

Partnering with the U.S. Coast Guard & Recreational Boating Community to Implement the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan: NASBLA and the States

*U.S. Coast Guard Nonprofit Grant No. 3312FAN120206
Awarded to the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators*

Final Grant Report Executive Summary

No other organization like the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) brings together nationally the state recreational boating safety agencies for public policy development, communicating strategies, coordination, information sharing, education and training. This fact is recognized in the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic plan with NASBLA being named an implementing partner in 65% of the strategies. Additionally, the states are named as implementing partners in 48% of the strategies. Together, NASBLA and the states are THE major contributors to the implementation and success of the National RBS Program.

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) sought and received a grant to partner with and support the states, the Coast Guard and the recreational boating safety (RBS) community in implementation of the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan (2012-2016) from October 1, 2012 – September 31, 2013. NASBLA completed this work by:

- Developing Policy Solutions and Products through our Committee Work
- Communicating Strategies to the States and Others through *Small Craft Advisory*, *NASBLA Currents* (e-newsletter) and our own online networking community – *NASBLA Connect*
- Coordinating State Program Administration and Performance Measurement at our Spring BLA Workshop
- And Engaging the RBS Community, the Coast Guard, and the States at our Annual Conference.

Although federal trust funds provide as much as one-fourth of the national RBS program's annual funding, virtually all of the program's major objectives are accomplished at the state and local levels by the state boating law administration agencies in the 56 states and territories. NASBLA is THE organization that works on a daily basis with these agencies to advance the National Recreational Boating Safety Program.

Project Description

Project Goal

The goal of the *Partnering with the U.S. Coast Guard & Recreational Boating Community to Implement the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan: NASBLA and the States* grant program was to aid the U.S. Coast Guard in carrying out the strategies in the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan, 2012-2016, in order to advance the mission of the national program - to ensure the public has a safe, secure and enjoyable recreational boating experience by implementing programs designed to minimize the loss of life, personal injury and property damage while cooperating with environmental and national security efforts.

Project Objectives

The objectives for *Partnering with the U.S. Coast Guard & Recreational Boating Community to Implement the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan: NASBLA and the States* included:

a) Developing Policy Solutions and Products that:

- enhance uniformity and reciprocity of boating safety efforts among jurisdictions;
- provide forums to encourage uniformity, reciprocity, closer cooperation and assistance in developing, administering, and enforcing state laws and regulations pertaining to boating safety;
- encourage sufficient patrol and other activities to ensure adequate enforcement of state boating safety laws and regulations;
- facilitate an adequate USCG-recognized state boating safety education program;
- enhance maintenance of USCG-approved vessel numbering system; and
- strengthen implementation of a USCG-approved marine casualty reporting system.

b) Communicating Strategies to the States and Others – providing a national RBS communications conduit to grassroots law enforcement officials and state and federal policymakers through *Small Craft Advisory*, the nation's award-winning recreational boating safety magazine; social media; NASBLA's Connected Community for online professional networking and knowledge management; and other outreach media and platforms.

c) Coordinating State Program Administration and Performance Measurement – conducting a spring workshop for boating law administrators to discuss methods, means and resources for improved administration of the state RBS programs.

d) Engaging the RBS Community, the Coast Guard and the States – hosting a dynamic, interactive annual conference that brings together boating law administrators, state staff and other RBS stakeholders.

Methodology

This proposal sought funding for the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators in four primary areas:

a) Developing Policy Solutions and Products – Research, staffing and meeting support for committee projects, products and publications, including policy staffing and travel assistance for the president and executive board and policy committees to support national RBS policy-making and partnership initiatives;

- b) Communicating Strategies to the States and Others – Production, printing and distribution of NASBLA’s award-winning magazine, *Small Craft Advisory*; the online *NASBLA Membership Directory*; NASBLA website; e-newsletters; Basecamp project management tool; Go To Meeting web conferencing service; and NASBLA’s Connected Community.
- c) Coordinating State Program Administration and Performance Measurement – planning and logistical support for the Spring Boating Law Administrators Workshop;
- d) Engaging the RBS Community, the Coast Guard and the States – staffing, planning, logistical and program support for the NASBLA Annual Conference.

Developing Policy Solutions and Products (Committee Work)

Since its founding in 1960, NASBLA has employed a committee structure to identify issues and address needs in the recreational boating safety public policy realm. NASBLA’s committees function as the primary source, sounding board and national policy-setting forum for each of the significant program areas addressed in the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan -- enforcement, education, vessel numbering and marine casualty reporting. These committees develop best management practices, model procedures, model acts, position papers and other products that advance recreational boating safety.

The committees also play an important role with respect to shaping a national response to a given challenge, problem or issue. Some issues impacting boating safety are resolved simply through open discussion and the exchange of ideas and experience. On the other end of the spectrum, more entrenched or long-term challenges may ultimately require a statutory or regulatory response to affect the desired outcome. NASBLA committees help the Coast Guard and other policymakers at the state and federal levels determine and coordinate the appropriate response.

This highly successful process has resulted in numerous boating safety policy directives and model boating laws of national significance. These policies include the nearly nationwide acceptance of BUI laws, interstate cooperation in boating accident investigations, and nationally accepted standards for state and private boating education courses and curricula. It is only through the commitment and perseverance of NASBLA committees through initiatives carried out, in some cases over several years, that the association can develop and endorse well-constructed, rational policy measures that merit multi-state and national acceptance.

The NASBLA policy committees, and by extension the NASBLA executive board and staff, are one of the key mechanisms the association utilizes to encourage uniformity and reciprocity among jurisdictions.

In addition to the state committee members, the committees include broad representation from boating professionals throughout the boating industry, the nonprofit sector, international interests, the boating public, and federal and local agencies.

NASBLA committees include:

Education & Awareness Committee

The Education & Awareness Committee works to advance boating safety by developing recommendations based on best practices in education for the states to implement; and creating a library of state marketing campaigns and outreach materials for other states to use. Among the issues addressed in 2013 were: supporting the Wear It and Operation Dry Water campaigns; developing and expanding the use of NASBLA Connect; promoting the use of the Seal of Safe Boating Practices; further developing State Education Coordinator Training; recommend marketing and outreach best practices for state programs to incorporate and implement the new USCG labeling standard; and define reciprocity as it relates to boating education courses.

Enforcement & Training Committee

The Enforcement & Training Committee works to advance boating safety by researching and disseminating information on new techniques and technologies for marine law enforcement officers; developing training and credentialing programs; and addressing boating under the influence issues. In 2013, the committee assessed, evaluated and delivered GPS Forensics training, updated law enforcement documents for Operation Dry Water, continued furthering the acceptance of for the Seated Battery of Standardized Field Sobriety Tests (SFSTs), worked to get more member agencies to adopt a policy for mandatory officer life jacket wear and develop a branded message – “Obey or Pay” - from law enforcement to the boating public.

Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee

The Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee (ERAC) is charged with identifying, evaluating and analyzing data and information that can shed light on factors associated with recreational boating accidents, inform the development of boating safety policies and practices, and ultimately measure their effectiveness. To ensure that the results of boating accident research and analyses are valid and reliable, ERAC is directed to actively seek ways to advance the quality, relevance, accuracy, consistency, applicability and completeness of the data and information. For 2013, continued working with the U.S. Coast Guard to complete work on standardized accident report terms and definitions in three remaining key report categories (Operation, Activity, and Vessel Types/Subtypes). The term and definitions were adopted by the membership on Sept. 3, 2013 and these three lists have been forwarded on to the Coast Guard for implementation at the national level in BARD.; developed a beta version of Reference and Resource Modules for review/input of the revised terms and definitions that emerged from the Accident Reporting Terms and Definitions Project; and Reviewed and assessed the data and findings collected and released by the U.S. Coast Guard through the National Recreational Boating Survey.

Vessel Identification, Registration & Titling Committee

Recognizing that accurate vessel information is the backbone of recreational boating safety data, the Vessel Identification, Registration & Titling Committee works to advance boating safety by analyzing and advocating for thorough and precise vessel identification throughout a vessel's chain of ownership from the hull numbering to registration to titling. For 2013, the committee assisted the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL) and the states with adoption of the Uniform Certificate of Title for Vessels Act; assisted the USCG on promoting the MOU for and state participation in the VIS as well as monitored any implementation issues; and continued worked with the USCG Documentation Center to notify states when a state registered vessel becomes documented.

NASBLA’s public policy work is a year-round endeavor. The process begins at the close of the NASBLA annual conference. Building upon or continuing the previous year’s work and with suggestions for new issues needing attention, staff draft the first round of charges and proposed committee membership for discussion. This draft is utilized by volunteer committee chairmen and the volunteer NASBLA Executive Board to select those charges that are most critical and that address issues identified in the National RBS and NASBLA strategic plans.

After the executive board, committee chairs and staff agree on charges for the year, teleconferences commence in late fall to kick off the committees’ work for the year. Charges are assigned and members work on these charges. The subcommittees and full committee meet in person – typically in conjunction with another national RBS meeting. Over the course of the meetings subcommittees discuss and debate their work and then the full committee comes together to consider all subcommittee work. Further work is assigned if needed. Work continues on charges throughout the summer. The committees convene again in the fall at the NASBLA annual conference and present their charges and work products to the RBS community and to NASBLA membership for consideration and adoption.

This grant provided funding for committee staff time, for travel for committee members to attend their respective late winter/early spring meetings and for other direct costs associated with development of committee products.

Committees met on the following dates at these locations:

Enforcement	March 1, 2013	Lexington, Kentucky
ERAC	March 1, 2013	Lexington, Kentucky
Education	March 23-24, 2013	San Antonio, Texas
VIRT	April 17, 2013	Lexington, Kentucky

Committee Reports and select products from these committees are attached with the hard copy of this report.

Communicating Strategies to the States (*Small Craft Advisory* and other platforms)

The second grant-funded vehicle for addressing elements of the National RBS Strategic Plan involved providing – through a variety of channels – a national RBS communications conduit to grassroots law enforcement, education, accident investigation and vessel numbering & titling officials and state and federal policymakers.

Key to this communication strategy is the association’s award-winning periodical, *Small Craft Advisory* (SCA). Six times during this grant year, SCA was published and distributed to nearly 11,000 boating safety professionals, policy and decision-makers, state legislators, members of Congress, Coast Guard personnel and recreational boating industry leaders to keep them informed on issues impacting recreational boating safety.

In addition to a vast array of recreational boating safety news and information, issues of SCA also focused on the following special topics --

November-December, 2012	Law Enforcement
January-February, 2013	Training
March-April, 2013	Leadership
May-June, 2013	Partnering
July-August, 2013	Water Sports
September-October 2013	Education

Copies of these magazines are attached with the hard copy of this report and available online for viewing and download at the NASBLA website: www.nasbla.org/sca.

NASBLA *Currents*, our RBS e-newsletter, delivers [on a weekly basis](#) NASBLA news and information to more than 6,000 state members, associates and other stakeholders – a 42% increase in circulation this year. To see the latest issue and all archived issues of *Currents*, please visit: nasbla.org/Currents.

NASBLA Connect – our online networking community, <http://community.nasbla.org>, provides our members and the RBS Community innovative ways to think together and build trusted communities where interactive communication and information exchange can occur. NASBLA Connect allows people to contribute, share and collaborate.

Other communications tools that NASBLA utilizes for RBS community engagement include Basecamp, which provides web-based project management and collaboration, and Go To Meeting, a web conferencing and online meeting platform.

Coordinating State Program Administration and Performance Measurement (Spring BLA Workshop)

Another method of advancing the goals of the NASBLA and the National RBS strategic plans is the Spring Boating Law Administrator Workshop. This two-day working session provided a mid-year opportunity for boating law administrators, key Coast Guard personnel and NASBLA staff to discuss and coordinate policy, programs and performance measures for the recreational boating safety program. Topics covered at the workshop included:

National RBS Program Financial Grant Update
National RBS Grant Program Discussion for BLAs
NASBLA Program News & Updates
Sequestration, Reauthorization 2014 and How D.C. Will Impact State Agencies
National Boating Education Standards Panel Briefing
Moving Away from the Gas Tax
NASBLA Law Enforcement Training Accreditation
Arkansas vs. Allen Briefing
Accident Reporting Terms & Definitions Project: The Rollout Begins
Wear It! Campaign
Roundtable Discussion on Boating Safety Program Administration

Copies of many of these presentations are available online at nasbla.org/digitalhub.

This workshop attracts more BLAs than any other recreational boating safety meeting in the spring.

Engaging the RBS Community, the Coast Guard and the States (Annual Conference)

The NASBLA Annual Conference is the premier national recreational boating safety forum. Boating law administrators and others in the RBS community throughout North America learn from the experts in the field, hear about cutting-edge research and exceptional best practices, and discover new ideas for programs that minimize the loss of life, personal injury and property damage.

The NASBLA annual conference brings together approximately 300 people representing more than 100 stakeholder organizations in the recreational boating safety community, including more than 50 state boating law agencies. **No other event brings together this diverse group of RBS stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, and the Coast Guard itself.**

Examples of topics covered in previous annual conferences include:

NTSB Parasailing Accident Investigation
WSIA Parasailing Safety Standards
Adaptive Boating
Training Boating Education Instructors
Joint Safety Marketing
State and County Partnerships
Hands on Education: Expanding Your Activity Choices
Advanced Spatial Analysis of Accident Risks in Recreational Boating
Data Mining for Educators
Paddlesports Panel
5% Nonprofit Grants
Education Standards: Classroom and On-Water

Copies of these presentations are available on the NASBLA website at www.nasbla.org/digitalhub

Executive Management and RBS Outreach

The NASBLA president, executive director and executive board members are called upon to provide information to congressional committees and staff regarding boating safety issues of national consequence and to provide technical advice and educational materials relating to the states' experience in managing boating safety programs. The board considers and further develops project research plans submitted by committee leadership. It also monitors the committees' progress in addressing the charges set forth in the project plan.

The board allocates resources from the grant award to facilitate committee meetings, projects and products and assures that the grant is administered according to guidelines and procedures prescribed by law. The work of the board and the overall grant program is supported by the executive director and policy staff. The staff provides professional support to the board and the committees, including conference and meeting planning and onsite staffing, grant and project management, research, financial management, public information, and member support.

The NASBLA president, executive director and their designees provide liaison to other national boating safety organizations, industry and trade groups, and related associations. Through the president's office, NASBLA works to formulate national consensus among all the stakeholders in the boating community. In a typical year, NASBLA representatives participate in as many as two dozen national and international meetings, hearings and boating safety forums, including, but not limited to, the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Boating Safety Advisory Council, the National Transportation Safety Board, the American Boat and Yacht Council, the International Boating and Water Safety Summit, the National Boating Federation, the National Safe Boating Council, the National Water Safety Congress, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the United States Power Squadrons, National Safe Boating Week and other national recreational, safety and transportation events.

For the FY13 outreach program, NASBLA continued the successful efforts of its executive board with assistance for three interim board meetings and one final board meeting held in conjunction with the NASBLA annual conference in Boise, Idaho. Board meetings were held as follows:

November 13-14, 2012	Lexington, Kentucky
February 25, 2013	Lexington, Kentucky
May 9-10, 2013	Flagstaff, Arizona
September 14, 2013	Boise, Idaho

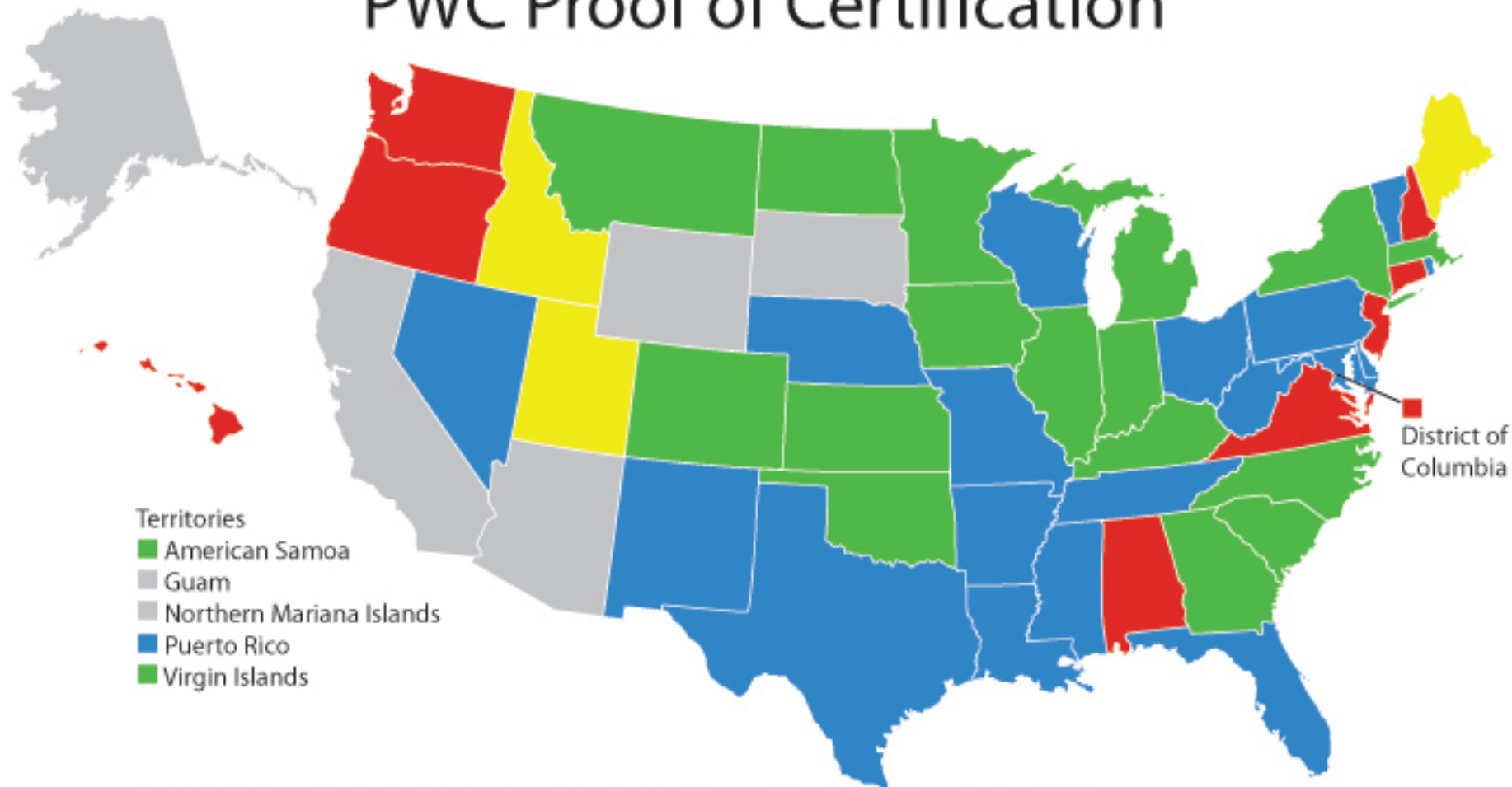
Minutes from these meetings are attached with the hard copy of this report.

In addition to its annual request to fund the NASBLA president's domestic travel and liaison expenses, this proposal also requested funding assistance to permit the NASBLA president (or designee) to participate in at least two international boating safety conferences including the annual Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons meeting and the International Boating & Water Safety Summit (held in San Antonio, Texas).

Uniformity

As requested by the Coast Guard, NASBLA this year took a look at the uniformity of select boating safety laws across the U.S. Attached are four maps that show how states are uniform in the areas of motorboat operator education, .08 blood alcohol content for boating under the influence citations, titling of recreational vessels and life jacket wear policy for law enforcement officers.

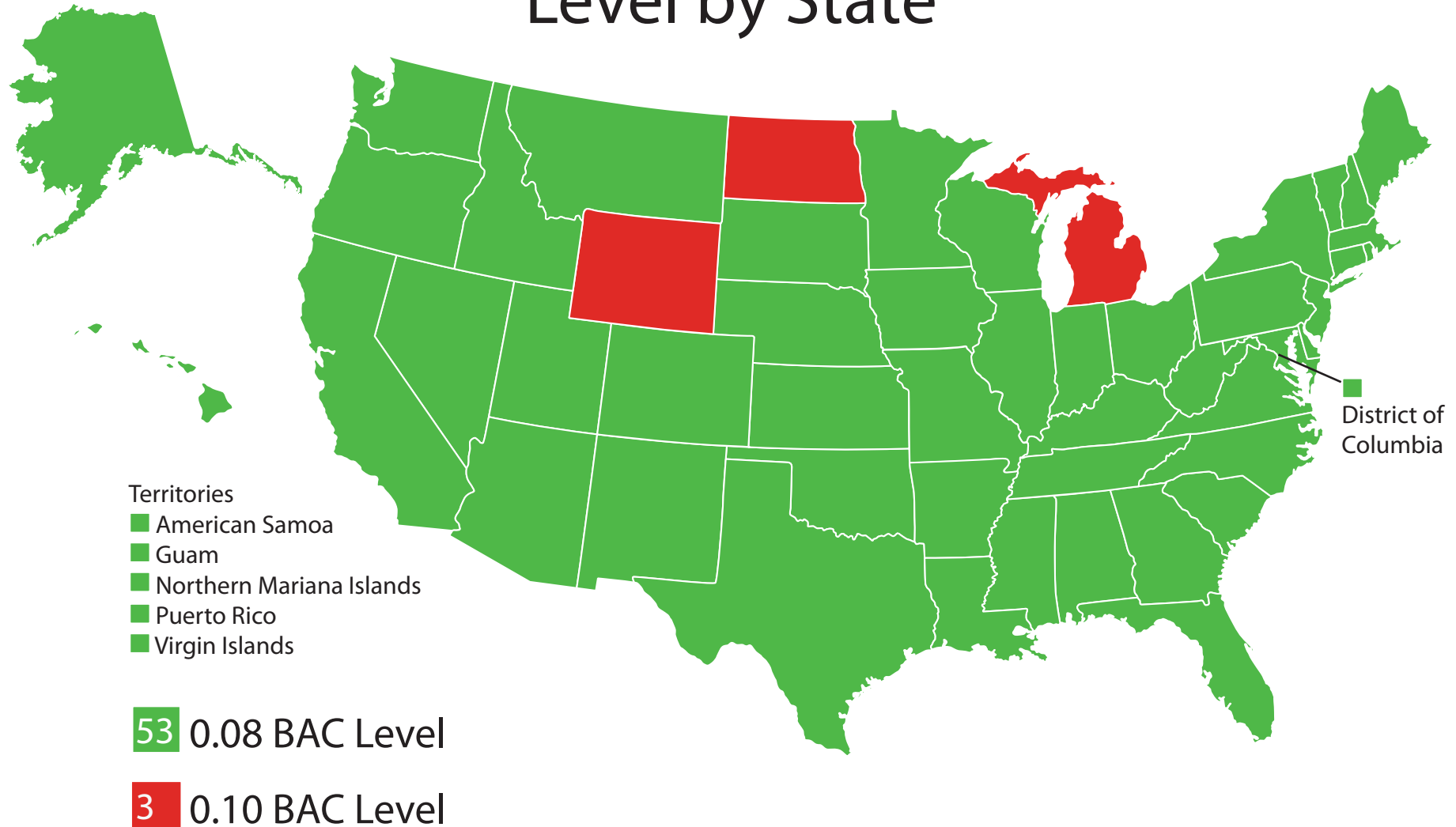
States Requiring Motorboat Operator or PWC Proof of Certification



District of
Columbia

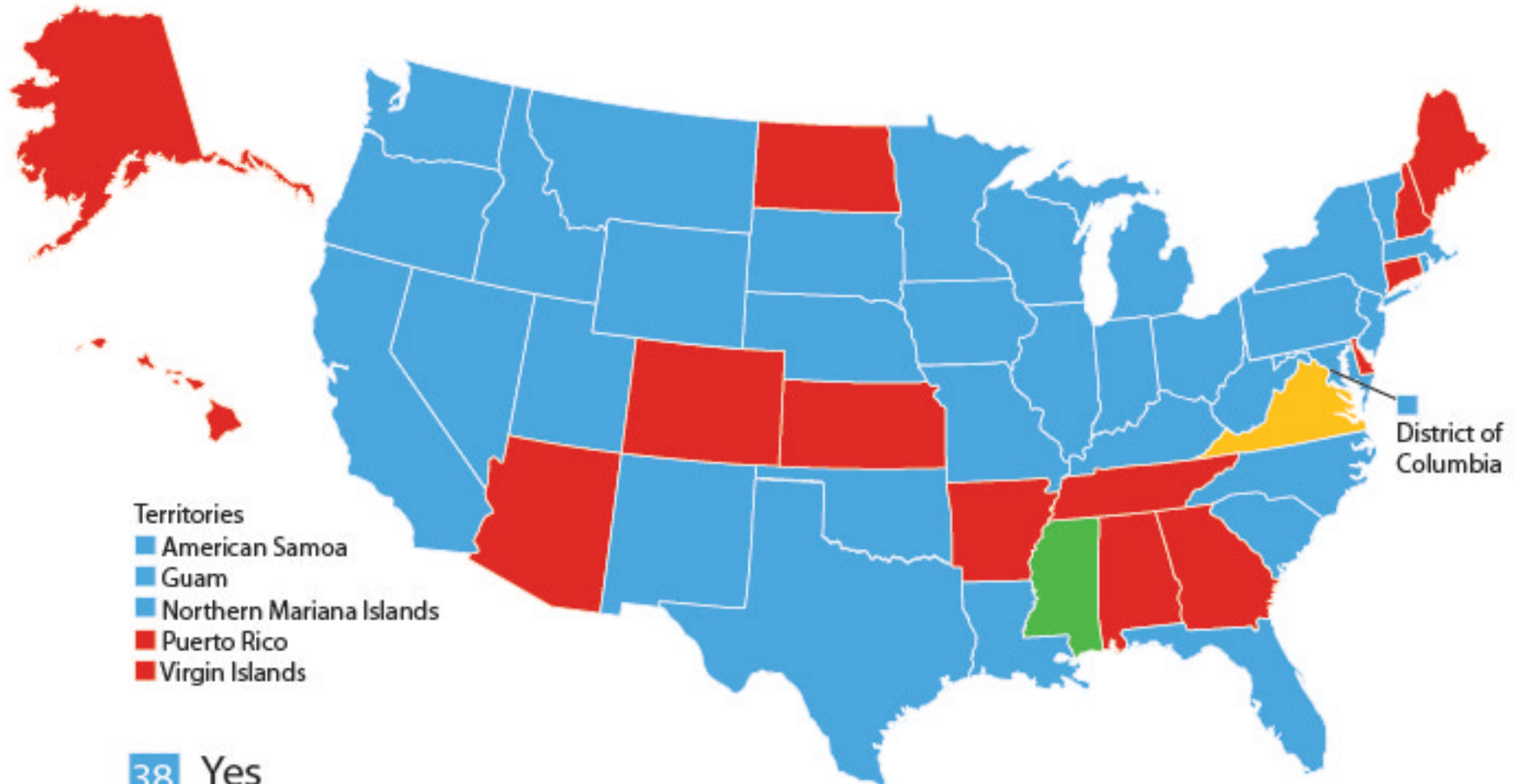
- Ed Req-PWCs Only for Certain Ages Only or Rentals Only
- Ed Req- Certain Ages Only (usually preteens and/or teens and/or young adults only)
- Education Req- Birthday Based
- Short Term Phase-In & May Require Operators License
- No Boating Education Requirements

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Level by State



May 3, 2013

Titling States



38 Yes

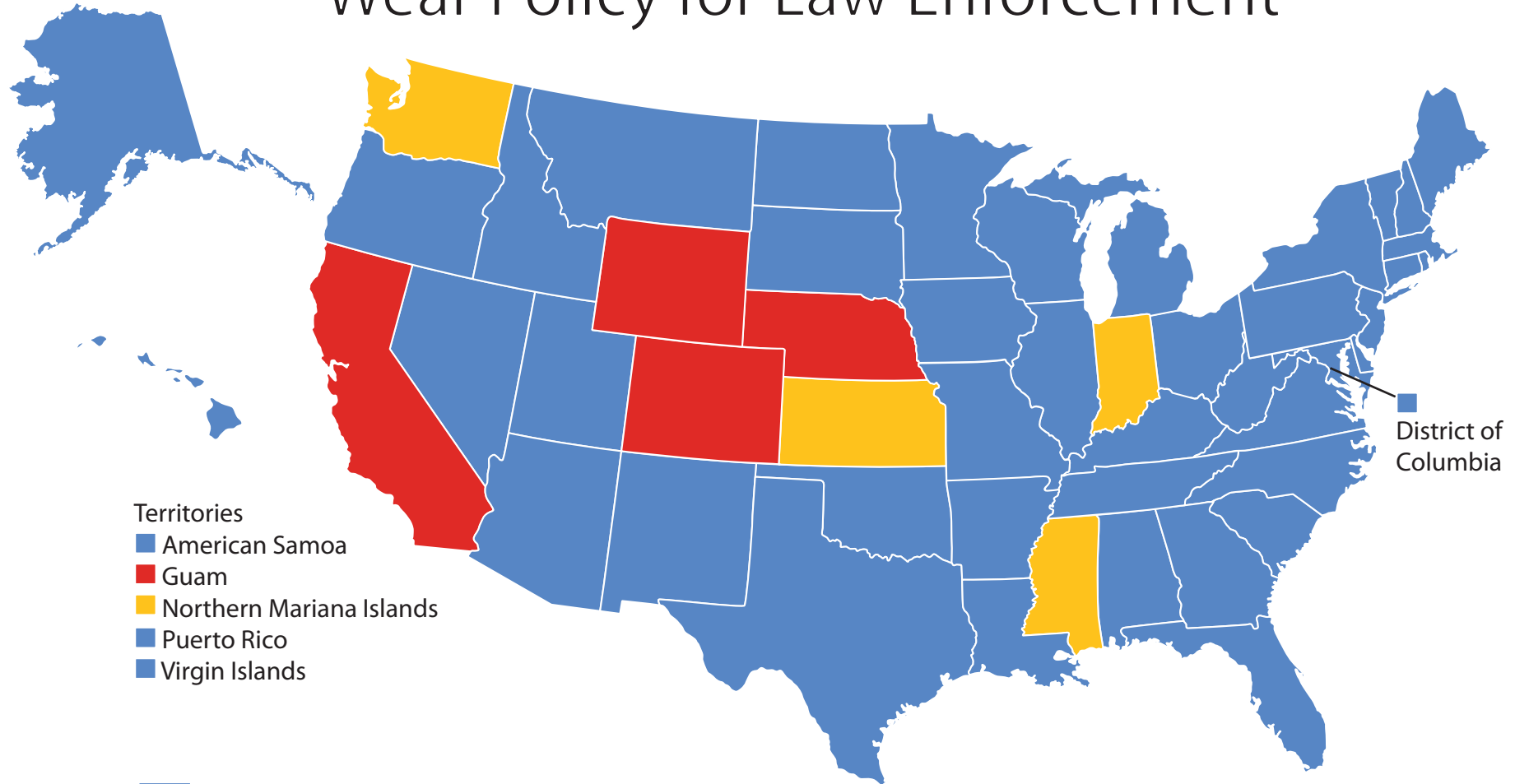
1 Yes – UCOTVA

1 Optional

16 No

December 12, 2013

States and Territories with a Mandatory Life Jacket Wear Policy for Law Enforcement



46 States with life jacket wear policy for law enforcement as of September 2012

5 States that have enacted a mandatory wear policy during the 2013 Committee year as a result of working with the NASBLA Law Enforcement Sub-committee on Techniques and Technology.

5 States without life jacket wear policy for law enforcement

May 6, 2013