[First Reprint]

# ASSEMBLY, No. 4658

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

## 222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 10, 2026

**Sponsored by:**
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**District 25 (Morris and Passaic)**
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**SYNOPSIS**

Requires information to be provided regarding levels of US Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices under certain circumstances.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Assembly Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee on October 15, 2026, with amendments.

**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/15/2026)**

**AN ACT** concerning personal flotation devices, amending P.L.1962, c.73 and P.L.1987, c.453, and supplementing Title 12 of the Revised Statutes.

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

1. Section 4 of P.L.1962, c.73 (C.12:7-34.39) is amended to read as follows:

4. (a) The owner of a vessel required to be numbered in this State shall file an application with the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission on forms approved by it. The application shall include information regarding the [1]**[**types**]** levels[1] of United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices, including when each [1]**[**type**]** level[1] is required pursuant to applicable State and federal laws, rules, and regulations, and when the use of a particular [1]**[**type**]** level[1] is recommended. The applicant shall acknowledge that the applicant has read the information by signing, initialing, or checking a box on the application, or by providing written or electronic confirmation of receipt of the information. The Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall consult with the Superintendent of State Police and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, or its successor organization, regarding the information to be included on the application.

The application shall be signed by the owner and shall be accompanied by the fee prescribed by this act for **[**such**]** the vessel. Upon receipt of the application in the approved form and the prescribed fee, the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall enter the same upon the records of its office and issue to the applicant a pocket-size, laminated or otherwise water resistant certificate of number, which shall state the name and address of the owner, a description of the vessel, its use, and the number assigned.

(b) Except as provided herein, the certificate of number shall be available at all times for inspection on the vessel for which issued whenever **[**such**]** the vessel is in operation. The certificate of number for vessels less than 26 feet in length and leased or rented to another for the latter's noncommercial use of less than 24 hours may be retained on shore by the vessel's owner or **[**his**]** a representative at the place from which the vessel departs or returns to the possession of the owner or **[**his**]** the representative; provided **[**such**]** any substitute as the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission may prescribe by regulation is carried on board.

**EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

**Matter underlined thus is new matter.**
**Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:**
**[1]Assembly ATG committee amendments adopted October 15, 2026.**

(c) The number assigned to a vessel shall be displayed on each side of the vessel's bow **[**thereof**]**, as prescribed by regulations of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, using letters and numerals not less than three inches in height; except that this provision shall not apply to a one-design class racing sailboat, without power installed either inboard or outboard, which is required to be numbered under section 3 of P.L.1962, c.73 (C.12:7-34.38). No other number shall be displayed on the bow.

(d) **[**No**]** An application for a vessel number shall not be approved if the applicant or owner has been found to have violated section 3 of P.L.1975, c.369 (C.12:7C-9) or subsection b. of section 10 of P.L.1975, c.369 (C.12:7C-16), until the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission has been notified by the appropriate municipality or harbor commission that all outstanding charges for vessel removal, storage, and destruction costs have been satisfied.

(cf: P.L.2008, c.52, s.1)

2. Section 1 of P.L.1987, c.453 (C.12:7-60) is amended to read as follows:

1. a. The Superintendent of State Police in the Department of Law and Public Safety shall establish a list of approved boat safety courses, offered by public or private persons or agencies for profit or otherwise and taught by approved boat safety instructors. Approved courses shall provide formal instruction in power vessel handling and safety. The superintendent may approve a boat safety course upon the initiative of the superintendent or by application on a form to be created by the superintendent.

For the purposes of this section, "approved boat safety course" means a boat safety course that meets qualifications set forth in regulations promulgated by the Superintendent of State Police, in consultation with the Attorney General; the regulations shall require at least eight hours of instruction, with a minimum of six hours of classroom instruction, or, if the boat safety course is offered via the Internet, require at least the equivalent of eight hours of instruction; whether offered in a classroom or via the Internet, the boat safety course shall conclude with a closed-book written examination administered by an instructor in person and present with the person taking the written examination. Additionally, the regulations shall require that the boat safety course include comprehensive instruction on the [1]**[**types**]** levels[1] of United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices, including when each [1]**[**type**]** level[1] is required pursuant to applicable State and federal laws, rules, and regulations, and when the use of a particular [1]**[**type**]** level[1] is recommended.

For the purposes of this section, an "approved boat safety instructor" means an individual who is trained and experienced in the art and science of navigation and seamanship and who holds a

United States Coast Guard operator's license, or a certification as an instructor as provided by the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, the United States Power Squadron, the National Safe Boating Council or other certification program that is determined to be acceptable by the Superintendent of State Police. A public or private entity which offers a course that was approved by the superintendent prior to the effective date of this act may continue to offer that course until that approval has expired.

The superintendent shall, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), adopt rules and regulations to implement this section. While developing these rules and regulations, the Superintendent of State Police shall consult with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, or its successor organization, concerning the provisions of the rules and regulations being adopted pursuant to this subsection.

b. A public or private entity authorized to offer a boat safety course pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall not employ an instructor who:

(1) does not possess a valid boat safety certificate required by section 2 of P.L.1987, c.453 (C.12:7-61); or

(2) has been convicted of any of the following crimes and offenses as evidenced by a criminal history record background check:

(a) In New Jersey, any crime or disorderly persons offense:

(i) involving danger to the person, meaning those crimes and disorderly persons offenses set forth in N.J.S.2C:11-1 et seq., N.J.S.2C:12-1 et seq., N.J.S.2C:13-1 et seq., N.J.S.2C:14-1 et seq. or N.J.S.2C:15-1 et seq.;

(ii) against the family, children or incompetents, meaning those crimes and disorderly persons offenses set forth in N.J.S.2C:24-1 et seq.;

(iii) involving theft as set forth in chapter 20 of Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes;

(iv) involving any controlled dangerous substance or controlled substance analog as set forth in chapter 35 of Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes except paragraph (4) of subsection a. of N.J.S.2C:35-10;

(v) involving weapons or firearms, meaning those crimes and disorderly persons offenses set forth in chapters 39 and 58 of Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes;

(vi) involving falsification of records under N.J.S.2C:21-4 or tampering with public records or information under N.J.S.2C:28-7.

(b) In any other state or jurisdiction, conduct which, if committed in New Jersey, would constitute any of the crimes or disorderly persons offenses described in subparagraph a. of this paragraph.

The Marine Services Bureau in the Division of State Police shall obtain the instructor's name, address, fingerprints and written consent for a criminal history record background check to be performed pursuant to this paragraph. The Marine Services Bureau is authorized to receive criminal history record information from the State Bureau of Identification in the Division of State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation consistent with applicable State and federal laws, rules and regulations. The Marine Services Bureau shall determine whether the person is disqualified from employment as an instructor based on the person's criminal history record background check and render the decision to the public or private entity.

The instructor shall bear the cost for the criminal history record background check, including all costs of administering and processing the check, but a volunteer instructor shall be afforded a fee reduction as authorized by applicable State and federal law, rule and regulation.

(cf: P.L.2005, c.292, s.5)

3. (New section) a. Any person engaged in the business of selling or renting personal watercraft for use on the waters of this State shall provide each purchaser or renter, at the point of sale or rental, with informational materials, prepared by the Superintendent of State Police pursuant to subsection c. of this section, regarding the [1]**[**types**]** levels[1] of United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices. The information shall include when each [1]**[**type**]** level[1] is required pursuant to applicable State and federal laws, rules, and regulations, and when the use of a particular [1]**[**type**]** level[1] is recommended.

b. Any person who purchases or rents a personal watercraft shall, at the time of the transaction, acknowledge that the person has read the information by signing, initialing, or checking a box on the purchase or rental agreement, or by providing written or electronic confirmation of receipt of the information.

c. The Superintendent of State Police, in consultation with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, or its successor organization, shall prepare informational materials containing the information required pursuant to subsection a. of this section. The informational materials shall be made available on the Division of State Police Internet website.

4. (New section) Any person engaged in the business of selling or renting a personal watercraft shall make available to each purchaser or renter the option to purchase or rent a United States Coast Guard approved [1]**[**Type I**]** Level 150[1] personal flotation device, regardless of whether other [1]**[**types**]** levels[1] of personal flotation devices are also available or offered as part of the sale or rental.

5. This act shall take effect on the first day of the seventh month next following the date of enactment, except that the Superintendent of State Police and the Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Commission may take any anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.