

Massachusetts Hanson-Milone Boater Safety Act Requires boat operators to obtain a boater safety certificate

Overview of New Legislation

Massachusetts recently passed the Hanson-Milone Act, a law requiring individuals born after January 1, 1989, to obtain a state-approved boating safety certificate to legally operate a boat. Compliance is required by April 1, 2026, with enforcement beginning September 1, 2026. The minimum age to obtain a certificate is 12 years old. All those born before January 1, 1989 will have until April 1, 2028 to comply

This new requirement aims to improve safety on Massachusetts waterways, reduce boating accidents, and ensure that all operators are educated on safe boating practices.

What This Means for You

If you're a recreational boater who falls under this age category—or if you want to stay ahead of the curve—now is the time to obtain your boating safety certificate. Even if you're exempt from this law based on your birth year, taking a safety course is a proactive step to enhance your knowledge and skills on the water.

Why Choose the Coast Guard Auxiliary *Boat America* Course?

The Boat America course, offered by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, is one of the best ways to fulfill this new legal requirement while gaining valuable boating safety knowledge. Here's why:

1. Approved by the State: The Boat America course meets Massachusetts' requirements for the boating safety certificate.
2. Comprehensive Curriculum: The course covers critical topics, including navigation rules, safe boating practices, emergency preparedness, and environmental responsibilities.
3. Experienced Instructors: Courses are taught by certified instructors with

extensive boating knowledge and real-world experience.

4. Community Support: By taking a Coast Guard Auxiliary course, you're connecting with a network of boating safety advocates who are committed to keeping waterways safe.

5. Convenient and Affordable: Courses are offered locally and at a low cost, making them accessible to everyone.

6. Official guidance will be published by the office of law enforcement no later than October 1, 2025

How to Enroll

Visit the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary website at

https://www.cgaux.org/boatinged/class_finder/index.php

or contact your local flotilla to find upcoming Boat America courses in your area.

