

Information for Prospective Airboat Operator Course Providers



ATTENTION: Please review the entire PowerPoint presentation before you begin putting your course together. Failure to review the entire presentation could result in delays in getting your course approved.



What you need to know to become a course provider.

The following slides will cover what you must know, and what steps you must take in order to become an Approved Florida Airboat Operator Course Provider.



First Steps

- Review the Florida Statute, 327.391, applicable to Airboat Operators Carrying Passengers for Hire in Florida, and Administrative Rule 68D-35.001 applicable to Airboat Course Providers.
- Become familiar with Airboat Course Provider requirements
- Become familiar with Airboat Course standards
- Become familiar with the Airboat Course approval requirements.



Florida Statute 327.391

Beginning July 1, 2019, a person may not operate an airboat carrying one or more passengers for hire on waters of the state unless he or she has all of the following onboard the airboat:

- A photographic identification card.
- Proof of successful course completion in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- Proof of successful course completion in first aid.
- Proof of successful course completion of an approved Florida boating safety course OR have a captain's license issued by the United States Coast Guard (USCG).
- Proof of successful completion of a commission-approved airboat operator course that meets the minimum standards established by commission rule.
- A violation of this statute is a misdemeanor of the second degree.



Course Provider Requirements

Course Providers have specific responsibilities related to providing this course. The next few slides will explain these important responsibilities.



Course Provider Requirements

- Course providers have responsibilities related to the required upkeep of course curriculum, records, certificates
 - Courses must be updated, as necessary
 - Books, Records, and Documents must be maintained for no less than 5 years
- Course providers must confirm students have met statutory requirements
 - CPR
 - First Aid
 - Proof of Boater Safety Course or USCG license



Course Provider Requirements - Certificates

- Course providers have responsibilities related to the certificates issued to students who received a passing score on the examination **and** passed the on the water practical evaluations
- The certificate may be either electronic or printable and must contain:
 - Name of the Course Provider; date of issue; the student's first name, middle initial, last name, date of birth, current mailing address; the passing score on the examination, including the date of the successful completion, and the primary instructor for the classroom and on the water training.



Course Provider Requirements - Certificates

(Continued)

- Printed certificates can be issued in any size/format, as long as the required information is on the certificate (or card).
- A draft copy of a certificate must be submitted as part of the course approval process.



Course Provider Requirements - Instructors

- Course providers have the responsibility of making sure their instructors meet the minimum requirements established in rule for this course.
- Course providers may use higher standards for hiring instructors than listed in the rule, but they must meet the minimum standards.

The next slide lists the minimum standards for instructors



Course Provider Requirements

- Instructor qualifications
 - Demonstrated knowledge and skills
 - Recommendation - have your instructors complete a US Department of Interior (DOI)-based course as a student prior to becoming an instructor.
 - Must be at least 21 years of age.
 - Have obtained either a High-School Diploma or GED.
 - Have a boating privilege that is current and has not had their privilege to operate a vessel in Florida suspended in the past three years.
 - No felony convictions within the previous five years.
 - Must have a minimum of 120 hours of documented airboat operation time within last three years, to be completed at a minimum of 40 hours per year.
 - Course providers may want to use an Airboat Operation Log to document time.



Course Provider Requirements

- Legal Obligation Reminders
 - Responsibility to create and maintain Curriculum/Course/Records.
 - Responsibility to confirm student requirements have been met.
 - Responsibility to confirm instructor requirements have been met.
 - Issue appropriate certificates.
- A violation is a misdemeanor of the second degree-Criminal
- A violation(s) could also expose you to Civil Liability
 - Example - Any person administering the Airboat Operators Course and examinations is prohibited from providing assistance of any kind to the examinee during the examination and must not allow, suffer, or permit any other person to assist the examinee during the examination.

Remember, the safety of your instructors, students and their future passengers through the safe operation of airboats is YOUR responsibility at all times.



Course Requirements

The following slides will cover the structure of the course. This includes the workbook/text format and the requirements as follows;

- Lesson plans
- Syllabus/course outline
- Course objectives
- Final exam
- On-the-water practicals



Course Requirements

Every course must be a minimum of 24 hours total instruction and testing time.

- 8 hours of classroom instruction and written testing.
- 14 hours of on-the-water instruction, practice, and testing of operational practicals.
- That leaves 2 hours that can be used at the course provider/instructor's discretion.

For the on-the-water instruction:

- The student to instructor ratio must be at least 3:1.
- Each student must have at least 4 hours of individual operating time.



Course Requirements

FWC will make available to prospective course providers the Airboat Operator Development Manual. This manual will be the basis of the workbook/text that course providers will need to modify to meet the requirements for course approval.

Course providers will add information to the Development Manual, but should not remove or delete information from the base manual.

Information must be added to this manual by the provider in order to create a workbook/text that will meet the requirements.



Course Requirements

Every course will have the same base information contained in the FWC Airboat Operator Course Development Manual, including most of the on-the-water practicals. There are five chapters in this manual

- **Airboat Orientation**
- **Airboat Maintenance**
- **Required and Recommended Equipment**
- **Operating Airboats**
- **Practical Exercises**



Course Requirements

14 Florida-specific topics and one on-the-water practical must be added, by the course provider, to the FWC Development Manual before it will meet the requirements to be approved.

The next slides show the 14 topics and include a few examples of what should be added by the course provider for each topic. The additional on-the-water practical will be discussed as well.



Florida Specific Topics

- Florida-specific Boating Requirements
- Equipment Requirements
- Ecosystem Awareness
- Boating Accident Requirements
- Problems Seeing Other Airboats and Being Seen by Them
- Boating Restricted Areas and Regulatory Markers
- Operator Responsibility, Courtesy, and Good Judgement on the Water
- Avoiding Careless, Reckless, and Negligent Operation of Airboats
- Effects of Alcohol, Controlled Substances, and Stressors
- Navigation Rules
- Aids to Navigation
- Awareness of Changes in Weather or Water Conditions and Proper Responses to Those Changes
- Boating Accidents
- Noises, Nuisances, Environmental and Other Operational Concerns



TOPIC 1: Florida Specific Boating Requirements *This topic will describe Florida's boating requirements to include, but not limited to:*

- The boating education law requirements–Example
 - Anyone born on or after January 1, 1988, who operates a vessel powered by 10 horsepower or more must pass an approved boating safety education course and have in their possession photographic ID and a boating safety education ID card issued by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- Life jacket requirement for children under 6 years old - Example
 - A child under the age of six must wear a USCG. approved life jacket while onboard a boat including an airboat under 26 feet in length while the boat is underway. “Underway” is defined as anytime except when the vessel is anchored, moored, made fast to the shore, or aground.
- Airboat muffling requirements
- Airboat flag requirements
- Airboat display of registration numbers and decals
- Boating safety education requirements related to boating violations and/or accidents



TOPIC 2: Equipment Requirements *This topic will describe Florida's adoption of the federal equipment requirements include, but not limited to :*

- Florida law requires the owner and/or operator of an airboat is responsible to carry, store, maintain, and use the equipment required by the federal safety equipment requirements established by the USCG. This applies to both recreational and commercial use.
- Life jackets - Example
 - Lifejackets must be US Coast Guard approved, in serviceable condition, be the proper size for the intended wearer, and be readily accessible.
- Sound Producing Device - Example
 - All vessels are required to carry an effective sound-producing device that is audible for at least one-half mile such as a whistle or horn.
- Fire Extinguisher(s) onboard as required
- Navigation Lights
- Visual Distress Signals (VDS)



TOPIC 3: Ecosystem Awareness *This topic will describe ecosystem awareness information to include, but not be limited to:*

- Awareness of the ecosystem around them – Example
 - Operators should be aware of Critical Wildlife Areas (CWA), manatee zones, shallow areas, and choke points, especially if they are operating in areas they don't normally operate.
- Operators should do their best to protect natural resources and not needlessly disturb wildlife.
- Operators should know their local waterway and those areas they intend to operate in.



TOPIC 4: Boating Accident Requirements *The course will describe Florida's boating accident reporting requirement to include, but not be limited to :*

- Requirements related to leaving the scene of an accident – Example
 - It is unlawful for any person operating a vessel involved in a boating accident to leave the scene without giving all possible aid to the involved persons and without reporting the accident to the proper authorities
- Requirements for reporting a boating accident.



TOPIC 5: Problems Seeing Other Airboats and Being Seen by Them *This topic will describe problems seeing and being seen by other airboats to include, but not be limited to:*

- Challenges of seeing and being seen by other boats – Example
 - Understand how navigating through any waterbody that has sight limitations such as; vegetation, trees, sharp turn in the channel or river, etc., that can obstruct your ability to see other vessels and be seen by them.
- Speed should be adjusted based on the prevailing circumstances.



TOPIC 6: Boating Restricted Areas and Regulatory Markers *The course will describe Florida's boating restricted areas and regulatory markers to include, but not limited to Idle Speed, Slow Speed, and mile per hour restrictions:*

- Idle Speed/No Wake Zone – Example
 - A designated area where vessels must be operated at a speed no greater than that which is necessary to maintain steerage and headway. The vessel should not produce a wake at this speed.
- Slow Speed/Minimum Wake Zones
- Local Restrictions
- Vessel Exclusion Areas



TOPIC 7: Operator Responsibility, Courtesy, and Good Judgement on the Water

The course will describe Florida's operator responsibility (ethics), courtesy, and good judgement on the water to include, but not be limited to:

- Operator Courtesy near boat ramps – Example
 - Operate at a slow speed on or near boat ramps and move away an adequate distance before powering up, and where possible no power loading.
- Learn and observe all state boating regulations, navigation rules, and airboat safety equipment requirements.
- Recognize the noise generated from an airboat propeller and engine exhaust system may annoy others.
- Protect natural resources and do not needlessly disturb wildlife.



TOPIC 8: Avoiding Careless, Reckless, and Negligent Operation of Airboats *The course will describe avoiding careless, reckless, and negligent operation of airboats to include, but not limited to:*

- Avoiding dangerous and illegal operation – Example
 - If no speeds are posted, you should operate the airboat so that it does not endanger others. Airboat speed always should be maintained so that the airboat can be stopped or an obstacle can be avoided safely.
- Avoid operating in restricted areas without regard for other vessels or people, posted speeds and wake restrictions, divers-down flags, etc.
- Keep a sharp lookout for submerged objects, such as debris, shoals, or stumps.



TOPIC 9: Effects of Alcohol, Controlled Substances, and Stressors *The course will describe effects of alcohol, controlled substances, and stressors to include, but not limited to:*

- Overall effects of alcohol – Example
 - It takes less alcohol and/or controlled substances when combined with stressors to impair an operator's judgement and reaction time which impacts their ability to operate safely.
- Alcohol causes dehydration of the body.
- Alcohol and/or controlled substances make it difficult for you to pay attention and perform multiple tasks.



TOPIC 10: Navigation Rules *The course will describe Florida's navigation rules requirement to include, but not limited to maintaining proper lookout, safe speed, and requirements of give way or stand on airboats:*

- Maintain a proper lookout – Example
 - Always maintain 360 degree awareness so you can see what you are approaching, and what boats might be approaching you.
- Learn and observe navigation rules.
- Know the difference between a give-way vessel and a stand-on vessel.
- Maintain a safe speed and operate defensively.



TOPIC 11: Aids to Navigation *The course will describe Florida's aids to navigation regulations to include, but not limited to buoys and other waterway markers:*

- **Waterways Markers – Example**

- Non-lateral markers give information other than the edges of safe water areas. The most common are regulatory markers that are white and use orange markings and black lettering. These markers are found on lakes and rivers and are used to give direction and information, warn of hazards and obstructions, mark controlled areas, and mark exclusion areas.

- **Vessel Exclusion Markers**



TOPIC 12: Awareness of Changes in Weather or Water Conditions and Proper Responses to Those Changes

The course will describe awareness of changes in Florida's weather or water conditions and proper responses to those changes to include:

- Changing weather – Example
 - Weather can change very rapidly and create unexpected emergencies for airboats. You should always watch for changes in the weather/tide and monitor the weather/tide forecast.
- Operators should always be aware of water conditions, tidal influence, rain/highwater in rivers, and wave actions and their impact on the proper operation of airboats.
- Watch for wind direction shifts, which usually indicate a weather change.



TOPIC 13: Boating Accidents *The course will describe boating accidents to include causes and prevention of airboat accidents:*

- Accident Prevention – Example
 - Prevent and prepare for capsizing, swamping, or someone falling overboard by not overloading the airboat, slowing the airboat appropriately when turning, and don't risk your passengers in rough water conditions or bad weather.
- Be aware of striking underwater objects in shallow water or while entering/exiting the water.
- If you capsize, swamp, or fall overboard, stay with your airboat, take a head count, try to reboard, don't panic if the airboat sinks or floats away.
- If someone falls over immediately reduce speed, turn around and, if necessary, stop engine and locate person.



TOPIC 14: Noises, Nuisances, Environmental and Other Operational Concerns *The course will describe noise, nuisances, environmental and other operational concerns to include:*

- Noise Reduction – Example
 - Use slow speed to reduce noise near residential and public use areas, and being extra cautious to reduce sound levels during nighttime hours.
- Since airboats can operate in a variety of areas, including environmentally-sensitive areas, every effort should be made to operate responsibly in these locations.
- Recognize the noise generated from an airboat propeller and engine exhaust system may annoy others.



Course Requirements

The on-the-water practicals and testing must include:

- Shallow water operation
- Deep water operation
- Docking
- Beaching
- Transitions from water to land and back to water

** The practicals for shallow water operation, deep water operation, Docking, and Beaching are already in the FWC Development Manual. **



On-the-Water Practicals

The practical for transitioning from water to land and back to land will be the one practical that a course provider will have to create and add to the FWC Development Manual.

Remember, for this practical that will have to be created, keep this information in mind.

- You will need to develop the on-the-water practical exercises for transitioning from water to land and back to water.
- This practical will be included in your course outline and lesson plan.
- You should include a diagram in your course material (textbook) and explain the required maneuvers, along with any required equipment to mark the course and the basic expectations you have for the student in order to successfully complete this practical.



Course Requirements

Once a course provider has added these Florida specific topics and on-the-water practical to the development manual to create their course workbook they will need a lesson plan for each chapter. These lesson plans will cover contain the following 8 elements.

- Subject
- References
- Objectives
- Safety Considerations
- Assessment
- Procedure
- Instructor Actions
- Desired Student Outcome

The next few slides will explain these elements in more detail.



Lesson Plan

- Subject
 - This will be the Title of the Chapter (Example – “Airboat Orientation”)
- References
 - This will be a listing of any reference pieces that were added to the chapter.

Example:

- United States Coast Guard--33 CFR 173.27
- USCG Navigation Rule 6-Safe Speed

❖ Be as specific as possible



Lesson Plan - continued

- Objectives
 - This will be the objectives for the chapter.

Examples:

- Student will be able to identify the components of an airboat.
- Student will be able to identify different types of hulls and their performance characteristics.



Lesson Plan - continued

- Safety Considerations

- List any and all safety considerations and procedures for this chapter.

Example:

- Each instructor will be equipped with relevant safety tools and knowledge when demonstrating the various parts of the airboat and ensure the students adhere to all safety rules.



Lesson Plan - continued

- Assessment
 - This will include how the instructor will assess the students during each lesson in order to determine when the students understand the subject well enough to move on the next topic or subject.

Example:

- Asking questions of the students and ensuring they are answering fully and correctly before moving on to the next objective.



Lesson Plan - continued

- Procedure

- This will be the procedure used to deliver the information in the chapter. (How this will be done.)

Example:

- Instructor will be identifying the parts on an actual airboat.
 - Instructor will use handouts and visual aids in order to provide and teach the students.



Lesson Plan - continued

- Instructor Actions

- The method of delivery by the instructor will be described in this portion of the lesson plan.

Example:

- Instructor will introduce the written information in the classroom in a lecture format and then take the students out to view and review the airboat.



Lesson Plan - continued

- Desired Student Outcome
 - The specific student outcomes should be described in this portion of the lesson plan.

Example:

- Students can identify types, parts, engines, materials on all types of airboats.



Airboat Orientation Lesson Plan Example

Here is a sample lesson plan, with each of the lesson plan elements demonstrated.



Lesson Plan – Airboat Orientation (Subject)

No Reference Pieces Used. (Reference Statement)

Objectives: (Lesson Objectives)

- ✓ Be able to identify the components of an airboat.
- ✓ Be able to identify different types of their hulls and their performance characteristics.
- ✓ Be able to identify the different types of airboat engines.

No specific safety considerations for this chapter. (Safety Considerations)

We will move on to Chapter 2 – Maintenance when all students have a basic understanding of the lesson of the objectives for this lesson. (Assessment)

The instructor will use a trailered airboat to discuss the following components, hull designs and materials: (Procedure)

Components of an airboat

- Rudder
- Propeller
- Cage
- Engine
- Cooling System
- Steering control
- Running Gear
- Exhaust
- Fuel Tank
- Driver's Platform
- Reinforced Hull

- Battery
- Other Airboat Components

Hull Designs and Materials

Basic hull design of airboats

- Hull Materials (and characteristics)
- Fiberglass
- Aluminum
- Wood
- Stainless Steel

The instructor will provide this information in a lecture format and will have an actual airboat (on a trailer). (Instructor Actions)

All students should have a working knowledge of the basic design of airboats, the main components, and the operating characteristics of airboats. They should understand some of most common engine and hull types. (Desired Student Outcomes)

Course Requirements

Each course will consist of:

A final exam of not less than 50 questions, with a minimum passing score of 80 percent

**** 10 of the 50 questions must cover the Florida-specific standards****



Course Exam Example

- 50 Questions
- 10 Florida-specific

FINAL EXAM ANSWER SHEET

INSTRUCTOR EYES ONLY

1. When you store an airboat with a wooden propeller, how do you leave the prop AND why? *Wooden propellers are stored in a vertical position to prevent moisture from settling in the lower "edges" of the prop. Moisture will "migrate" down the propeller and dissipate through the weep holes in the metal tips.*
2. What determines the safe SPEED for an airboat? **C. the present conditions the operator is currently traversing**
3. What is the first thing you should **ALWAYS DO** before beginning the initial Pre-Flight Safety Inspection? **Turn OFF the battery selector switch**
4. Give three (3) examples of how to break the suction when trying to free a stuck airboat:
 1. **Rock the boat with rudder action and applied power**
 2. **Lighten the payload**
 3. **Wet the immediate area in front of the airboat**
 4. **Flatten out vegetation in front of the boat**
 5. **Attempt to manually turn the boat 180 degrees**
 6. **Utilize a "come-a-long", attached to a fixed object**
 7. **Place PVC pipe or other objects under the boat**
 8. **Have another airboat "wet down" the area in front of the stuck boat**
 9. **Utilize another airboat as a tow (LAST RESORT) !!!!!!!!!!!!!**
5. List five (5) spare items you should carry as spare PARTS on an airboat:
fuel pump, hose, clamps, tune up parts, belts, cables, bolts, nuts, washers, oil, electrical wire, terminals, fuses, bulbs, etc...
6. Pulling the "control stick" sharply backwards, results in the rudders **leading edge** swinging to the: **RIGHT**
7. What is the purpose of the rudder "trim fins"? *The trim fins are used to help straighten the "tracking" of the airboat much like the trim fin of an outboard motor and/or helps reduce operator fatigue*



Course Requirements

A syllabus or course outline is required for the course

A sample course outline/syllabus is on the next slide. This will provide an idea of what the course outline/syllabus will look like although it does not have to look exactly like this sample.



Syllabus/Course Outline

The Boating Safety Course Class Plan

This recommended eight-hour Class Plan assumes you are teaching the course in one full day, starting class between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. with an hour lunch break midday. If instead you are teaching this in two sessions, follow the plan on this page for the first session and the plan on the next page for the second session. This plan also assumes you are using the Boat Ed classroom video.

Start Time	Duration	Key Topics	Aids/Suggested Activities
0:00	15 min	Kick Off <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Class logistics ◆ Course introduction 	
0:15	25 min	Lesson One: Know Your Boat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Vessel parts—terms and definitions ◆ Hull types and shapes ◆ Vessel classifications (including PWC as an inboard vessel) ◆ Types of engines and drives (outboards, inboards, stern drives, jet drives) ◆ PWCs ◆ Sailboats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classroom video—4 minutes • display the drawings of boat and PWC, and ask students to name the parts
0:40	35 min	Lesson Two: Before You Get Underway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Vessel's capacity—load and horsepower ◆ Float plans ◆ Fueling a vessel/PWC and fuel selector switch ◆ Trailing ◆ Vessel and engine maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classroom video—6 minutes • calculate a vessel's capacity • distribute a float plan for the students to use on future outings
1:15	15 min	BREAK	



Course Requirements

A list of course objectives must be listed. These objectives should be for the entire course.

Note: There are course objectives in the FWC Development Manual that cover the 5 chapters within that manual. These will not be a complete list of objectives for a complete course, but they may provide a starting point for a full list of course objectives.

Course Objectives

By the end of the airboat operator course, the participant should be able to:

1. Describe the operating principles of an airboat
2. Identify the control panel and the purpose of each gauge with respect to aircraft and automotive engines
3. Identify each part of an airboat
4. Conduct a thorough pre-flight safety inspection
5. Perform minimal required maintenance of airboat components
6. Demonstrate how to safely start, stop and turn an airboat in shallow and deep water as well as in semi-dry conditions
7. Demonstrate minimum planing speeds
8. Demonstrate docking, beaching, loading and unloading an airboat



Important Reminder

You will be provided a copy of the FWC Airboat Operator Course Development Manual. This will have a large part of the required course information. However, you will take this manual and add your information in order to create your workbook for your course.

You will need to add, at minimum, the 14 Florida-specific topics and the on-the-water practical for water to land and back transition. You can also add other information or practicals as long as this information follows the required format as demonstrated in this PowerPoint presentation.

Remember, you can add to the development manual, but you can't remove anything when creating your course. Your workbook will have everything from the development manual, plus the information you add to create your workbook.



The following slide will cover the steps to submit your course for approval.



Course Submission/Approval

- Course workbook must be submitted to the following address:

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement
Boating and Waterways Section
620 S. Meridian Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600

- Each course (coursebook) must be submitted in an electronic format (on a CD/Disc or flash drive) and in print.
- Handwritten courses will not be reviewed.
- Course must be submitted with a completed application and course content checklist (both supplied by FWC.)



Course Submission/Approval – continued

- Course (workbook) must be complete in order to be submitted. Incomplete courses/workbooks will not be reviewed.
- Additional information on course submission, access to a copy of the FWC Airboat Course Development Manual, and sample work products will be available on FWC's Website at MyFWC.com.



Course Content Checklist

- The course content checklist is intended to be used by the course provider to make sure all of the required information is included in the course. When the course is submitted, you should complete the checklist (an example is shown on the next slide and a checklist will be posted on FWC's website) and highlight the content in your workbook for all required material.



Sample Course Content Checklist

Course Content Checklist

TOPIC 1: Florida Specific Boating Requirements *This topic will describe Florida's boating requirements to include but not limited to:*

The boating education law requirement **Addressed: Page 10, paragraph 3**

Anyone born on or after January 1, 1988, who operates a vessel powered by 10 horsepower or more must pass an approved boating safety education course and have in their possession photographic ID and a boating safety education ID card issued by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Child life jacket requirement **Addressed: Page 7, paragraph 1**

- A child under the age of six must wear a U.S.C.G. approved life jacket while onboard a boat including an airboat under 26 feet in length while the boat is underway. "Underway" is defined as anytime except when the vessel is anchored, moored, made fast to the shore, or aground.

Airboat muffling requirements **Addressed: Page 19, paragraph 3**

- The exhaust of every engine used on any airboat operated in Florida must use an automotive-style factory muffler, underwater exhaust, or other manufactured device capable of adequately muffling the sound of the engine exhaust. The use of cutouts or flex pipe as the sole source of muffling is prohibited.

Are all standards addressed? Yes ___ No ___

Paragraph _____ Page _____

Reviewer's comments: _____

