an OM decides to establish a group of knowledgeable people to oversee boat use, a “Boat Safety Committee” membership should consist of:

- 1 Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)  
The CAO has the ultimate responsibility for the boat program and its related activities.
- 2 Other Members  
Should consist of a majority of persons who are knowledgeable about boating operations.
- 3 Boat Safety Officer (BSO), [or OM equivalent].

**2.20 BOATING SAFETY COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITY**

- 1 Has authority over the boating program’s operation.
- 2 Shall review and revise the boating safety manual.
- 3 Shall assure compliance with the boating safety manual.
- 4 Shall take disciplinary action for unsafe practices, and act as a board of appeal.
- 5 Shall recommend the issue, reissue, or the revocation of boating authorizations.
- 6 Shall establish and/or approve training programs through which the applicant can satisfy the requirements of the organizational member’s boating safety manual.
- 7 Shall suspend boating operations that are considered to be unsafe or unwise.
- 8 Shall periodically review the Boating Safety Officer’s performance and program.
- 9 Shall sit as a board of investigation to inquire into the nature and cause of boating accidents or violations of the organizational member’s boating safety manual.
- 10 May grant exceptions to this manual.

**2.30 BOATING SAFETY OFFICER (BSO)**

The Boating Safety Officer (BSO) serves as a member of the Boating Safety Committee (BSC). This person should have broad experience in boating.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1 Reports to BSC and/or CAO or designee, for the conduct of the boating program of the OM. The BSO is the operational authority for this program and is responsible for the conduct of training and authorization of operators, and ensuring compliance with this standard and all relevant regulations of the membership organization.
- 2 May permit portions of this program to be carried out by a qualified delegate(s), although the Boating Safety Officer may not delegate responsibility for the safe conduct of the OM boating program.
- 3 Shall have the ability to suspend boating operations considered to be unsafe or unwise.

## **2.40 PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS**

- 1 Principal Investigators and Administrative Officers are responsible for assuring that all boat operations that are part of a program under their direction are conducted in accordance with these guidelines.
- 2 Principal Investigators and Administrative Officers should determine that all individuals assigned to boat operations related to their projects are properly authorized as described in section 3.10 of this manual.

## **2.50 BOAT OPERATOR**

- 1 Only authorized OM boat operators may operate small boats under OM auspices, whether or not the boat is owned by the OM. Exceptions may be granted by the BSO for vessels run by non-OM owner/operators.
- 2 In US waters, non-OM owner/operators shall comply with USCG, state, and local regulations covering chartered vessels. In foreign waters, the responsible OM person should ensure the vessel meets the equipment requirements of this manual.
- 3 The designated boat operator is responsible for all aspects of boating operations, regardless of any senior personnel present in the boat. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Safety of the vessel and all persons on board.
  - b) Operation of the vessel in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations and OM's manual.
  - c) Safe transport of the vessel to and from the launch site, if applicable.
  - d) The safe operation of all equipment.
  - e) Ensuring that all required operational and safety equipment is on board and that crew members know the location and how to operate safety/survival equipment.
  - f) Report all accidents, incidents, boardings, citations, safety concerns, and issues to the BSO.
- 4 Failure to comply with provisions of the OM's boating policy may be cause for the revocation or restriction of the operator's authorization. However, any operator may deviate from the requirements of the boating safety policy to the extent necessary to prevent or minimize a situation that is likely to cause death, serious physical harm, damage to the vessel, or major environmental damage.
- 5 The operator or person in charge of a vessel is obligated by law to provide emergency assistance that can be safely provided to any individual in danger at sea. The operator or person in charge is subject to a fine and/or imprisonment for failure to do so.

**SECTION 3.00**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

**3.10 AUTHORIZATION OF BOAT OPERATORS**

**Boat Operator Authorization**

To become an authorized boat operator, he/she should submit the OM's application form and:

- 1 Complete boating safety course(s) and licensing requirements listed below in Section 3.70 from a BSC approved provider.
- 2 Provide documentation of, and/or acquire, practical experience in operating a boat.
- 3 Demonstrate proficiency in the safe operation of the proposed type of boat in local conditions.
- 4 Demonstrate proficiency in the operation of any specialty equipment and procedures specific to the boat to the BSO or designee.

**3.20 MAINTAINING AUTHORIZATION**

OM's should set standards for maintaining authorization. At a minimum, operators should be re-authorized every five years.

**3.30 REVOCATION OF AUTHORIZATION**

A boat operator's authorization may be revoked for any action deemed unsafe or unlawful or for not meeting the procedural requirements of the OM.

**3.40 RE-AUTHORIZATION**

If a boat operator's authorization is revoked, they may be re-qualified after the operator complies with such conditions as the Boating Safety Officer may impose. The operator should be given the opportunity to present his/her case to the BSC before conditions for re-authorization are stipulated.

**3.50 TRAILERING**

To become qualified to tow a boat and trailer, the operator or designated driver should demonstrate to the Boating Safety Officer or his/her designee, the proper procedures for towing the boat and trailer over the road, as well as launching and retrieving the boat from the trailer to the water.

**3.60 LAUNCHING AND RETRIEVING**

OMs should set forth guidelines for launching and retrieving as applicable.

**3.70 TRAINING AND OPERATOR LICENSING**

The following training and licensing are required as a minimum for vessel operators:

Class A & 1 (<26') - Successful completion of a state specific NASBLA approved course plus underway hands-on training including vessel and local conditions/environment familiarization. MOTC style course recommended.

Class 2 (26' - <40') - Above plus MOTC-style course required.

Class 3 (40' - <65') - Above plus some form of USCG licensing or designation as appropriate for the local mission, geography & conditions, operations, crew requirements, possibility of non-crew on board.

All Operators – Skills/knowledge check-off sheets (to be kept in operators permanent file).  
Appropriate level of first aid training.

## **SECTION 4 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND RECORD KEEPING**

### **4.10 FLOAT PLAN – SEE APPENDIX 2**

The use of float plans and a contact list in case of an overdue vessel is required. For trips in remote sites and/or multiple days a communication schedule shall be established before departure.

The use of personal locator beacons (PLBs), EPIRBS and/or similar communication devices is strongly recommended. See Appendix I

### **4.20 MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS**

- 1 Operator records to be kept shall include; training, time underway, location, vessel and any other pertinent information. Copies of these activities are to be kept in the operator's permanent file.
- 2 Other records kept shall include an up to date record of vessel activity, engine time and maintenance/repairs for the vessel and for its trailer if applicable.
- 3 Records should be maintained for a period deemed appropriate by the OM.

### **4.30 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTING**

- 1 All accidents should be reported to the Boating Safety Officer and other OM responsible personnel within 24 hours of the incident.
- 2 Incidents and near accidents, breakdowns or other unsafe events whether on land or at sea should be reported to the Boating Safety Officer within a time period specified by the OM.
- 3 Any accident causing loss of the vessel, damage over \$2,000, requiring medical treatment beyond first aid, or loss of life shall be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard and state authorities as prescribed by the Code of Federal Regulations, 33CFR, 173, sub part C. See <http://law.justia.com/us/cfr/title33/33-2.0.1.8.38.html#33:2.0.1.8.38.3>

- 4 The Boating Safety Committee should investigate and document the accident as described in 4.33 above, and related personal injury and/or property damage, and prepare a report.
- 5 Accident reports shall be held for five years.

## **SECTION 5.00 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

- All boats and equipment operated by SBSA members in US waters, regardless of ownership, shall, at a minimum, conform to U.S. Coast Guard, state, and local requirements and to the standards set forth in the Organizational Member's manual.
- All boats operated outside of U.S. Coast Guard jurisdiction shall at a minimum comply with U.S. Coast Guard regulations in addition to any applicable local requirements and to the standards set forth in the OM's manual.

### **5.10 STABILITY**

No person may operate a vessel loaded in a manner that will jeopardize the safety of the operator or crew.

### **5.20 EQUIPMENT**

- 1 The operator shall be familiar with the operation of all vessel equipment and shall inspect all emergency equipment prior to departure.
- 2 The operator and/or crewmember shall notify the responsible person of any malfunctioning equipment.
- 3 The nature of specific operations may require vessels and boating equipment to meet higher standards than these guidelines as determined by the Boating Safety Officer or the Boating Safety Committee.

### **5.30 COMMUNICATIONS**

The OM should set minimum communication guidelines.

### **5.40 WEATHER**

The OM should establish weather guidelines for boating operations.

### **5.50 SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

The OM should establish guidelines for special operations such as; foreign waters, scuba diving, trawls, live boating, night operations, equipment deployment, etc.

### **5.60 SAFETY CHECKS**

Prior to Departure the Boat Operator Shall:

- 1 Perform a functional inspection of the boat and equipment, including communications.
- 2 Assess all environmental conditions – weather, water conditions, etc.



- 3 Give a briefing to all on board including, at minimum, emergency procedures, location of PFDs, fire extinguishers, man overboard, and methods of seeking assistance.

After Returning

- 1 Upon return the operator should close the float plan as agreed upon before departure.
- 2 Notify, the responsible person of any problems with the boat or equipment within 24 hours of return.

#### 5.70 OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH VESSEL (ORV) DESIGNATION

In some instances, an OM may find it beneficial to obtain ORV status for a specific class 2 or 3 vessel. The vessel must be used for exclusively for oceanographic or limnologic research and/or instruction.

To begin the process, contact the USCG Sector Officer in Charge (OIC) of Marine Inspections. This will be at a major USCG Sector base or a field office in your region.

- a. The OIC of the Inspections office will require a USCG Application form [OMB No. 1625---0014](#).
- b. The OIC MI will require a detailed operating plan defining the intended use for the vessel.
- c. The OM should be prepared to provide supporting documentation, program and policy guidelines and be prepared to answer a variety of questions from the Inspector.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Safety Equipment**

Motorboats operating in coastal waters should carry at least the following equipment:

- One VHF or agency radio, or cell phone, whichever is more appropriate to the environment.
- Class I, II, III or V PFD for each person on board, plus one 'throwable' device.
- Signal flares - smoke flare(s) and  $\geq 3$  day/night signaling devices.
- Fire extinguisher(s) which meet or exceed those required by law
- Horn, whistle, or other audible signaling device.
- Proper registration and documentation for the vessel.
- Each vessel shall meet federal, state, and local numbering requirements.

Suggested equipment as appropriate for vessel & operations:

- Alternate method of communication and a personal locator beacon or comparable emergency signaling device
- Anchor and anchor line
- Oars or paddles
- Emergency repair kit and tools
- First aid kit and, if diving, an oxygen unit, rescue blanket, etc.
- Running and RAM lights as needed.
- Bilge pumps manual and electric if feasible
- Bailer
- Dock lines
- Boat hook
- Navigational items – compass, GPS
- Drinking water
- Spare fuel and oil, if needed
- Sea anchor
- Spare parts including prop, nut, etc.
- Suitable tool kit
- Extra lines and tow harness
- Extra food rations
- Flags – dive and alpha
- EPIRB &/or PLB
- Spare key and deadman clip

**APPENDIX 2**  
**Float Plan**

All vessels operating under the auspices of the OM shall, at the minimum, be in compliance with local, state and USCG regulations

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure time: \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated return: \_\_\_\_\_

Name & description of vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ # of people on board \_\_\_\_\_

Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Area of operations. (be specific): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Point of departure: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of tow vehicle if applicable \_\_\_\_\_

If overdue, contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact # \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency plan, including activation time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Local information & emergency numbers	
Emergency USCG	911 Monitors VHF 16

**APPENDIX 3**  
**Request for Scientific Boating Project Approval or Renewal**

1. Name of project: \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Name of Principal Investigator or Administrative Officer: \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Department: \_\_\_\_\_
  4. New or an ongoing project? \_\_\_\_\_
  5. How will boat(s) be used to support this project? Use a separate sheet if necessary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  6. Vessel name & description: \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Vessel owner & Operator(s): \_\_\_\_\_
  8. Names & affiliation of those on board: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  9. Location of project: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  10. Dates of start and end of operations: \_\_\_\_\_
  11. Special conditions or logistical considerations: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  12. Emergency procedures (EMS activation, nearest medical aid, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Other universities, institutions or groups involved with the project \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR OFFICIAL USE**

Project #: \_\_\_\_\_

Renew on: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature, Chair BSC*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **BOATING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

#### **Introduction**

Most boating incidents take place through the culmination of several factors leading up to a single point when unsafe situations combine and pass a critical point resulting in an emergency situation. Identifying these factors and correcting them immediately is the best course of action.

#### **General Procedures (Personnel Injury)**

The nature and severity of personnel injury shall be the determining factor for the mode and method of patient transport.

Make contact with victim, if safe, rescue as required.

1. Establish ABC's. (Airway, Breathing, Circulation) Then apply first aid as required.
2. Determine severity and select the mode of transport. (Self-transport, USCG, Sheriff or EMS)
3. As applicable, contact the pre-designated land base, USCG channel 16 VHF, or EMS 911. Or local equivalent
4. Coordinate with EMS for patient transfer site and ETA.
5. Notify the Boating Safety Officer or the designated Assistant.
6. Complete the Accident Forms as required.

#### **General Procedures (Non-urgent Disabled or Damaged Vessel)**

For non-emergency related damage or disabling situations it is the responsibility of the operator to suspend the mission and assess all conditions then take appropriate action. The operator should communicate the situation to the designated mother-ship or land-based point of contact. A communication schedule should be established to monitor the situation until safe moorage is obtained.

1. Apply measures to minimize or correct the situation and contact land base or mother ship.
  - Location
  - Nature of problem
  - Type of assistance needed
  - Number of persons on board
  - Establish a communication schedule based on severity.
2. Arrange USCG or local authorities assistance if another assistance provider (such as Vessel Assist) is not available. Hail on VHF Channel 16 (or local equivalent) and follow their directions.
  - Same as #1 above.
  - Request notification of the land base that is holding your float plan.
2. Notify the Boating Safety Officer or the designated Assistant.
3. Complete the Accident Form if required.

#### **Emergency Procedures (Collision, Fire, Flooding, Grounding, Crew overboard)**

Severe situations that can lead to the loss of life and property are collision, fire, flooding, grounding and crew over board. Each of these situations requires the operator to immediately initiate measures to correct the situation. Additionally, the USCG and/or another designated agency shall be notified to facilitate rescue and/or assistance.

1. Initiate control measures to prevent/minimize loss of life and the vessel.
2. Contact USCG or local authorities on Channel 16 VHF
  - MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY!
  - Location (Speak slowly and repeat position)
  - Nature of distress
  - Vessel name, ID number & description
  - Number of people on board
3. Request notification of the Boating Safety Officer or the designated Assistant as soon as possible.

**APPENDIX 5**  
**BOATING ACCIDENT REPORT FORM**

OM home institutions will have their own in-house accident reporting guidelines. It is the boat operator's responsibility to know & follow reporting requirements in the area of operations.

Below are links for some boating accident forms

Federal waters: <http://uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/accident-reporting.php>

Alaska: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/boating/accident.htm>

California: <http://dbw.ca.gov/PDF/AccidentForms/BAR.pdf>

Florida: <http://www.myfwc.com/boating/regulations/> But there isn't an online form.

Louisiana: [http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/pageboating/31696-boating-incident-reporting/bioperatorreport-09-2010\\_0.pdf](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/pageboating/31696-boating-incident-reporting/bioperatorreport-09-2010_0.pdf)

Massachusetts: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/grants-and-tech-assistance/enforcement/environmental-police/boat-and-recreation-vehicle-safety-bureau/oleboataccidentreport.pdf>

Oregon: <http://www.oregon.gov/OSMB/forms-library/Documents/boatingaccidentreptform.pdf>

Washington: <http://parks.state.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/2213>

**APPENDIX 6  
SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL UNDERWAY HOURS LOG**

Individual Underway Hours Log						
<b>Name:</b> _____ <b>Department:</b> _____ <b>Month/Year:</b> _____ <b>Signature:</b> _____ <b>Date</b> _____						
Date Day / Night	General Description of Mission Type of Operations and Comments	Area or Location (Inland/Offshore)	Vessel Size	Vessel Propulsion Type and Number	Vessel Launch Method	Total Time Underway
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						
Day / Night						

**APPENDIX 7**

**< OM >**

**BOATING SAFETY PROGRAM**

**VERIFICATION OF BOATER’S TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE**

The < OM > is an Organizational Member of the Scientific Boating Safety Association.  
As such, < OM > complies with SBSA guidelines and procedures for boating education and safety.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information: Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Working with: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

< OM > boat check out: \_\_\_\_\_ Last date U/W \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Vessel experience, past 24 months: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours underway \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Operating areas: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional training/experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Trailer launch	_____	Anchoring	_____	1 <sup>st</sup> aid	_____
Beach launch	_____	Hoist launch	_____	CPR/AED	_____
VHF	_____	Navigation	_____	Oxygen	_____
Electronics	_____	Trawling	_____		_____
Restricted visibility	_____	Instr. deploy	_____		_____
Towing	_____	Scuba ops	_____		_____

Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to verify that \_\_\_\_\_ is current as a smallboat operator at the  
< OM.>

For additional information contact me at the address below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Boating Safety Officer*

Boating Official/Office Contact information