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**Boating Safety Education**  
2026 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor:**

Sponsor:

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**LONG TITLE**

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**General Description:**

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This bill creates an education requirement to operate a watercraft.

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**Highlighted Provisions:**

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This bill:

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▸ creates a watercraft operator safety course;

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▸ establishes guidelines for the course; and

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▸ prohibits the operation of a watercraft without evidence of completion of the course.

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**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

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None

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**Other Special Clauses:**

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This bill provides a special effective date.

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**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

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ENACTS:

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**73-18-15.6**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

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Section 1. Section **73-18-15.6** is enacted to read:

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**73-18-15.6 . Watercraft operator safety course.**

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(1) As used in this section, "watercraft" means a motorboat or sailboat.

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(2) The division shall create a watercraft operator safety course for the purpose of

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developing and instilling the knowledge, attitudes, habits, and skills necessary for the

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safe and ethical operation of a watercraft.

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(3) The course shall include:

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(a) instruction on personal flotation devices as described in Subsection 73-18-8(1);

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(b) instruction on driving under the influence, as described in Title 41, Chapter 6a, Part

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5, Driving Under the Influence and Reckless Driving, in relation to the operation of a

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watercraft while under the influence of alcohol, any drug, or the combined influence

- 32           of alcohol and any drug;
- 33           (c) instruction on best practices for safe operation and navigation of watercraft;
- 34           (d) information about aquatic invasive species necessary to fulfill the requirements
- 35           described in Subsection 23A-10-304(4)(b); and
- 36           (e) other safety information determined by the division.
- 37 (4) A watercraft operator shall complete the course once every calendar year.
- 38 (5) The division shall ensure that an individual may complete the course in less than 20
- 39           minutes on average.
- 40 (6)(a) The division shall issue proof of completion of the watercraft safety course to a
- 41           watercraft operator upon completion of the watercraft operator safety course.
- 42           (b) The proof of completion expires the day after December 31 in the calendar year
- 43           which the operator completes the watercraft operator safety course.
- 44 (7) An individual may not operate a watercraft unless the individual has in the individual's
- 45           immediate possession proof that the individual completed the watercraft operator safety
- 46           course described in this section within the current calendar year.
- 47 (8) Completion of the watercraft operator safety course does not satisfy the requirements of
- 48           the personal watercraft safety course described in Section 73-18-15.2.
- 49 (9) A watercraft owner or livery may not rent a watercraft to an individual who does not
- 50           provide to the watercraft owner or livery proof that the individual completed the
- 51           watercraft operator safety course within the current calendar year.
- 52 (10) A person who violates Subsection (7) or (9) is guilty of an infraction.

53           Section 2. **Effective Date.**

54           This bill takes effect on January 1, 2027.