WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §20-7-12b

§20-7-12b. Boating safety education certificate.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (c) of this section, beginning on January 1, 2001, no person born on or after December 31, 1986, may operate a motorboat or personal watercraft on any waters of this state without first having obtained a certificate of boating safety education from this or any other state, which certificate was obtained by satisfactorily completing a course of instruction in boating safety education administered by the United States coast guard auxiliary; the United States power squadron; the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources; any person certified to teach the course administered by West Virginia natural resources boating safety education section personnel; or any person authorized to teach the course prescribed by the national association of state boating law administrators in this or any other state.

(b) Any person who is subject to subdivision (a) of this section shall possess the certificate of boating safety education when operating a motorboat or personal watercraft on the waters of this state and shall show the certificate on demand of any West Virginia natural resources police officers or other law-enforcement officer authorized to enforce the provisions of this chapter.

(c) The following persons are exempt from the requirements of subsection (a) of this section:

(1) A person who is a nonresident of this state and who is visiting the state for sixty days or less in a motorboat or personal watercraft from another state if that person:

(A) Is fifteen years of age or older; and

(B) Has been issued a boating safety education certificate by his or her state of residence in accordance with the criteria recommended by the national association of state boating law administration.

(2) A person who is visiting the state for ninety days or less in a motorboat or personal watercraft from a country other than the United States;

(3) A person who is operating a motorboat or personal watercraft in connection with commercial purposes; and

(4) A person who is operating a motorboat or personal watercraft which was purchased by the person within the previous forty-five-day period and who has not been previously charged with a violation of any provision of this chapter involving the use or registration of a motorboat or personal watercraft.

(d) The division shall issue a certificate of boating safety education to a person who:

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(1) Passes any course prescribed in subsection (a) of this section; or

(2) Passes a boating safety equivalency examination administered by persons authorized to administer a boating safety education course as outlined in subsection (a) of this section. Upon request, the division shall provide, without charge, boating safety education materials to persons who plan to take the boating safety equivalency examination.

(e) No person who owns a motorboat or personal watercraft or who has charge over a motorboat or personal watercraft may authorize or knowingly permit it to be operated in violation of subsection (a) of this section.

(f) The provisions of subsection (a) of this section may only be enforced as a secondary action when the officer detains an operator of a motorboat or personal watercraft upon probable cause of a violation of another provision of this code or rules adopted in accordance with the code. A person may not be taken immediately to a court or detention facility solely for a violation of subsection (a) of this section.

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