



BOAT OPERATOR ACCREDITED TRAINING™

LIFESAVING SOCIETY

AFFILIATE UPDATE FEBRUARY 2011

This update is designed to brief Lifesaving Society Affiliate Members on the changes Transport Canada has made to the Pleasure Craft Operator Competency program.

BACKGROUND

- ❑ A Pleasure Craft Operator (PCO) Card is the proof of competence required of operators of recreational boats powered by a motor. Until federal regulations were introduced in 1999, anybody of any age could operate any type of boat with no training or education of any kind. All Canadian recreational boaters now require a PCO Card to drive a boat powered by a motor.
- ❑ Transport Canada Marine Safety has created a new *Boating Safety Course and Test Syllabus* comprising 256 knowledge requirements. The revised Lifesaving Society *BOAT Study Guide* and new PCO Card tests reflect the changes.
- ❑ No additional time is required to deliver a BOAT course as a result of the changes. Eight hours is the estimated minimum required to provide sufficient time to learn the knowledge and successfully write the PCO Card test.
- ❑ The time needed to ensure the success of candidates in the BOAT course varies with the number and maturity of the candidates, their prior knowledge and their training or experience in lifesaving or boating.

BOAT STUDY GUIDE

- ❑ The Lifesaving Society's revised *BOAT Study Guide* is approved by Transport Canada in both English and French. The new edition (March 2011) will be available in February 2011 and is the required on-course reference as of April 15, 2011.
- ❑ The cover of the revised *BOAT Study Guide* states, "Revised in accordance with the new Transport Canada Boating Safety Course and Test Syllabus (TP14932E)".

BOAT STUDY GUIDE (*cont'd*)

- ❑ After April 15, 2011, do not use the current *BOAT Study Guide* (8th printing, April 2010 or earlier). The current edition may be returned for exchange or refund no later than July 15, 2011. Returned literature must be the current edition; “new” not used, not damaged, not marked, not bent or partially read.

PCO CARD TEST CHANGES

- ❑ Transport Canada has announced:
 - March 1, 2011** – The new Transport Canada PCO Card tests will be released to course providers. The Lifesaving Society will distribute the new tests to BOAT Instructors before April 15, 2011.
 - April 15, 2011** – New tests may not be used prior to this date, and must be used as of this date. Transport Canada has instructed that all existing tests must be removed from circulation and destroyed. Please ensure that your BOAT Instructors or proctors comply with this requirement.
- ❑ Transport Canada plans to release three new tests (in English and in French) every six months to replace the previous three tests in circulation.
- ❑ The tests ask more questions (50 instead of the current 36), and are designed to be suitable for any age group. There are no age-specific tests.
- ❑ The tests remain multiple-choice with a pass mark of 38/50 or 75%. A maximum of 60 minutes is allowed to complete the test.
- ❑ There is no change to the test supervision protocol mandated by Transport Canada.

BOAT INSTRUCTOR UPDATE

- ❑ The Lifesaving Society does not require current BOAT Instructors to attend an update clinic. The changes are relatively minor and are meant to simplify boater education and training.

BOAT INSTRUCTOR UPDATE (*cont'd*)

- ❑ Before teaching a post-April 15, 2011 BOAT course, BOAT Instructors should review the *BOAT Instructor Update* and the revised *BOAT Study Guide* to familiarize themselves with the new and revised content. The *BOAT Instructor Update* is available on the Society's website.
- ❑ The Society's *BOAT Instructor Notes*, which reflects the former 149 Canadian Coast Guard Knowledge Statements, will be retired. The Society is reviewing options regarding updated support material for BOAT Instructors.

NEW RULES FOR INTERNET TESTING

- ❑ Transport Canada has revised the requirements for PCO testing over the Internet. After April 15, 2011, the option to take just the PCO Card test online will cease. Accredited providers who wish to offer the PCO Card test over the Internet must provide online courses and meet specific requirements. The Lifesaving Society is reviewing this option but has no plans to participate in 2011.
- ❑ As of April 15, 2011, there are new rules for Internet testing:
 - Candidates must complete a minimum three hour online study guide before taking the test. The online study guide must be composed of at least five modules. Each module must conclude with a practice quiz that must be successfully answered before going onto the next module.
 - The 50 test questions for the PCO card will be randomly generated from Transport Canada's test database each time. Only one question will be displayed at a time with no option to go back once answered.
 - The candidate can print a temporary card if successful in passing the test. If the candidate is unsuccessful, he or she must repeat the online study guide session.

THREE WAYS TO EARN THE PCO CARD

- ❑ As an accredited course provider, the Lifesaving Society issues PCO Cards (Transport Canada does not).
- ❑ Participation in a boating safety course is not mandatory. Boaters can study on their own and take the test when they're ready.

Candidates might:

1. **Take a BOAT course:** approx. eight hours of classroom education using the *BOAT Study Guide* with a PCO Card test at the end of the course. On-water instruction is not required.
2. **Take a refresher clinic:** less than eight hours (time varies) of classroom education using the *BOAT Study Guide* with a PCO Card test at the end. On-water instruction is not required.
3. **Just write the test:** Individuals with boating experience or previous training can read the *BOAT Study Guide* to brush up on their boating knowledge and then take the PCO Card test.

The Lifesaving Society's 80-page *BOAT Study Guide* is easy to read with full colour charts, diagrams and photos for easy reference. It is available in English and French. Order the *Boat Study Guide* from the Lifesaving Society office.



LIFESAVING SOCIETY
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