

## **Criteria for Internet Boating Safety Education Courses**

**Section 5103(e)(1) of the Fish and Boat Code, 30 Pa.C.S § 5103(e)(1), requires that the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) promulgate regulations that establish criteria for courses of instruction in boating safety education. The following criteria will be used to approve Internet Boating Safety Education courses for the purpose of issuance of Pennsylvania Boating Safety Education Certificates to Pennsylvania boat operators.**

### **Overview**

The Internet boating safety education course allows students to study boating and boating safety information and take a certification examination online in a secure Internet environment. The Internet course will consist of a complete educational curriculum covering the basics of boating safety, regulations and accepted best practices. The course will be presented in lesson format with in-depth coverage of the various topics listed in following sections. The information will be presented in a narrative fashion followed by review questions and discussion points. Courses that consist solely of questions with a correct answer description will not be deemed to meet the criteria contained in this document.

### **Providers**

Internet courses shall be offered by providers that meet the requirements of the PFBC. Individuals or organizations that desire to provide an Internet boating safety education course that is approved for Pennsylvania boaters shall be willing to enter into an agreement with the PFBC containing the Commonwealth's standard terms and conditions and the additional terms set forth in Exhibit A. Prior to entering into an agreement with the PFBC, providers shall submit a request in writing to the PFBC's Director of Boating and shall demonstrate to the PFBC's satisfaction that the provider is capable of performing its obligations under the agreement. Providers shall demonstrate their capability by submitting the following documentation along with their request to the PFBC's Boating Director:

1. A description of the provider and its capabilities including a description of type and number of staff and their responsibilities.
2. Proof of ability to manage certification data securely and digitally. This will be demonstrated by providing either:
  - An existing computer-based database management system designed to manage certification data, or
  - Detailed specifications and a project plan to deliver such a computer-based system.

3. Copies of certification by the Payment Card Industry (PCI) to demonstrate provider's secure handling of students' credit card data.
4. Proof that provider's course(s) have been approved by NASBLA.
5. The web address (URL) of the Internet course.

### **Course Content**

1. The course must be approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). Information on NASBLA approval is available on the NASBLA web site at <http://www.nasbla.org/> or by calling the NASBLA office at 859-225-9487
2. In addition to NASBLA requirements, course content will include:
  - o A description of boating in Pennsylvania.
  - o PFBC regulatory responsibilities.
  - o Types of boats, boat motors, and boat hulls.
  - o Boat terminology including, but not limited, to: hull, bow, forward, aft, stern, port, starboard, transom, keel, freeboard, draft, beam, gunwale, bilge, waterline.
  - o Long distance communication on the water.
  - o Boat handling.
  - o Process for passage through river locks.

### **Organization**

1. Internet course contents will be organized in chapters or lessons.
2. Internet course will include chapter/lesson review exercises.
3. Internet course will have a comprehensive final examination.

### **Animation quality**

1. Internet course will include animations or video clips where appropriate to illustrate concepts.
2. Animations will be developed using vector-based graphics for viewing on a variety of screen resolutions.
3. Animations and/or video clips will be of reasonable file size for quick download and delivery on a wide variety of user platforms and connection speeds.
4. Animations and/or video clips will allow student-paced instruction, where the student controls the pacing of the instructional segment and can re-play the instructional segment.
5. Animations and/or video clips will be created in a contemporary design to engage all age groups, particularly the youth segment of the boating education market.

### **Internet course design quality**

1. Internet course web page design will have an attractive, easy-to-read, and contemporary look and feel.
2. Internet course web page design will support all common user environments (various operating systems, web browsers, and connection speeds).
3. Boating terms used in the Internet course will be hyperlinked to their definitions.
4. Internet course will include hyperlinks to locations within the PFBC's website from all appropriate locations within the Internet course.

### **ADA version of Internet course design quality**

1. Standard Internet course design will be developed so that it complies with all Priority 1 checkpoints within the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (WCAG) developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).
2. Internet course design will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Course provider will schedule annual reviews of its course material to verify continuing ADA-compliance and implement any changes needed as a result in its development of new course material.

### **Internet Course Chapter Review Quiz, Pre-Test and Online Certification Examination**

1. The Internet course must be organized into at least six chapters with a chapter review quiz at the end of each chapter.
2. The Internet course must be designed so that the student actively participates.
3. Students will not be able to access the certification examination without first successfully completing the chapter review quiz for each chapter.
4. Students will not be permitted to take the chapter review quiz without spending the minimum study time assigned to that chapter. The minimum study time assigned to each chapter must be approved by the PFBC. The minimum time for the Internet course to be completed by the student, not including the certification examination, is three hours.
5. There must be at least ten review questions for each chapter.
6. Students must successfully complete each chapter review quiz before progressing to the next chapter. Students may proceed once they have achieved at least a seventy percent on the chapter review quiz.
7. Students failing the chapter review quiz will be directed to study the material again and may not retake the quiz until they have again spent the minimum study time assigned to that chapter.

8. The testing portion of the Internet course will include a Pennsylvania-specific pre-test and certification examinations. The PFBC will review and approve all questions that are included in the examination question pool.
9. Internet course will have a testing algorithm for the pre-test and certification examinations.
10. The pre-test and final examination will contain at least 50 questions randomly drawn from the pool of at least 300 questions written to NASBLA Education Standard 9.
11. The pre-test and final examination will also include, at least, an additional 10 Pennsylvania-specific questions drawn from the pool of at least 30 such questions developed by course provider and written to NASBLA Education Standard 9.
12. The randomization algorithm for online testing will create examinations that meet NASBLA Education Standard 9.2: Testing Standard 3.
13. Examination presentation will allow for the questions to be presented with color graphics or photos in order to test knowledge of aids-to-navigation, navigation rules, boating at night, and other subjects.
14. Testing questions will be grouped into the number of categories requested or approved by the PFBC. Each category will be defined by the PFBC in terms of the category description and the number of questions from that category that should appear on each randomly-generated pre-test or examination.
15. Each occurrence of the pre-test or certification examinations will be generated individually and uniquely for every student. The questions on each pre-test or examination will be chosen randomly from each of the defined categories according to the number of questions specified for that category included in NASBLA Education Standard 9.2: Test Standard 3 to ensure that each important topic is tested. The course certification examination process and design will not provide for or promote the use of reference materials during the examination process.
16. The pool of examination questions and associated graphics, the number and description of categories, the number of questions per category and the total number of questions on the pre-test and certification examination will be changed at any time upon request of the PFBC.
17. The pre-test and certification examinations will be graded automatically and the student given their score online.
18. A test critique will be generated and presented to the student each time a chapter/lesson review exercise, pre-test or certification examination is completed.
19. Students completing the pre-test will be presented with only the topics (categories) of questions for which they gave incorrect answers. The pre-test will not show students specifically which questions they missed.

20. Students completing the certification examination will be presented with the questions, the correct answers for those questions, explanations of the correct answers, and hyperlinks back to the relevant course material where those questions are covered.
21. The passing grade for the final examination will be 80%.

### **Certification**

1. The course certification examination registration process will contain PFBC defined personal data fields to be collected from student applicants.
2. The online registration process will validate the data fields to ensure data integrity.
3. The registration process will check that all required data fields have been supplied by the student, and the process will allow data for fields such as hair color or race to be selected from a PFBC-specified list of allowed values.
4. Students passing the course certification examination with a minimum grade of 80% will be issued a temporary boating safety education certificate. Provider will not allow the downloading of the form to the student's computer in a form that can be edited by the recipient. This will be accomplished by a locked PDF file or other secure method. The provider will arrange for resolution of any printing problems and provide for the mailing of the original or duplicate temporary certificate. The temporary boating safety education certificate will display a code (character string) that is tied uniquely to that student's personal data, so that the PFBC can decode it easily to determine if the temporary certificate was generated fraudulently.
5. The temporary boating safety certificate expires 60 days after the date of issue. The temporary boating safety certificate used by the provider must be approved by the PFBC and will contain the following information: date of issue, date of expiration, name and address, type of course, hair color, eye color, sex, date of birth, NASBLA approval, signature of instructor and date, signature of student and date, instructions on how to obtain a permanent boating safety education certificate at a later date.
6. The fee for the Internet course's certification examination will be the same regardless of whether the student passes or fails.

## **Exhibit A**

### **Internet course promotion and advertising**

1. All promotion of the Internet course will be done ethically and honestly and will not mislead the public in any way. Promotions will not include contests or give-away promotions. Course provider will not advertise the Internet course from within other websites where the other websites are designed in a way that misleads the public.
2. Course provider will not collect names or E-mail addresses of other potential students from the online students. Any direct solicitation of potential students via E-mail, mail, or telephone will be approved in advance in writing by the PFBC.
3. Course provider will not receive direct or indirect compensation for providing an advertisement or link to another website from within the Internet course unless approved in advance in writing by the PFBC.

### **General Course Provider Tasks and Qualifications**

The course provider will:

1. Employ sufficient staff to develop, maintain, operate and manage the course.
2. Secure an Internet Domain (URL address) to host the course and publish the course on the Internet.
3. Issue temporary boating safety education certificates approved by the PFBC to students successfully completing the Internet course.
4. Generate any reports on the student data and financial transactions that are requested by the PFBC including, but not limited to, year to date and monthly reports showing student demographics and fees collected.
5. Handle the purchase of PFBC boating safety education certificates by successful students as part of the video course certification process and transfer the associated fees and certificate-purchaser data to the PFBC, electronically or in any agreed format to by the course provider and the PFBC, on at least a monthly basis.
6. Pay PFBC fees by check or electronic fund transfer.
7. Update the Internet course to reflect changes in Federal or State regulations or laws and make any other changes or corrections to the Internet course that are requested by the PFBC at any time.
8. Provide an email link that allows users to contact the course provider and respond to all inquiries within 24 hours. (Automated responses merely stating that the user's E-mail has been received will not satisfy this requirement.)

9. Respond to PFBC and public queries promptly.
10. Provide daily (including weekend) service for the Internet course
11. Answer all technical questions related to using the Internet course, and also any questions related to boating safety, laws, etc. that can be answered from the course material.
12. Forward any questions that cannot be answered with confidence to a designated PFBC contact.
13. Allow the PFBC to use graphics, text, animations and video from the Internet course for other PFBC boating courses or education efforts.
14. Maintain a complete backup of the student data for a period of five (5) years and make available to the PFBC, upon request, a complete copy of the digital files of the student data.
15. Provide a bond of a \$20,000 in the form specified by the PFBC to indemnify the PFBC against any loss or damage of monies that course provider collects on behalf of the PFBC (for example, fees collected for purchases of the PFBC-required boating safety education certificates) upon execution of the agreement between the course provider and the PFBC.
16. Collect all student data fields desired by the PFBC.
17. Adhere strictly to a privacy policy that ensures that student data will not be transferred to any party other than the PFBC and will not be used by course provider for any purpose except to issue students' certification cards. In the event course provider fails to adhere to this privacy policy, course provider agrees to pay the PFBC the sum of \$100 for each name or other piece of student data transferred or used in violation hereof. The course provider will state this privacy policy clearly on its web page that is accessible from every web page in the Internet course material and examination.

### **Adherence to Payment Card Industry Security Standards**

Course provider will obtain and maintain certification by the Payment Card Industry (PCI) to ensure course provider's secure handling of students' credit card data. The PCI audits will cover course provider's web server, data management system, and associated networks. Additionally, course provider will meet those same payment card security standards with respect to course provider's handling of students' personal data. Detailed requirements are found in the document titled "Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard" and can be downloaded from [www.pcisecuritystandards.org](http://www.pcisecuritystandards.org).

### **Course Fees**

Course providers may charge users a reasonable fee not to exceed \$25.00 to take the Internet course and online certification examination.

### **Boating Safety Education Certification Fee**

Students who take the Internet boating safety education course will be given the option by the course provider of paying the \$10 fee required to obtain Pennsylvania boating safety education certification as follows:

1. Establish and administrative procedure to allow students to purchase a Pennsylvania boating safety education certificate as part of the Internet course certification process.
2. The course provider will collect the \$10 fee from the student in addition to the charge (if any) for the Internet boating education course examination.
3. The course provider will provide instruction to students who choose to not pay the \$10 fee at the time of passing the online examination on how to obtain a permanent boating safety education certificate at a later date. The instructions will appear on the notes displayed on the temporary certification card and on the instructions page for the online examination.

### **Administrative Fee to PFBC**

The course providers will pay the PFBC an administrative fee of \$5 for each boating safety education certification examination.

### **Transfer of Data, Fees and Reports**

The course provider will:

1. Pay all certification fees and administrative fees by check or electronic fund transfer on a monthly basis or other term as required by the PFBC.
2. Transfer student data to the PFBC digitally and securely in the form and format established by the PFBC.
3. Generate any reports on the student data and financial transactions that are requested by the PFBC including, but not limited to, year to date and monthly reports showing student demographics and fees collected.