

CHAPTER 59

AN ACT concerning the regulation of personal watercraft and amending P.L.1987, c.453 and P.L.1995, c.401.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Section 2 of P.L. 1987, c.453 (C.12:7-61) is amended to read as follows:

C.12:7-61 Operation of power vessels, personal watercraft; boat safety course requirements; violations.

2. a. A person who is under 16 years of age shall not operate a power vessel on the waters of this State, except that:

(1) a person who is under 16 years of age but at least 13 years of age and possesses a certificate certifying that person's successful completion of a boat safety course approved by the Superintendent of State Police in the Department of Law and Public Safety may operate:

(a) a power vessel powered solely by a motor of less than one horsepower or an electric motor of 12 volts or less; or

(b) a power vessel which is 12 feet or greater in length and powered by a motor, or combination of motors, of less than 10 horsepower;

(2) A person who is under 16 years of age and has successfully completed an approved boat safety course prior to July 1, 1996 may operate a power vessel on the tidal waters of this State, provided that the person complies with all other requirements of law, rule and regulation; and

(3) A person who is under 16 years of age and was issued an operator's license pursuant to section 7 of P.L.1954, c.236 (C.12:7-34.7) before July 1, 1996 may operate a power vessel equipped with an outboard motor until the expiration date of that license.

b. A person who is 16 years of age or older and was born after December 31, 1978 shall not operate a power vessel on the waters of this State without having completed a boat safety course approved by the Superintendent of State Police in the Department of Law and Public Safety.

c. Except as provided pursuant to section 18 of P.L.1995, c.401 (C.12:7-86), a person shall not operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this State after July 1, 1997, without having successfully completed a boat safety course approved by the Superintendent of State Police in the Department of Law and Public Safety or a written test pursuant to section 17 of P.L. 1995, c.401 (T & E).

d. Whenever a person who is required by this section or by section 7 of P.L.1995, c.401 (C.12:7-76), section 3 or 4 of P.L.1952, c.157 (C.12:7-46 or C.12:7-47), or section 9 of P.L.1986, c.39 (C.12:7-57) to have completed a boat safety course operates a power vessel or personal watercraft, as appropriate, on the waters of this State, that person shall have in possession a certificate certifying that person's successful completion of a boat safety course approved by the superintendent and shall, when requested to do so, exhibit the certificate to a law enforcement or peace officer of this State. Failure of the person to exhibit the certificate is presumptive evidence that the person has not completed an approved boat safety course.

e. A person who violates subsection a., b., c. or d. of this section or who exhibits to a law enforcement or peace officer a certificate of completion of an approved boat safety course of another person is subject to a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500.

f. A person who owns or has control or custody of a power vessel and allows the power vessel to be operated on the waters of this State by a person who is required pursuant to the provisions of this section to possess a certificate certifying successful completion of a boat safety course but who does not possess such certificate is subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

g. A person making application to the Director of the Division of Motor Vehicles for a power vessel operator's license issued pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1995, c.401 (C.12:7-72) who is required pursuant to the provisions of this section to possess a certificate certifying successful completion of a boat safety course shall submit the original or a copy of the certificate with the application. The director shall not issue a power vessel operator's license to such person who fails to submit the original or a copy of the certificate.

2. Section 57 of P.L. 1995, c.401 (T & E) is amended to read as follows:

57. This act shall take effect on the first day of the sixth month following enactment, except that section 18 shall take effect on July 1, 1997, sections 17 and 55 shall take effect immediately

and section 17 shall expire on July 1, 1997.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved June 28, 1996.