

Drive a boat? You will need a license

By Tom Stienstra, San Francisco Chronicle

A new era is at hand for boating in California. Most call it the "Boater Driver's License." Its official name is the California Vessel Operator Card (CVOC).

The Division of Boating and Waterways sent out its annual two-year registration certificates this month to the state's 820,000 registered boat owners. It included a flyer on how the CVOC will be implemented.

Anybody who takes the wheel of a powerboat will be required to pass a safety course and written test, somewhat similar to how a special license certification is required to drive a motorcycle or a commercial truck.

Those with non-motorized boats, such as kayaks, canoes, rafts or drift boats, are not required to go through the program. But if you're on a friend's boat and you're asked to take the wheel for a moment, you then would need the boater's card.

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