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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**May 10, 2022**

## **Free Boating Safety Classes to Return to New Mexico**

*Recreational boaters urged to get educated before the upcoming boating season*

**Santa Fe, NM** - It may not feel like boating season yet, but New Mexico State Parks, along with boating safety advocates nationwide, are urging boaters to enroll in a boating safety course this spring. New Mexico State Parks offers free boating safety classes throughout the state and online.

“We all need to learn how to drive a car before we take it out on the road, and we should all learn how to operate a boat safely before we head out on the water. Now is the time to enroll in a boating safety course to get ready for the summer boating season,” said Manuel Overby, Chief of Law Enforcement and Boating Safety for New Mexico State Parks.

Traditional and online courses are available. Courses are made to fit every schedule and lifestyle. New Mexico State Parks has a class schedule and boating safety information [on its website](#).

“Over the last five years, 84 percent of boating deaths occurred on boats where the operator had never taken a safety course,” said Scott Chalmers, Boating Safety and Education Program Coordinator for New Mexico State Parks. “We want everyone to get educated and to be safe out on the water.”

Benefits of taking a boating safety course:

- Boost your confidence by brushing up on essential skills.
- Interact with and learn from an experienced boating instructor, and network with other boaters.
- A boating safety course can save boaters money. Many boat insurance providers offer discounts to people who have successfully completed a boating safety course.

Who is required to take the course? All motorboat, personal watercraft and sailboat operators born on or after January 1, 1989 must complete a boating safety course—including children who are being supervised by an adult.

Students must score 80 percent on the closed book exam to receive their boater education card and carry it on board while operating the motorboat. Many recreational boaters in most states are required by law to complete a boating safety course and carry a boater education card. The boater education card is valid for life and meets the requirements for recreational boating education in most states.

For more information and to register for a class, call 888-NMPARKS or visit [emnrd.nm.gov/spd/](https://emnrd.nm.gov/spd/).



*Photos courtesy: New Mexico State Parks Division*

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