

Sir or Madam,

I have been made aware of proposed changes to the issuance of the Connecticut "Safe Boating Certificate". These changes would allow for on line boating education and testing for the issuance of this certificate.

I caution you against these proposals. Many boaters are already under educated with practical on the water situations. Even some boaters with previously issued certificates need more education, not less. What every new boater needs is more practical education, not less.

Safety is the key issue. You cannot learn the situational awareness necessary to be safe in class or on line. You can only pass the test. To be safe, you need the fundamental application of safe boating practices to be taught in a boat and on the water under the supervision of an experienced trainer and teacher. I most strenuously argue against computer based training and testing for this state issued document.

I argue, instead, in favor of State required instruction, training and testing in Boats. The state can use many organizations in Connecticut to accomplish this end. US Power Squadrons, US Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotillas, yacht clubs and private marinas could aid in raising level of safety on the water. These organizations along with experienced and trained individuals could be licensed to teach Boating Safety in class and ON THE WATER and be authorized to examine and certificate individuals.

Any changes you consider should be oriented toward more practical instruction and more relevant testing, not less.

Respectfully,

Stewart L. Napoleon  
USCG Licensed Master