



How To Plan Your Courses and Seminars

Boating education stands at the center of the core purpose of the **United States Power Squadron** and **America's Boating Club Hilton Head**. Offering a regular program of seminars, courses, and accreditations, is the best way we can accomplish our goal for safe, responsible, and confident boating in the Low Country.

While a number of our seminars and courses are available without the need for any prerequisite courses, there is a core “pathway” of courses and seminars, that is designed to build the knowledge and expertise of ABCHH members, and which lead to recognition of achievement through the **United States Power Squadron Boat Operator Certification (BOC)** accreditations.

1. The **ABC** Course

Anyone interested in boating education should take the “first course” entitled **America's Boating Course (ABC)**. This course involves two half-days of in-the-classroom instruction, with an On The Water (OTW) component on the final day. It is designed to provide a basic knowledge of boat operating practices, including safety, navigation, and communications, as well as state and federal rules and regulations. Successful completion meets the boating education requirements for operator permits in South Carolina. ABCHH will offer this course twice a year, in the spring and fall. It is not necessary to be a member of ABCHH to enroll.

2. **Boat Handling**

Following ABC, the next recommended course for boaters is **Boat Handling**, a series of six seminars that focuses on the specific skills and capabilities that are essential to become confident, comfortable, and a safe boater in our local waters. The six specific seminars are **Mastering The Rules of the Road, Docking, Boating with Confidence, Anchoring, Emergencies On Board, and Knots and Lines**.

Registrants in **Boat Handling** will take an exam upon completion of the six seminars. Those individuals passing will be awarded the **S (Seamanship)** designation by the USPS. Completion of **Boat Handling** is also a prerequisite to the **Boat Operator Certificate (BOC)**. Read more on this below.

The separate seminars offered under **Boat Handling** will also be open to registration on an individual basis as well, but registrants will only receive accreditation for the **Boat Handling** certification (**S**) if they are enrolled in the **Boat Handling** seminars, and successfully complete the exam.

ABCHH will offer all of the seminars in the **Boat Handling** series at least once a year. It is not necessary to take the seminars in any particular order, and it is not required that registrants attend all seminars prior to taking the exam, if they believe they have proven knowledge and competence in some of the seminar topics.

Beyond the ABC and Boat Handling seminars, those seeking additional knowledge and accreditation have two primary streams they can follow, one focused on **Boat Operator Certifications (BOC)**, and one focused on **advanced** knowledge of specific topics, that are offered through our Advanced Courses, Elective Courses, and Seminars, all taught by our certified instructors.

3. Advanced Navigation Courses

Those individuals with a desire to develop an in-depth knowledge of piloting and navigation, there are four courses available, with each being required to be taken in sequence. They are **Marine Navigation** (formerly Piloting) , **Advanced Marine Navigation** (formerly Advanced Piloting), **Offshore Navigation** (formally Junior Navigation), and **Celestial Navigation** (formally Navigation). As these courses are extensive and complex, (but very interesting) the demand for these courses tends to be limited. We will endeavor to offer **Marine Navigation** on an annual basis, but offer the other advanced courses only when there is a clear demand from our members. As an alternate, we will facilitate interested members in taking these courses through larger squadrons, that may offer them on an online basis.

4. Elective Courses

Elective courses focus on specialized topics that will be of specific interest to some members. These courses include topics on electrical systems, communications systems, vessel maintenance, radar, electronic navigation, weather, and cruise planning. They are geared towards developing in-depth knowledge and practical skills for each subject. They generally require six to ten 2 hour classroom sessions. It will be our intention to offer all of these electives, but not necessarily to offer each one every year, dependent on the number of interested members interested. Again, with the expansion of the USPS online offering, we will be able to facilitate members accessing these courses through other squadrons as well.

5. Seminars

Currently, the USPS provides us with approximately 35 seminar offerings covering a wide range of boating topics. These fall into two categories: the first being general two hour overviews of topics that would be of interest to most boaters, such as using GPS, VHF, radar, dealing with emergencies, how to use charts, weather, and tides and currents. The second category deals with more narrowly specific topics such as: trailering, propane systems, hurricane preparation, and marine fuels.

Our seminar offerings are central to our general education objective. Seminars allow members to acquire core skills and knowledge they need to safely and capably boat in our local waters. Courses, on the other hand, require a larger commitment to an in-depth course that extends over a number of class sessions that delves into a greater depth on theory, technology, and knowledge necessary to pass an exam.

It is our intention to offer the following seminars at least on an annual basis: These include all the six seminars from **Boat Handling**, as well as **Partner in Command**, **Using GPS**, **Using VHF Marine Radio**, **Marine Radar**, **How to Use a Chart**, **Basic Weather Forecasting**, and **Hurricane Preparation**. Depending on demand, we may offer some of these seminars twice in a year.

6. Boat Operator Certification (BOC)

While courses and seminars are invaluable to establish a core knowledge and understanding of specific boating subjects, the practical application of these skills in a marine environment is the ultimate demonstration of capability. For this reason, the USPS offers four levels of **Boat Operator Certificate**, for members who complete a curriculum of courses and seminars on specific subjects, and are then able to demonstrate their capabilities through an On The Water (OTW) examination.

The four levels of **BOC** begin with **Inland Navigator**, and then progress through **Coastal Navigator**, **Advanced Coastal Navigator**, and **Offshore Navigator**. For practical reasons, the focus of the ABCHH is on the **Inland Navigator** designation (IN), for which there are required courses (**Boat Handling, Engine Maintenance, Electrical Systems**), required seminars (**How to Use a Chart, Basic Weather Forecasting, Using GPS, and Using VHF Marine Radio**), and two skills demonstrations, one for powerboat handling, and one for fire extinguisher handling.

It will be our intention to offer all of these courses and seminars in 2019/2020, as well as to insure we qualify the necessary examiners who can evaluate and certify the boat handling skills demonstration requirement.

7. Jump Start

The **Jump Start** program is a hands-on training program teaching one-on-one training sessions with a student **on their own boat**. The content of the training is customized to the needs of the individual student. Typical sessions last two hours depending on the skills to be taught. The goal is to help the new boat owner develop essential skills for safe operation of their boat, and to break through any barriers that may limit their boating enjoyment. There is no charge for this program.

For further information on any of the above , please contact Tom Ryley, ABCHH Education Officer at tomryley@mac.com.

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