



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

## **Boat Operator Accredited Training**



## **Policy and Procedures**

**Newfoundland and Labrador Branch**

# **Boat Operator Accredited Training**

## **Policy and Procedures Guide**

### **Table of Contents**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
	Boat Operator Accredited Training, Preamble	1
1	Summary of Changes to Federal Boating Legislation	2
2	The Pleasure Craft Operator Card	2
3	B.O.A.T. Course Length	3
4	Required Text	3
5	Course Location & The Approved Testing Facility	3
6	The Testing Process	4
6.1	Youth Testing	4
6.2	Appointment of Proctors	5
7	Certification of B.O.A.T. Instructors	6
8	Instructor Registration (The B.O.A.T. Package)	7
9	Responsibilities	8
10	Decertification of Instructors	9
	Appendix	10
	References	10

# Boat Operator Accredited Training

## Policy and Procedures

### Lifesaving Society Newfoundland and Labrador Branch

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#### Boat Operator Accredited Training PREAMBLE

Boating activities are the leading cause of drowning and water-related deaths in Canada. The new Lifesaving Society Boat Operator Accredited Training (hereafter B.O.A.T.) program reflects the standards mandated by the Canadian Coast Guard to establish a common level of understanding of safe boating knowledge among operators of all pleasure craft in Canada.

On 15 September, 1999, the federal government introduced new boating safety regulations. These regulations include age / horsepower restrictions and mandatory competency requirements for all those who wish to operate powerboats in Canadian waters. The Canadian Coast Guard developed 149 knowledge statements grouped into 37 tasks that accredited courses must include.

The Lifesaving Society is pleased to present B.O.A.T. (Boat Operator Accredited Training). This course will offer boaters of all ages the chance to learn basic boating skills, knowledge and attitudes, as well as the rules and regulations in Canada. The B.O.A.T. Program is now available for delivery to the general public. The program has been developed and continues to be directed by a group of volunteers from across Canada.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Lifesaving Society welcomes any written correspondence or inquiries regarding the B.O.A.T. program. Comments or inquiries should be directed to:

Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Lifesaving Society  
**ATTENTION: B.O.A.T. Captain**  
Box 8065, Station "A"  
St. John's, NF  
A1B 3M9

Or by e-mail [lifeguard@seascape.com](mailto:lifeguard@seascape.com)

Or by phone (709) 576-1953

Or by facsimile (709) 738-1475

## 1. Summary of changes to federal boating legislation:

The ten year phase in (who needs to carry "Proof of Competency"):

As of 15 September 1999, youth born after 01 April 1983.

As of 15 September 2002, operators of pleasure craft less than 4 m, including PWC's.

As of 15 September 2009, all operators of pleasure craft fitted with a motor.

Age/horsepower restrictions:

PWC's may not be operated by anyone under the age of 16.

Children under 12 may operate boats with motors < 10 hp unaccompanied.

Children under 16 may operate boats with motors < 40 hp unaccompanied.

Pleasure craft operators must carry "**Proof of Competency**" at all times, as per the ten year phase-in plan. Proof of competency may include; a certificate from a boating safety course taken prior to 01 April 1999, a PCO card or a professional mariners certificate. Those without previous proof of competency that wish to rent a pleasure craft will be required to complete a rental boat safety checklist, and carry on board the co-signed section of the checklist as proof of competency for the duration of the rental. Non-residents of Canada may demonstrate proof of competency by providing proof of competency from their own country.

## 2. The PCO Card

Candidates may earn "Proof of Competency" by completing the Lifesaving Society B.O.A.T. test. The test comprises of 36 multiple-choice questions. Candidates over the age of eight (8) are eligible to take the B.O.A.T. test.

The test is administered at the completion of the B.O.A.T. course. Anyone may attend the Lifesaving Society B.O.A.T. course. Upon earning 75% (27 / 36) on the test, candidates earn the Pleasure Craft Operator card (hereafter PCO card).

Any candidate with significant boating experience may wish to "challenge" the test without taking the entire course. The challenge test may be conducted at any "approved test facility" (see section five (5) of this document.

Alternatively, candidates may wish to study at home using the B.O.A.T. Study Guide prior to writing the B.O.A.T. test. See section five (5) re: proctoring of tests.

In all cases where a PCO card is to be issued, a "Candidate Registration" must be completed and forwarded to The Lifesaving Society. In all cases where a B.O.A.T. Instructor is submitting Candidate Registration forms, an "Instructor Roster Sheet" must be submitted.

See "Candidate Registration" in the Appendix.

See "Instructor Roster Sheet" in the Appendix.

### **3. Course Length**

The B.O.A.T. course is to be conducted for eight (8) hours. The course is classroom based, no practical demonstration of skills by candidates is required although the course incorporates the writing of the 36 question multiple-choice test.

A maximum of twenty (20) candidates per B.O.A.T. Instructor may be taught in one course.

The candidates will be asked to complete a course evaluation.

See "Course Evaluation" in appendix.

### **4. Required Text**

The B.O.A.T. Study Guide is available from the Lifesaving Society or from any registered B.O.A.T. Instructor. Any candidate taking the eight hour course or the home study program requires the Study Guide. Candidates who wish to become a B.O.A.T. Instructor also require the Study Guide. The candidate who challenges the test may wish to purchase the B.O.A.T. Study Guide as well, in order to study for the test.

Note that anyone may purchase the B.O.A.T. Study Guide regardless of his or her intentions to complete a course or the B.O.A.T. test with the Lifesaving Society.

### **5. Course Location / Approved Test Facility**

B.O.A.T. Instructors must establish a location for teaching their courses based on the following; access to a toilet, adequate space for the number of candidates registered for the course and a location that is generally recognized as being a good environment for write an test. Anywhere that a B.O.A.T. course is conducted may be considered an approved test facility, for the duration of the course.

As the need arises, certain other facilities or businesses may be designated as approved test facilities. An approved test facility must have a location for a candidate to write the 36 question multiple choice test in a quiet environment. Approved test facilities will be identified by the "Approved Test Facility" signage.

Approved test facilities can offer the B.O.A.T. test and retail the B.O.A.T. Study Guide. Approved test facilities are encouraged to liase with B.O.A.T. Instructors as the test is preferably administered by a B.O.A.T. Instructor (see section 6.2).

## **6. The Testing Process**

Accredited tests may only be administered in an approved testing facility. The test should be administered in writing. The test may be administered orally if a candidate indicates that they are illiterate or learning disabled. B.O.A.T. Instructors will correct the candidate's tests as soon as they have finished. There is no time limit on the test although candidates generally take between 45-60 minutes to complete the. If the candidate achieves 75% (27 / 36), The Lifesaving Society will issue a PCO card upon receipt of the Registration form.

Should the candidate receive less than 75%, (s)he will be permitted the immediate opportunity to write another version of the test and complete another Candidate Registration Form. The Instructor is encouraged to review the candidate's errors prior to administering the alternate test. If the candidate does not have the Study Guide, they should be encouraged to purchase one and study from it OR take the course before attempting the re-exam. The Instructor should submit both Candidate Registration forms but only one evaluation, in this case.

Should a candidate receive less than 75% on their second attempt, the Instructor should encourage the candidate to register in another) course. The Instructor MAY not refund all or some of the course fee however, (s)he may wish to offer the next course at a discounted price. The Coast Guard forbids the writing of more than two tests on the same day.

Every time that a candidate attempts the accredited test, the candidate registration form must be submitted to the Lifesaving Society. The Lifesaving Society must be paid, in full for each test attempt (except where the Instructor permits the candidate to attempt another version of the test immediately following the course.) In no case will a candidate be allowed to retain or make a copy of the B.O.A.T. test. If a test is damaged or marked in any way, the Instructor should destroy it.

The PCO card is good for life and must be carried by the candidate at all times when operating a motorized recreational craft in Canadian waters.

### **6.1 Youth testing**

Youth tests may only be administered to youths. Two test formats exist. One version of the test is designed for eight to twelve (8-12) year olds. The second version of the youth test is designed for twelve to sixteen (12 to 16) year olds. Proctors or Instructors administering the youth tests must ask for proof of age and satisfy themselves that the age of the person taking the accredited test is consistent with the age category for which the test is designed.

The Coast Guard recommends that questions be read orally to candidates of eight (8) to nine (9) years of age.

## 6.2 Appointment of Proctors

Whenever possible, the B.O.A.T. test will be administered and proctored by a registered B.O.A.T. Instructor. Where an Instructor is not available (in the case of home study or a challenge test), a proctor may be appointed by the Lifesaving Society. An appointed proctor must have attained the age of majority (18) and may not be related to the candidate(s).

In the event that the Lifesaving Society cannot make an arrangement with a person to proctor a candidate (or a group of candidates), the individuals interested in writing the test may submit, to the Lifesaving Society, the name of a person who meets the following requirements: be an adult (18 years of age), not be related to any of the candidates, occupy one of the following professional positions:

- peace officer
- justice of the peace
- court official or lawyer
- religious official
- elected representative
- doctor or engineer
- a person holding a teaching license, or
- a person who is a member of a generally recognized professional organization

The proctor's name must be forwarded to The Lifesaving Society prior to the test date. The Lifesaving Society will contact the proctor. Once approved as a proctor, the proctor will receive the B.O.A.T. test(s) and a candidate registration form for each candidate. The test must be administered in an approved facility. The proctor must forward the test(s) and the completed candidate registration(s) to The Lifesaving Society. The test will be marked at the Lifesaving Society and PCO cards issued upon successful completion (75%). The candidate is responsible for all costs associated with writing the test.

Refer to "Letter to Proctor, Pre-approval" and "Letter to Proctor, Testing" in appendix.

## **7. Certification Requirements for B.O.A.T. Instructor Status**

Provincial Trainers may approve any candidate with the following four (4) pre-requisites as a B.O.A.T. Instructor:

- Coaching or Instructor certification card (from any society/institution) or proof of instructional competency (verified by reference).
- Previous practical boating experience (verified by reference).
- Pleasure Craft Operator card or alternative "Proof of Competency".
- Complete the pre-course assignment (using the B.O.A.T. Study Guide) and attend the eight hour B.O.A.T. Instructor Clinic. Attendance at the Instructor clinic is free during the summer of 2000. Commencing in September 2000, there will be a cost to attend the Instructor School.

See "Instructor Clinic Application Form" (2 pages) and "Instructor Acceptance Letter" in the Appendix (note that these are samples only, to be modified for each clinic).

The Provincial Trainer will approve only candidates for which (s)he has verified all four (4) pre-requisites. See " Instructor Registration and Evaluation" in the appendix.

## **8. Instructor Registration / Purchase of B.O.A.T. Package:**

Once a Provincial Trainer has approved a candidate as a B.O.A.T. Instructor, the Instructor must purchase the B.O.A.T. package in order to teach B.O.A.T. courses to the general public. The Instructor package contains everything necessary to teach a full B.O.A.T. course to 20 candidates. Specifically, the package contains:

- 20 B.O.A.T. Study Guides
- "MASTER" Candidate Registration sheets and Course Evaluation forms
- "MASTER" Instructor Roster sheet (to be completed for each course)
- 4 B.O.A.T. posters
- Instructor T-shirt
- 8 tests **note:** each Instructor must sign for the test package as accredited tests are strictly regulated by Coast Guard
- B.O.A.T. Policy and Procedures Guide

Instructors will receive the Instructor package after paying the Instructor Package and Registration fee. Additional B.O.A.T. Study Guides and B.O.A.T. posters may be purchased at the Lifesaving Society. The Instructor is responsible for setting course fees. Maximum number of candidates per Instructor is 20. Co-teaching is encouraged.

Refer to the "Price List" in the Appendix.

Instructors will be required to sign for all tests in the package as these are considered "controlled documents" by the Coast Guard. The B.O.A.T. test will at all times remain in a secure location and may never be copied or distributed in any way. If an Instructor ceases to teach, (s)he agrees to destroy all copies of the B.O.A.T. test. Tests remain, at all times, the property of The Lifesaving Society and B.O.A.T. Instructors administering the B.O.A.T. test are doing so on behalf of the Lifesaving Society.

See "Instructor Waiver and Responsibility for Tests" in Appendix.

## **9. Instructor Clinics and I.T. certification**

At the recommendation and discretion of the Lifesaving Society Board of Directors, B.O.A.T. Instructor clinics will be set up. Instructors who wish to be considered for B.O.A.T. Instructor Trainer status must teach a minimum number of B.O.A.T. courses before submitting their name to the Board for consideration. I.T.'s will be paid by the Lifesaving Society on a "fee/course" basis or for travel depending on the situation.

## 10. Responsibilities

### **B.O.A.T. Instructors will:**

- advertise and promote safe boating
- provide every candidate with the opportunity to purchase the B.O.A.T. Study Guide (required for home study and for the course)
- establish a lesson plan and modify the plan to suit candidates and changes to the program content
- be responsible for setting up their own course dates and locations and for setting a fee schedule
- wear the B.O.A.T. Instructor T-shirt or other Lifesaving Society insignia while conducting Lifesaving Society business
- find a suitable location for teaching and testing (see section 5)
- pay for the facility (if required), own meals while teaching and for own transportation to and from the B.O.A.T. course
- handle all aspects of registration (unless an alternate arrangement is made with the host facility) and administration except the issuing of the PCO card
- forward candidate registrations and roster sheets to the Lifesaving Society branch office as soon as practicable following successful completion of the B.O.A.T. test
- alert the Lifesaving Society to the dates and locations of upcoming B.O.A.T. courses
- comply with the Lifesaving Society Code of Conduct for Instructors
- graciously welcome, from time to time, monitors from the Lifesaving Society and/or from the Coast Guard, Office of Boating Safety
- recertify every two years using the Lifesaving Society credit card
- be considered part of the provincial B.O.A.T. team, attend meetings whenever possible and at all times feel at liberty to suggest, comment or criticize the B.O.A.T. course, test or procedures

### **The Lifesaving Society will:**

- advertise and promote safe boating
- direct potential candidates to local B.O.A.T. Instructors
- post upcoming B.O.A.T. courses on the Lifesaving Society website
- offer technical support to registered B.O.A.T. Instructors
- supply Instructors with B.O.A.T. material in a timely manner
- accrue all costs for postage and handling of B.O.A.T. materials
- mail PCO cards directly to successful candidates
- maintain records of all courses taught and PCO cards issued
- host provincial B.O.A.T. Instructor meetings
- keep all B.O.A.T. Instructors advised of B.O.A.T. meetings
- keep all B.O.A.T. Instructors advised of changes to policy or amendments
- at **least** annually, monitor each B.O.A.T. Instructor during a B.O.A.T. course
- liaise with the Coast Guard about changes and new developments in boating safety

## **11. Instructor Decertification**

The Canadian Coast Guard accredits the B.O.A.T. course as a Pleasure Craft Operator (PCO) course. Part of that accreditation requires that the Society be vigilant in protecting the security and the integrity of the B.O.A.T. certification. Failure to do so would put the Society's accreditation at risk. Consequently, any violations of B.O.A.T. protocols as outlined in the B.O.A.T. Policy and Procedures Guide will be dealt with very aggressively using the following practice:

- a) Upon notification of a possible violation, the Society will immediately suspend the B.O.A.T. Instructor's certification. During this suspension, the Instructor will not be permitted to teach B.O.A.T. courses or proctor B.O.A.T. tests.
- b) The Society will quickly investigate the alleged violation. The result of the violation could result in one of three actions:
  - removal of the suspension and reinstatement of B.O.A.T. Instructor status
  - implementation of a process to correct the violation and permit B.O.A.T. Instructor reinstatement after corrective action has been applied
  - decertification with the permanent disqualification from further involvement in the teaching, testing and administration of the B.O.A.T. program

**Appendix (available upon request only):**

1. Candidate Registration
2. Instructor Roster Sheet
3. Course Evaluation
4. Letter to Proctor
5. Instructor Clinic Application Form (2 pages)
6. Instructor Acceptance Letter
7. Instructor Registration and Evaluation
8. Price List
9. Instructor Waiver and Responsibility for Tests

**References:**

Source material provided by:

Canadian Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety  
B.O.A.T. Study Guide  
Lifesaving Society, Nova Scotia Branch documents  
Lifesaving Society, Alberta Branch documents  
Lifesaving Society, Ontario Branch documents