

STATION: 6

LOCAL INFORMATION



PREPARATION

Objectives

The Local Information Station requires the most preparation because it focuses on the wildlife, waterways and resources unique to your location. The outline for this station provides an organizational framework; most of the details will come from research you conduct and materials you gather. As you plan your approach, remember that this station's overall goal is to raise participants' awareness and teach them how and where to follow up – not to cover every aspect of your locale. For example, rather than reviewing the entire content, having participants find a quick answer or two will get them acquainted so they can use the regulations booklets independently.

Making the station relevant to your area and state is critical. The presenter should be well-versed on local habits – which boating and fishing activities people participate in most and where they like to do so. Detailed knowledge of state regulations and aquatic wildlife is also vital to the station's content. Your state fish and wildlife agency / DNR is an excellent resource for regulations booklets, maps, fish identification guides and other materials you'll need. Local tackle shops are also sources for these materials, as well as for up-to-date information regarding seasonal activity.

Upon completion of the station, participants should understand:

1. **Why boating and fishing regulations are important and where to get them**
2. **Where they can go boating and fishing near by**
3. **Why and how they should respect private property that provides access to public waters**
4. **Where to locate courses in boating safety and fishing skills**
5. **How to identify some local fish**

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Materials

For Presenter:

- Life jacket to wear throughout the program

For Station Activities:

- Current fishing license from your state
- Copies of your state's fishing rules booklet – one for each participant to take home, plus a set to use in the station

Your state may refer to its fishing rules document as “regulations,” “digest,” “proclamation,” or by another term.

There may be two editions – freshwater and saltwater.

- Copies of your state's boating regulations or handbook – one for each participant to take home, plus a set to use in the station
- State map showing local access to fishing and boating
- Information sheet of Boating Safety Courses, Fishing Instruction Classes and other resources available in your area – one for each participant to take home, plus one for presenter's use

See “Tips and Options” for further details.

- State fish identification posters or state fish species identification booklets – one for each participant to take home, plus a set of booklets to use in the station

Check with your state fish and wildlife agency.

Species identification may be included in your state's fishing regulations.

- Fish cut-out from the online Passport Kit

Choose a fish participants might catch in your area.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- I. Introduce yourself and the station.
- II. Objective 1: Accessing boating and fishing regulations
 - A. Show group a fishing license from your state.
 1. Review some specifics such as age requirements, renewal frequency, types of licenses, how to display, etc.



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2. Explain how and where to obtain a license in your state.
3. Reinforce that it's important to have a valid license not only to comply with the law, but also as a means of stewardship.
 - a. Fishing license sales provide revenue that funds fish and habitat conservation.
 - b. Special taxes on fishing and boating equipment also support environmental programs.
- B. Hand out your state's fishing and boating regulations booklets.
 1. Inform group they'll receive their own copies in their take-home bags and will use the copies they're holding to get acquainted with the material.
 2. Emphasize that anglers and boaters should be well acquainted with the regulations before heading out on the water and should refer back to the regulations whenever there's a question.
 3. Direct participants' attention to the boating regulations booklet.
 - a. Guide them through a brief review of the information the booklet contains.
 - b. Ask one or two questions and have participants find the answer in the booklet.
 4. Direct participants' attention to the fishing regulations booklet.
 - a. Guide them through a brief review of the information the booklet contains.
 - b. Ask one or two questions and have participants find the answer in the booklet.
 5. Make sure the group knows how and where to get updated copies of your state's boating and fishing regulations.
 6. Remind them to keep a copy in their tackle box and with their boating gear.
 7. Collect sample boating and fishing regulations booklets.



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- III. Objective 2: Discovering nearby places to boat and fish
- A. Display map in front of group or on the ground in the middle of the group, oriented so north points north.
 - 1. Engage group in identifying your location.
 - 2. Place an X on the map to mark your location.
 - B. Have participants identify nearby bodies of water.
 - 1. Guide the group to use the map's key and coloration to specify the type – lake, river, ocean, etc.
 - 2. Lead discussion regarding activities people enjoy on and around these bodies of water.

- IV. Objective 3: Respecting private property
- A. Direct group's attention to a public access point on the map.
 - 1. Explain that it's sometimes necessary to cross private land to reach public waters.
 - 2. Landowners who cooperate with wildlife agencies to provide this access should be shown respect.
 - B. Review some basic ways participants can show respect for the landowner and the property.
 - 1. If there is an entry gate, leave it in the position in which they find it.
 - 2. Walk only on the path or trail that leads directly to the water.
 - 3. Proceed quietly to the water – especially if there are residences nearby.
 - 4. Do not litter. Practicing the "Carry in, carry out!" rule is important.

- V. Objective 4: Finding safety and skills courses
- A. Emphasize the value of boating safety and fishing skills courses – especially for beginners.
 - B. Inform the group these courses are often available at low cost or even free of charge.
 - C. Hold up a copy of the handout they'll receive in their take-home packages.
 - 1. Point out a couple of the safety / skills courses opportunities.



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2. Encourage participants and their families to take advantage of the courses.
- VI. Objective 5: Identifying local fish
- A. Hand out the state fish species identification booklets and/or display the state fish poster.
 1. Discuss the varieties of fish that are native to your area.
 2. Review characteristics used to identify fish: fins, colors, patterns, shape, etc.
 - B. Hold up the cut-out fish you have downloaded from the Kit.
 1. Instruct the group to examine it carefully, taking note of specific characteristics.
 2. Have participants raise their hands when they believe they've matched the fish with the identification materials.
 - C. Explain the different types of limits set for fish – size, bag, seasonal, male/female, etc.
 1. Discuss why these limits exist.
 2. Remind group that eating the catch is not a negative concept; regulations ensure anglers know which fish are acceptable to keep and responsible anglers do not keep more than they'll consume.
 - D. Collect identification booklets.
- VII. Review of station's major points
- A. It is every angler's and boater's duty to know state regulations and comply with them.
 - B. A map is a good tool for locating nearby places to boat and fish and identifying the type of waterway.
 - C. When using a public access point, it's important to show respect for the landowner and the private property.
 - D. Beginners should take boating safety, fishing skills and other courses.
 - E. Being able to identify fish is crucial to complying with state regulations.

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TIPS and OPTIONS

- This station includes various pieces of literature. To keep the group focused, collect each piece after it's been covered. Remind participants they'll receive their own copies in their take-home bags.
- Participants under ten years of age may need help finding answers in the regulations booklets. Enlist parents when possible. If the entire group is younger, you can direct them to the answer page rather than having them find it on their own.
- A template for the Information sheet is available online with *Passport*. This sheet should include the following:

Local places to boat and fish

Boating education courses (Look for NASBLA certification.)

Angler education courses

Safety courses

Boating / Fishing license requirements and where to obtain licenses

Other information to consider:

Fishing Tackle Loaner Program sites

Life Jacket Loaner Program sites

Local rental operations for boating and fishing

Local clubs sponsoring novices

Disabled access sites

- Following are examples of questions you can ask to engage participants with the boating and fishing regulations booklets. Make sure to mark the answer page(s) in your copy.

At what age do you have to purchase a fishing license?

At what age can you operate a motor boat?

Personal watercraft?

What is the legal length for (popular local catch)?

How many (select fish species) can you keep when fishing on the (local waterway)?

Do you have to wear a life jacket on a boat?

When are the Free Fishing Days in our state?

Where can you get information about boating education and safety courses?



**PASSPORT TO
FISHING &
BOATING**

FISHING & BOATING SAFETY FOR FAMILIES

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- If invasive species are a concern in your area, the fish identification segment is a good place to cover the topic. Invasive species discussion can also help participants better understand the overall ecosystem and how delicate aquatic systems can be.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further background information applicable to the Local Information Station:

- Take Me Fishing®: <http://www.takemefishing.org/state/page>
- Life Jacket Loaner Program:
<http://www.boatus.com/foundation/LJLP/usamapB.asp>
- U.S. Coast Guard / State Laws:
http://www.aboutboatingsafely.com/state_boating_laws.htm
- NASBLA-Approved Courses:
<http://www.nasbla.net/courseListing.php>
- Fish Identification:
<http://www.enature.com/fieldguides/intermediate.asp?curgroupid=3>

