



Policies and Procedures

Boat Use Policy

Introduction:

It is the policy of the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry to set minimum standards to help assure that all College or Research Foundation owned or operated boats used for any purpose are appropriately outfitted, reliable, and safely operated and managed. Individual instructors, researchers, or programs may have additional requirements. This policy applies to any boat owned, operated, or maintained by SUNY ESF, and the employees, students, and visitors using them.

Policy:

General State-wide & Federal Requirements

All boats must be operated, equipped and maintained in accordance with regulations established by the New York State Navigation Law, <http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/lawssrch.cgi?NVLWO> or the United States Coast Guard, depending upon waters of operation.

Boats operating on **federally navigable waters** as oceanographic research vessels and manned by scientific personnel employed exclusively in instruction and/or research in oceanography and/or limnology must be in possession of a letter of designation as an oceanographic research vessel from the nearest Coast Guard Sector Prevention Department.

ESF-specific Requirements

Boat Equipment:

Every occupant of any ESF boat must wear a suitably rated personal floatation device at all times the boat is in the water and away from the dock.

Motorized boats must be equipped with a hand held or permanently mounted two-way communications device (radio, cell phone, etc.) capable of summoning emergency assistance in the area of the boat at the time of operation, whenever such communication routes exist. Boat Operators must be familiar with the proper use of their device.

All motorized boats must display their required navigation lights at all times between sunset to sunrise, and during daylight periods of reduced visibility. All manually propelled vessels, including canoes, in lieu of carrying the prescribed lights may carry a lighted lantern that shows a white light.

Boat Operators:

All operators of motorized boats must have completed an approved boater safety course. Approved classroom courses include those offered by NYS Parks <http://www.nysparks.com/recreation/boating/safety-courses.aspx>, the [U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary](#) or the [U.S. Power Squadron](#). New York State approved online courses are available at: <http://www.nysparks.com/recreation/boating/boating-safety-class.aspx>.

Documentation of such completion is to be retained by the Unit Chairs and Directors



Policies and Procedures

State law requires that the New York Safe Boating Program includes at least eight hours of classroom instruction, and a proctored exam. Documentation of such completion is to be retained by the Unit Chairs and Directors.

Unit Chairs and Directors shall ensure and document that all Boat Operators are provided with training that includes at a minimum: ESF Boat Use Policy; loading/unloading boat; check of boat equipment; operation of two-way communication device; check of navigation lights; boat & motor operation; avoiding boat/motor damage; docking; and tie down.

This policy requires that boats transporting more than 20 persons have a Crew Person in addition to the Operator. The Crew Person must be a College employee, must be familiar with the boat and its accessories, and must have completed an approved boater safety course. Documentation of such completion is to be retained by the Unit Chairs and Directors.

Boat Operators shall keep informed of weather and water conditions. The safe use and operation of a boat, and all related decisions, are the sole responsibility of the Boat Operator.

It is the Boat Operator's responsibility to see that the following minimum information is filed with their supervisor, a designated person, or in a specific location prior to departure: boat description or registration #; names of occupants; destination; departure time; planned return time. Subsequent note of the actual return time must also be made.

Motorized boats are to be used for related program activities. Motorized boats are not to be used for recreational or personal use. Canoes and non-motorized boats may be used for recreation during the hours between sunrise and sunset. Exceptions may be approved by the Program Director.

The ESF Smoking Policy, and the ESF Policy Governing Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs apply to the use of all ESF boats. See <http://www.esf.edu/au/documents/CollegeSmokingPolicy.pdf> and <http://www.esf.edu/au/documents/AlcoholOtherDrugUsePolicy.pdf> and <http://www.esf.edu/au/documents/AlcoholUseDistributionPolicy.pdf>.

All boating accidents are required to be reported by the NYS Navigation Law <http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/lawssrch.cgi?NVLWO>, and must be reported in accordance with such law to the nearest police agency. In addition to reporting in accordance with the NYS Navigation Law, the Unit Chair/Director, University Police, the Vice President for Administration, and the Research Foundation (as appropriate) must be contacted as soon as possible, but definitely within 24 hours regarding any accident in which any person is killed, injured or disappears, or in which damage to the property of any person in excess of \$500 is sustained. A copy of the accident report must also be filed with the University Police Office. Any tickets or citations issued by a law enforcement regulatory agency to the operator of an ESF boat, while operating an ESF boat, must be reported by the Boat Operator to the ESF University Police Department within 24 hours.