

I understand that your committee is considering changing the law to allow a short on-line computer course to take the place of classroom-based safe boating courses. This is also the change in the law that is going to allow on-line training for firearms.

This is an idea that needs a lot of careful consideration as it does not take into account all of the downsides to the safety on the boating public in Connecticut waters.

I would urge you to not allow this new law to go into effect for several reasons:

1. It has not been adequately publicized and therefore most people have not had the opportunity to evaluate the issues or have had the time to respond.
2. The integrity of on line learning has often come into question. There is no one watching to see if people are taking the course in a group where one knowledgeable person gives people the answers so they can pass, but no learning has taken place.
3. The interaction between students and a qualified instructor is one of the major advantages of classroom instruction and reinforces the retention of the material taught.
4. If a student makes the wrong assumption with on line content, there is no one to correct them.

With the several tragedies that occurred during the boating the 2012 boating season on Long Island Sound it is most apparent that higher quality instruction must be maintained, this is not a time to take a step backward, therefore, I am strongly opposed to changing the regulations and laws regarding Boating Safety and Hunter Safety training at this time.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
John Knipper
USCG Master