
**Housing, Community Development &
Veterans Committee**

HB 2444

Brief Description: Concerning boater education cards.

Sponsors: Representative Ryu.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes an expiration date for Boater Education Cards that is 10 years from the date of issuance and establishes requirements for renewal of Boater Education Cards.
- Modifies statutory language requiring boaters to possess Boater Education Cards to require valid Boater Education Cards.
- Removes statutory language related to the completed phase-in of the Boater Education Card requirement.

Hearing Date: 1/21/20

Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) has established and implemented, as required by law, a program to provide required boating safety education (Program). The Program must include: (1) a minimum standard of boating safety education accomplishment; (2) minimum standards for boating safety course of instruction and examination; (3) accreditation of boating safety education courses operated by entities such as the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary and the United States Power Squadrons; and (4) development of an equivalency examination that may be take as an alternative to the boating safety education course.

In order to operate a motor-driven boat or vessel of 15 horsepower or greater, a person must be at least 12 years old and: (1) possess a Washington State Boater Education Card (Boater Education

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Card); or (2) be accompanied by and under the supervision of a person at least 16 years old who has a Boater Education Card.

Certain individuals are not required to have a Boater Education Card, including:

- any person born before January 1, 1955;
- operators with a commercial fishing license operating a commercial fishing boat;
- operators with a United States Coast Guard Marine Operator License when operating the vessel authorized under the license;
- operators of exempt vessels, including vessels for law enforcement or official government work;
- operators of rented, leased, or chartered vessels who complete the Commission-approved educational checklist in lieu of a Boater Education Card;
- an operator who is a resident of another state or country and does not operate the vessel for more than 60 consecutive days;
- an operator who is a resident of another state or country who has a valid card from that state or country;
- any person who has purchased a vessel within the last 60 days; or
- any person who is involved in practicing for, or engaging in, a permitted racing event where a valid document has been issued by the appropriate government agency.

To obtain a Boater Education Card, a boater must:

- provide a certificate of accomplishment issued by a boating educator for taking and passing an accredited boating safety education course;
- pass an equivalency exam; or
- or provide proof of completion of a course that meets the standard adopted by the Commission.

The Commission is required to charge a fee of 10 dollars for a Boater Education Card. Boater Education Cards do not expire. Failure to possess a Boater Education Card as required by law is an infraction punishable by a fine; however, the penalty must be waived if the boater provides proof to the court within 60 days that he or she has received a Boater Education Card.

Summary of Bill:

Boater Education Cards expire and are no longer valid on the tenth anniversary of the date of issuance of the Boater Education Card. A person may renew his or her Boater Education Card by:

- providing the Commission a certificate of accomplishment issued by a boating educator for taking and passing an accredited boating safety education course;
- passing an equivalency exam developed by the commission; or
- providing the commission proof of completion of a course that meets the standard adopted by the commission.

The requirement that boaters operating a motor-driven boat or vessel of 15 horsepower or greater possess a Boater Education Card is modified to require possession of a valid Boater Education Card. The infraction for failure to possess a Boater Education Card is modified to require possession of a valid Boater Education Card.

Statutory language relating to the phase-in of the Boater Education Card requirement, which was completed in 2016, is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2020.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.