

Transport Canada Policy Changes for Commercial Boaters

By Rod & Marianne Nuttall

You've heard lots about training of the recreational boater in the past. The rules for Commercial boat operators (non-pleasure) are a bit different and there have been some recent policy changes to the requirements for commercial boaters in our protected waterways. Note: if you are working while on a boat, you are considered a commercial boater.

As would be expected, a commercial boat operator does need some training. The requirements for training on larger boats has been around for many years. But Transport Canada is now enforcing the requirement for safety training on smaller non-pleasure craft and commercial boats for both the operators and crew. This affects fishing lodges, camps, guides, barges, taxi's, conservation workers, commercial fishing boats etc. It only makes sense, if a business is operating a boat, they should have some safety training to protect themselves, staff, passengers and other boaters.

In the past the regulation said a person who uses a boat for work requires MED (Marine Emergency Duties Training) for work and a Pleasure Craft Operators Card if and when they are using their boat for recreational purposes only.

NEW Policy

The new policy changes coming into effect this year will allow certain smaller boat commercial operators and their crew to have a Pleasure Craft Operators Card in lieu of the MED training. This only applies to Commercial (non Pleasure Craft) Operators of vessels less than 8 Metres carrying less than 6 passengers and operating their boats less than 1 nautical mile from shore in protected waters. It is highly recommended that the operators and crew of these vessels take the 6 hour course for their PCOC card. While recreational boaters may have until the year 2009 to get their cards, commercial boaters must have the card right now and all crew on the boat need it whether they are driving the boat themselves or not.

Transport Canada requirements for larger vessels carrying more than 6 passengers or greater than 8 metres will require the MED training and or other training and certificates as previously required. Contact Transport Canada Marine division for more information.

There is no crossover between the Marine Emergency Duties Training and the Pleasure Craft Operators Card.

Rod & Marianne Nuttall are certified Boating Safety instructors offering Boating Safety courses in all areas of NW Ontario and Manitoba. They have certified over 14,500 pleasure craft boaters and 1,000 MED certificates to date. They offer a comprehensive basic course, a refresher course and challenge exam for recreational boaters and training for commercial boaters as well. They can be contacted Toll Free at 1-877-783-3368.