

Massachusetts Boating Law Changes: **THE HANSON MILONE ACT OF 2024**

Massachusetts has passed new laws affecting recreational boating, known as the **Hanson Milone Act of 2024**. These changes are important for everyone who enjoys boating on our state's waters.

✓ Here are some key points to know:



1. Mandatory Boating Safety Education

- Starting **April 1, 2026**, all motorboat operators **born after January 1, 1989**, must complete a **boating safety course** to operate motorized vessels or personal watercraft (like jet skis). Anyone **born before January 1, 1989**, will have until **April 1, 2028**, to obtain their boater safety certificate.
- The course can be taken online or in person and covers essential safety rules, boat operation, and how to avoid accidents.
- After completing the course, boaters will receive a **boating safety certificate**, which must be available for display while operating a boat.

2. Age Requirements for Boating

- To operate motorized boats or personal watercraft, you must be at least **12 years old** and hold a **valid** boater safety certificate **unless** accompanied on-board and directly supervised by a capable adult who is **18 years of age or older with a valid boater safety certificate**.
- Personal watercraft (PWC) users must be at least **16 years old** to operate with a valid boater safety certificate, with no exceptions.

3. Life Jacket Laws

- A **throwable personal flotation device** is designed to be thrown to someone in the water.  This includes Type IV or Type V devices with Type IV performance. However, wearable PFDs are not considered throwable unless clearly marked as such.
- A **wearable personal flotation device (PFD)** is designed to be worn or attached to the body. This includes legacy Type I, II, III, or V PFDs with Type I, II, or III performance.
- Every motorboat must have at least one personal flotation device (PFD) for **each person** onboard. For Class A, 1, 2, or 3 motorboats, these must be **wearable PFDs**. All PFDs must be U.S. Coast Guard approved, the right size for the user, and in good condition. Boats 16 feet or longer must also carry a **throwable PFD** (legacy Type IV). 

Why is this Important?

The changes made by the **Hanson Milone Act** are designed to make boating safer for everyone. With more young people and families on the water, it's important that everyone knows the rules and understands how to stay safe. By following these new laws, you help keep our waters safe for all boaters!

How to Stay Compliant:

- Take a **boating safety course**.
- Always **wear your life jacket** if you're under 12 years old.
- **Don't** drink and boat.
- **Be aware** of the new age and operator requirements.

For more details, visit the Massachusetts Environmental Police website or contact your local boating authority.



Stay safe and enjoy your time on the water!

Environmental Police Website:

www.mass.gov/OLE

MEP's Boating Course Schedule:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/boating-safety-course-schedule>

Massachusetts Boating Safety Handbook:

<https://www.boat-ed.com/massachusetts/handbook/>

Contact Us: Boatsafetycourse@mass.gov

Read the full Hanson Milone Act Here:

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter350>