

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SANTA BARBARA

SMALL BOAT OPERATIONS MANUAL FOR ACADEMIC USE

Last Revision July 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
1.00 OVERVIEW ..	3
1.10 PURPOSE.....	3
1.20 CONTENTS	3
1.30 APPLICABILITY	3
2.00 RESPONSIBILITY	3
2.10 SBOC MEMBERSHIP	3
2.20 SBOC RESPONSIBILITY	3
2.30 BOATING SAFETY OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY	4
2.40 LAUNCH LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	4
2.50 DEPT, PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS, AND ADMIN OFFICERS	4
2.60 BOAT OPERATOR	5
3.00 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.....	5
3.10 AUTHORIZATION OF BOAT OPERATORS	5
3.20 MAINTAINING AUTHORIZATION	6
3.30 REVOCATION OF AUTHORIZATION.....	6
3.40 RE-AUTHORIZATION.....	6
3.50 WAIVER OF REQUIREMENTS.....	6
4.00 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES & RECORD KEEPING	6
4.10 FLOAT PLANS.....	6
4.20 MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS	6
4.30 ACCIDENT REPORTING	7
5.00 GENERAL OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES.....	7
5.10 EQUIPMENT	7
5.20 STABILITY... ..	7
5.30 COMMUNICATIONS.....	8
5.40 WEATHER	8
5.50 SPECIAL OPERATIONS	8
5.60 SAFETY CHECKS	8
6.00 ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES FOR SPECIFIC UCSB BOATING PROGRAM	
<i>Below are additional procedures to Section 1-5 determined for the various UCSB Boating programs. Forms, waivers and the boating programs manuals of each specific UCSB scientific boating program are available online.</i>	
6.10 Department of Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology – Marine Lab	
*see document titled “EEMB Small Boat Regulations”	

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA SMALL BOAT OPERATIONS MANUAL

SECTION 1.00 OVERVIEW

1.10 PURPOSE

The purpose of these boating standards is to ensure that all scientific boating is conducted in a manner that maximizes safety and is in compliance with UCSB policy 5455 (Small Boat Operations). This manual also sets forth standards for training and certification that will allow a working reciprocity between organizational members.

1.20 CONTENTS

The Small Boating Operations Manual establishes minimum guidelines for the operation of non-University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS) University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) scientific boating operations. Sections 1-5 describe these minimum guidelines and Section 6 should be completed by each Launch Lead to describe the guidelines for the day-to-day operation of their boating program.

This manual includes:

1. Policies that pertain to all vessels operating for academic use under the auspices of the UCSB.
2. Guidelines for obtaining and maintaining boat operator authorization.
3. Administrative procedures.
4. Operational procedures.

1.30 APPLICABILITY

For the purpose of this manual, "small boat" is any boat 40 feet or less in length and the provisions of this manual apply whenever UCSB personnel are using a boat under UCSB auspices for academic use, regardless of ownership of the boat.

Specific examples of boat operations under UCSB auspices include: persons engaged in research, earning academic credit, employees acting within the scope of their employment; students engaged in any research operation including those receiving or providing boat operation instruction or involved in boat checkouts.

Boats used under UCSB auspices include:

1. Boats owned, supported, or administered by the UCSB, regardless of ownership.
2. Privately owned boats used by the UCSB for scientific or educational purposes.
3. Any other vessels used by the UCSB for scientific or educational purposes.
4. In case of joint operations, the lead institution will ensure that all applicable safety standards are being met.

SECTION 2.00 RESPONSIBILITY

2.10 SMALL BOAT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE (SBOC) MEMBERSHIP

A Small Boats Operations Committee, appointed by the Chancellor, will consist of a committee chair, PIs, Launch Leads and boat users that represents the UCSB scientific boating programs.

2.20 SMALL BOAT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITY

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Has autonomous and absolute authority over the boating program's operation.
2. Review and revise the small boat operations manual.

3. Assure compliance with the small boat operations manual.
4. Take disciplinary action for unsafe practices, and act as a board of appeal.
5. Recommend the issue, reissue, or the revocation of boating authorizations.
6. Establish and/or approve training programs through which the applicant can satisfy the requirements of the organizational member's boating safety manual.
7. Suspend boating operations that are considered to be unsafe or unwise.
8. Periodically review the Boating Safety Officer, Launch Lead, and committee chair performance.
9. Sit as a board of investigation to inquire into the nature and cause of boating accidents or violations of the organizational member's boating safety manual.
10. May grant exceptions to this manual.

2.30 BOATING SAFETY OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

The Boating Safety Officer (BSO) serves as a member of the Small Boat Operations Committee (SBOC). This person should have broad experience in boating.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Reports to SBOC for the conduct of the boating program of the UCSB. The BSO is the operational authority for this program and may permit portions of this program to be carried out by a qualified delegate(s).
2. Shall have the ability to suspend boating operations considered to be unsafe or unwise.

2.40. LAUNCH LEAD RESPONSIBILITY

The Launch Lead for each UCSB boating operation should have broad experience in boating and is responsible of the day-to-day operations of the particular boating program.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Evaluate prospective boat operation as specified by the SBOC.
2. Have the authority to schedule and cancel boating trips.
3. Have the authority to suspend one's boating privileges, until review by the SBOC.
4. Oversee the inspection and maintenance of safety equipment and maintain all inspection forms on file for one year unless an incident occurs. In the case of an incident, the form will be kept on file for 5 years.
5. Maintain all itinerary forms on file for one month unless an incident occurs. In the case of an incident the form will be kept on file for 5 years.
6. Have the authority to authorize boat use beyond the geographical constraints.
7. All boats, vehicles and boat trailers (private or University owned) used under the auspices of UCSB must be approved by the Launch Lead.
8. Shall suspend boating operations considered to be unsafe or unwise.
9. Report all accidents, incidents, boardings, citations, safety concerns, and issues to the SBOC.

2.50 DEPARTMENT, PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Responsibilities of the departments, principal investigators and administrative officers operating small boats are the following:

1. Develop and maintain procedures for the safe operation of all small boats under their jurisdiction.
2. Establish procedures to assure proper qualification of small boat operators as described in section 3.10 of this manual.
3. Ensure compliance with all departmental procedures and procedures in this manual for small boat operators.
4. Provide secure storage for all small boats sufficient to prevent their unauthorized use.
5. Forward all accident reports to the Small Boats Operations Committee.

2.60 BOAT OPERATOR

1. Only authorized UCSB boat operators may operate small boats under UCSB auspices, whether or not the boat is owned by the UCSB. Exceptions may be granted by the Small Boat Operation Committee for vessels run by non-UCSB owner/operators.
2. In US waters non-UCSB owner/operators must comply with USCG, state, and local regulations covering chartered vessels. In foreign waters, the responsible UCSB person shall ensure the vessel meets the equipment requirements of this manual, as well as any/all applicable local requirements for vessels of this type and purpose.
3. The designated boat operator is responsible for all aspects of boating operations, regardless of any senior personnel present in the boat. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Safety of the vessel and all persons on board.
 - b. Operation of the vessel in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations and this manual.
 - c. Safe transport of the vessel to and from the launch site, if applicable
 - d. The safe operation of all equipment.
 - e. Ensuring that all required operational and safety equipment is on board and that crew and passengers know the location and how to operate safety/survival equipment.
 - f. Report all accidents, incidents, boardings, citations, safety concerns, and issues to the Launch Lead.
4. Failure to comply with provisions of the Small Boat Operations Manual may be cause for the revocation or restriction of the operator's authorization. However, any operator may deviate from the requirements of this manual to the extent necessary to prevent or minimize a situation that is likely to cause death, serious physical harm, damage to the vessel, or major environmental damage.
5. The operator or person in charge of a vessel is obligated by law to provide emergency assistance that can be safely provided to any individual in danger at sea regardless of affiliation. The operator or person in charge is subject to a fine and/or imprisonment for failure to do so.

SECTION 3.00 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

3.10 AUTHORIZATION OF BOAT OPERATORS

An authorized boat operator should complete the following:

1. Boating safety course from the California Boating and Safety Department, Coast Guard Auxiliary, Power Squadron or approved equivalent.
2. Provide documentation of, and/or acquire, practical experience in operating a boat.
3. Demonstrate to the Launch Lead proficiency in the safe operation of the proposed type of boat:

- a. Prepare the boat for use
 - b. Safely drive and back a vehicle, which is trailering a boat, and launch and retrieve the boat (if trailering is required)
 - c. Operate the boat effectively in local conditions (in close quarters, choppy seas, kelp and other conditions determined by the Launch Lead).
 - d. Proficient use of the support equipment: compass, radio, electronic navigational, emergency gear and other support equipment.
 - e. Anchoring the boat
 - f. Perform other minor safety-related maintenance on the type of vessel that is to be used, as determined by the Launch Lead and/or Boating Safety Officer.
 - g. Demonstrate how to tow another boat. (If required)
 - h. Demonstrate proficiency in the operation of any specialty equipment and procedures specific to the boat.
 - i. Other items determined by the Launch Lead.
4. Have current training in CPR and First Aid
 5. Conduct a minimum number of trips determined by the Launch Lead and Small Boat Operations Committee where he/she is the primary operator under direct supervision of an approved boat operator.

The following metrics should be used when designating a boat operator:

1. Experience and history within the Boating Safety Program.
2. Familiarity and ability with the boat, related equipment, project and boating environment.
3. Communication skills of the candidate (Operator to Crew, BSO and Launch Lead).
4. A history of demonstrating good judgement.
5. Boating experience and appropriate training as determined by the Launch Lead.

3.20 MAINTAINING AUTHORIZATION

The UCSB Small Boat Operations Committee shall set standards for maintaining authorization. At a minimum, operators shall be re-authorized by the Launch Lead every 5 years.

3.30 REVOCATION OF AUTHORIZATION

A boat operators' authorization may be revoked by the Launch Lead or SBOC for any action deemed unsafe or unlawful or for not meeting the procedural requirements of the UCSB outlined in this manual.

3.40 RE-AUTHORIZATION

If a boat operator's authorization is revoked, they may be re-qualified after the operator complies with such conditions as the SBOC may impose. The operator shall be given the opportunity to present his/her case to the SBOC before conditions for re-authorization are stipulated.

3.50 WAIVER OF REQUIREMENTS

The SBOC may grant a waiver for specific requirements for a UCSB boating operation.

SECTION 4.00 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND RECORD KEEPING

4.10 FLOAT PLAN

All boat operators conducting boat operations under the auspices of the UCSB shall file a float plan with a responsible party (shore contact person) prior to departure. The float plan shall include the passenger manifest, destination and time of return, shore contact, equipment check and the latest weather forecast for the area(s) to be visited.

4.20 MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

1. A file of usage for all boats, including a log of scheduled and unscheduled maintenance for each boat and boat trailer shall be maintained.
2. Records shall be maintained for a period deemed appropriate by the Launch Lead.

4.30 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTING

1. All accidents should be reported to the Launch Lead, Boating Safety Officer and other UCSB responsible personnel within 24 hours of the incident.
2. Incidents and near accidents, breakdowns or other unsafe events whether on land or at sea should be reported to the Launch Lead and Boating Safety Officer within a time period specified by the OM.
3. Any accident causing loss of the vessel, damage over \$2,000, requiring medical treatment beyond first aid, or loss of life shall be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard and state authorities as prescribed by the Code of Federal Regulations, 33CFR, 173, sub part C.
4. The Small Boat Operations Committee should investigate and document the accident as described in 4.33 above, and related personal injury and/or property damage, and prepare a report as outlined by the USCG.
5. Accident reports shall be held for at least five years.

SECTION 5.00 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

- All boats and equipment used by UCSB authorized operators in US waters, regardless of ownership, will, at a minimum, conform to U.S. Coast Guard, state, and local requirements and to the standards set forth in this manual.
- All boats operated outside of U.S. Coast Guard jurisdiction shall at a minimum comply with U.S. Coast Guard regulations in addition to any applicable local requirements and to the standards set forth in this manual.

5.10 EQUIPMENT

1. The operator shall be proficient with the operation of the equipment and shall inspect all emergency equipment prior to departure.
2. The operator and/or crewmember shall notify the Launch Lead of any malfunctioning equipment.
3. The nature of specific operations may require vessels and boating equipment to meet higher standards as determined by the Launch Lead and/or the SBOC.
4. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) - The type and number of PFDs on board shall meet US Coast Guard Standards required for the type of boat being used and be easily accessible.
 - a) All boat personnel are advised to wear PFDs at all times. PFDs must be worn by all personnel when:
 1. Conditions necessitate as determined by the operator.
 2. Deck operations necessitate as determined by the operator, BSO or Launch Lead.
 3. Operating a boat within 50 meters of the surf zone.
 4. Transferring from one vessel to another.
 5. Non-swimmers and/or minors must wear a PFD at all times.

5.20 STABILITY

The operator shall observe the posted maximum boat load limits set by the Launch Lead and no person may operate a vessel loaded in a way that would jeopardize the safety of the operator or crew.

5.30 COMMUNICATIONS

The Launch Lead shall set communication guidelines. At a minimum, the vessel is required to have one effective means of communication for assistance (VHF radio, cell phone, satellite phone, etc).

5.40 WEATHER

The Launch Lead shall establish weather guidelines for the boating operations.

5.50 SPECIAL OPERATIONS

The Launch Lead shall establish guidelines for special operations such as; foreign waters, SCUBA diving, trawls, live boating, night operations, equipment deployment, etc.

5.60 SAFETY CHECKS

Prior to departure the boat operator shall:

1. Perform a functional inspection of the boat, trailer and equipment, including communications.
2. Assess all environmental conditions – weather, water conditions, etc.
3. Complete a float plan (Section 4.10) and provide the shore contact w/ the necessary information.
4. Have crew complete any necessary forms: work comp., waivers.
5. Give a briefing to all new crew on board including, at a minimum, emergency procedures, location of PFDs, fire extinguishers, person-overboard procedures, and methods of seeking assistance with a VHF radio, satellite device or other predetermined communication equipment.

After Returning:

1. Upon return the operator will contact the shore contact as agreed on before departure.
2. Notify the Launch Lead of any problems with the boat or equipment that occurred during the cruise.

Shore Contact Duties:

1. Be notified of float plan details before departure.
2. Attempt to contact vessel after ETA if nothing heard. Contact Launch Lead, Boating Safety Officer, and US Coast Guard or other emergency agency if nothing is heard from the vessel after one hour past their ETA determined by the Launch Lead.

**SECTION 6.00
ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES
FOR SPECIFIC UCSB BOATING PROGRAMS**

Below are additional procedures to Section 1-5 determined for the various UCSB Boating programs. Forms, waivers and the boating programs manuals of each specific UCSB scientific boating program are available online: <http://ehs.ucsb.edu/units/diving/dsp/html/sbc.htm>

6.10 Department of Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology – Marine Lab

*see document titled “EEMB Small Boat Regulations”