



# Driver Training Packet

*December 2023*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Congratulations!!! You have taken a step in “advancing your status” within the ranks of the Convair Waterski Club. Obtaining this packet and initiating your driver training process shows that you are willing to share in the responsibility of driving the boats, making a valuable contribution to the club and viewed with very high regard by your fellow club members. It means that you are willing to spend more of your time driving the boats for the other members — but, it also means that you’ll be more readily accommodated on ski runs, particularly when a boat-load needs a driver. Club drivers inherently have more opportunities to ski, especially at the river, as they are often a scarce commodity.

However, driving a boat is a serious responsibility and should never be taken lightly. Boat drivers are responsible for the safety of all passengers, including the skier. Therefore, drivers must be able to provide for the safe conduct of the boat and skiing operation in conjunction with any other boats, obstacles, and activities that are underway in the water, and under all conditions.

During Bay ski sessions, club drivers can invoke the "Driver's Prerogative," which essentially means that they can ski ahead of their turn. The only provision for exercising this privilege is that the driver actively drives that day. The purpose of this privilege is to entice club drivers to participate and help the Launchers running the Bay operation, which, of course, includes driving.

## **DRIVER TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

In order to become a club driver, the Convair Driver Training Program consisting of four basic activities must be completed, followed by approval from the executive board. The four activities are:

1. Learning, reviewing, and understanding boating rules (the law), club rules and guidelines, and miscellaneous information about the club boats;
2. The dry-land orientation;
3. Obtain the California Boater Card <https://californiaboatercard.com/>
4. Minimum 10 hours of check-driving ((More hours and/or driving at both the river and bay are at the discretion of the executive board and may be directed at any time during the application process);
5. The oral & practical checkout.

Use the following check-sheet to indicate your progress toward completion.

**Name of Student Driver:** \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ 1. Print your full name on the cover sheet of this packet, on the above line, and on the check-out sheet at the end of the packet to identify that they are yours.

Note: ALWAYS have log sheet with you when you perform any driver training activity, including all check driving. It will be your responsibility to get all the check-offs and signatures. Consider downloading this PDF to your phone in case you have questions.

- ☐ 2. Read through the packet and become thoroughly familiar with its contents. Feel free to ask questions, get additional information, or get clarification on areas you do not understand from any club driver or launcher.

Note: When you feel confident enough to initiate your training, contact an approved Check Driver or Launcher. Let them know that you are a beginning student driver and would like to initiate your training. Set up a meeting time and place where the Check Driver or Launcher can take you through the dryland orientation.

- ☐ 3. Complete the dryland orientation, and have the Check Driver or Launcher sign and date the check-out sheet. (This signifies completion of the dryland orientation and allows you to proceed to the check-driving.)

- ☐ 4. If you are unfamiliar with driving a boat, have a Check Driver let you drive a boat without a skier, and familiarize yourself with the basic maneuvers encountered in skiing, including taking off, turning, stopping, turning around at idle, and backing up. This step is particularly important for trainees who have never driven a boat or those who have never pulled a skier, and is intended to allow the trainee time to get the “feel” of the boat.

- ☐ 5. Commence your check-driving activity by showing up at the bay or river, and arrange with any launcher or check-driver to start your check-driving. Be sure to bring this packet with you each time you intend to drive.

*Note: Upon completion of each driving session, record the session hours, tally up the cumulative hours, and obtain all of the Check Driver's comments and signatures on the check-out sheet. Each tow of a skier counts as 15 minutes, and you need a minimum of 10 hours of driving time which equates to 40 tows. Keep in mind that you must accrue the 10 hours within a 6-month time period and any driving time that was logged 6 months prior automatically becomes void.*

- ☐ 6. Complete the 10 hours of check-driving, ensuring that it all occurs within six months. Upon completion of your driving activity, you are ready to take your oral & practical test. Contact any approved Check Driver or Launcher and set up a meeting time and place where you can take this test.

- ☐ 7. Complete and pass the California Boater Card exam. Print out the completion certificate and provide with the final paperwork.
- ☐ 8. Complete the oral & practical, and have the Check Driver or Launcher sign and date the check-out sheet.
- ☐ 9. There is a minimum 5 hours required in Bay Operations to become a fully approved driver.  
*Please circle one of the following:*
  - Requesting Bay Only driver approval (minimum 5 hours on Bay)
  - Requesting River Only driver approval (no Bay minimum)
  - Requesting Full Driver approval (minimum 5 hours on Bay)
- ☐ 10. Contact the President and inform him or her of the preliminary completion of your student driving activity.

*The president will then queue your name onto the next executive board meeting agenda as a candidate for driver approval. Ask for the time, date, and location of the next meeting, and plan to attend.*

- ☐ 11. Attend the executive board meeting and bring this packet with you. Be prepared to discuss your application. The Board will discuss the application and the check driver comments without you present. They will either provide full approval or require additional activity. The board has the discretion to require more hours, require additional specific driving activities or limited driving approval. (For example: Bay driving only)

## **Introduction**

To be a good club driver requires knowing the basic rules and regulations for boating; safety considerations; techniques of towing skiers; and club rules and guidelines. The following information is to be studied and fully understood prior to the dryland orientation. Your knowledge of this information will be included as part of your assessment during both the dryland orientation and the Oral & Practical.

## **Club Boat Driver Regulations**

### Qualification Requirements for Boat Drivers

1. Active, paid-up membership
2. At least eighteen (18) years of age
3. Familiarity with the following:
  - a. Mission Bay Park operating rules and regulations (Boating map: <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/lifeguards/pdf/mbaymap.pdf> )
  - b. ABC's of the California Boating Law
  - c. US Coast Guard Pleasure Craft Requirements
  - d. US Coast Guard Pilot Rules, Signals, and Markers
  - e. USA Water Ski Association Signals to Boat Drivers
  - f. California Safety Card: All boat drivers in the State of California are required to carry an approved Boater Safety Card. Details can be found at [www.californiaboatercard.com](http://www.californiaboatercard.com)
4. Completion of the requirements set forth in the Student Driver Training Packet, including:
  - a. Dryland orientation
  - b. Boat-handling Orientation (if requested)
5. Ten (10) hours (or more) of driving experience in any club boat supervised by authorized check-drivers and/or launchers. Minimum 5 hours at the Bay.
6. Oral & Practical
7. Approval by the club's executive board.
8. A driver's qualification may be revoked by the executive board.
9. A once qualified driver whose qualification has been revoked may be reinstated after an appropriate time of supervised student driving if the President agrees on his/her reinstatement and all objections voiced by other qualified drivers have been considered.
10. To encourage driver participation the club has a policy that allows drivers who actively drive to have priority over others on the sign-up list to ensure that they are allowed to ski if time is running out.

## **Operating Ground Rules, Responsibilities, and Authority of You, the Boat Driver**

1. You are the **CAPTAIN** of the boat with the authority to provide commands to the skier, observer, and passengers to ensure the safety of skiers, passengers, and other people using the surrounding waters.
2. Operate the boats in a manner consistent with the safety and well-being of the skier and passengers, and for the safety and longevity of the equipment.
3. Ensure that, along with the observer, you are physically capable of pulling an unconscious skier into the boat in an emergency.
4. Have an observer (over twelve years old) whenever towing a skier. Observers should always watch aft, and the driver should always watch forward. This is especially important during the take-off.
5. Be sure an approved personal flotation device is available for every passenger in the boat, including the skier. It is imperative that those who cannot swim and children under 12 years old wear a life jacket while in the boat.
6. Insist that each skier know how to swim, and wears either an approved life jacket.
7. Ensure that all passengers remain seated while the boat is underway.
8. Be sure the flag is used properly. The flag should be raised whenever a skier or tow rope is in the water; when bringing a skier in for a landing (300 to 500 yards from the landing area); and when starting off from the beach with a skier.
9. Stay a safe distance from beaches, other vessels, water skiers, and swimmers. The Harbors and Navigation Code of California limit boat speed to 5 knots:
  - Within 100 feet of any person in the act of bathing;
  - Within 200 feet of most beaches;
  - After sunset and before sunrise.
10. Stay clear of sand bars and shallow water, such as the north end of Crown Point Shores.
11. Return as quickly as is safely possible to protect a fallen skier. He or she is virtually helpless to deal with oncoming boat traffic, and this is one of the driver's primary responsibilities.
12. Avoid sharp or high-speed turns which could cause injury to passengers.

13. From Crown Point Park always start skiers from a designated take-off area, perpendicular to the beach, and then drive in a counterclockwise pattern. The park has designated ski boundaries as shown by the large signs posted at the beach. Always land in a designated landing area. To ensure the safe landing of skiers, approach the landing area staying at least 200 feet from the beach until passing the sign designating the start of the landing area.
14. Be sure the observer and skier know the basic club hand signals for both driver and skier.
15. Be sure the skier knows and uses the proper landing area.
16. Drive a straight box-like pattern, providing advance signals for turns. This allows the skier to perform his or her own maneuvers rather than compensating for yours.
17. Drive according to the skier's ability, avoiding sharp turns. Club boats will easily run at speeds faster than are comfortable for most types of skiing.
18. Check the gas before starting out as a courtesy to skiers.
19. Be sure the boat and tow line are aligned, and that all slack is taken up before hitting the throttle when executing a deep-water start.
20. When near another boat that has a skier in the water, acknowledge to the other driver(s) that you see their downed skier(s) by holding your arm up vertically while passing at a safe distance.
21. When approaching any downed skier to prepare for a deep-water start, maneuver the boat such that the skier is on the same side of the boat as the driver. Do not drive around while the skier is on the opposite side because it is difficult to see the skier and you could inadvertently run him or her over.
22. Cut (shut off) the motor when pulling downed skiers into the boat, and while skiers are getting into the water from the boat.
23. Ensure that no alcoholic beverages are in the boat during skiing operations.
24. Ensure that no dogs or animals ride in the boat.
25. Any equipment damaged while in violation of federal, state, or local laws; or club bylaws; shall, at the discretion of the executive board, be the financial responsibility of the driver involved.
26. Don't move the throttle control lever from forward all the way into neutral after a "down" directive is heard. the tendency is to go into reverse, which ruins the transmission.
27. Don't "rap" on the throttle control lever to slowly increase speed, but rather apply a smooth, gradual force to move the lever.

28. Towing a skier on a wakeboard, knee-board, hydroslide, or trick skis is different and more exacting than normal ski tows. Consult an approved Check-Driver prior to attempting this type of towing.
29. To avoid “swamping” and subsequently sinking the boat, there are a few guidelines.
  - Never overload the boat, especially at the stern. Examples include full gas cans, all occupants standing at the stern, etc.
  - While waiting to drive the boat onto the trailer, keep the motor running and keep maneuvering to avoid getting swamped by a large swell or wave.
  - In any situation where the boat starts to go under, move the throttle lever forward and motor the boat forward, which both tilts the bow up out of the water, and forces the water inside the boat out and over the stern. Once the boat is motoring forward, aim for the nearest beach and attempt to “beach” the boat on the sand. If there is just too much water, ***DON’T*** play the proverbial captain going down with the ship: Get away from the boat, swim away, and if possible, get assistance from another boat.
30. When only a moderate amount of water is in the boat, it can be drained out by removing the drain plug while the boat is moving at skiing speed (on those boats equipped with drain plugs accessible from the inside).
31. The boat driver should be able to handle and maneuver the boat at slow speeds, in rough water, with winds, in water currents (at the river), and with any combination of the above conditions.
32. The driver must be able to safely maneuver a boat to pick up a skier in the water. The speed while returning toward the skier should be adjusted based on the conditions: faster if an oncoming boat is approaching the skier; and slower if the water conditions are rough, which could cause the boat to veer off course. Of course, the size of the turn should be adjusted to accommodate for winds and rough water.
33. Some boats have a different type of throttle mechanism. To advance the throttle without putting it “in-gear”, as is needed for cold engine starts, you must disengage the gear shift mechanism by pulling the base of the handle laterally away from its pivot point. It is very important NOT to over-rev the engine while it’s still cold. When starting using this method, place one hand on the lever to pull it back quickly if the engine starts to over-rev.



## **CLUB DRIVING PROCEDURES**

### **Beach Starts**

1. Make sure the motor is down.
2. Check oncoming traffic — Clasp hands overhead if the starting path is obstructed.
3. Ensure that the boat is not pointed parallel to the shoreline, but rather away from the shoreline and as close to perpendicularly as is safe.
4. Ensure that the skier has adequate slack (extra rope) in his/her hands.
5. Idle out (not too slowly) when directed by the skier AND it's safe to do so.
6. When the skier shouts "hit-it", push the throttle lever smoothly forward (to propel the boat forward), and then "back off" the throttle to hold a constant speed once the desired skiing speed has been reached.

### **Starts Near the Beach**

1. Make sure the motor is down.
2. Check oncoming traffic — Clasp hands overhead if the starting path is obstructed.
3. Ensure that the boat is not pointed parallel to the shoreline, but rather away from the shoreline and as close to perpendicularly as is safe.
4. Idle out (not too slowly) when directed by the skier AND it's safe to do so.
5. When the skier shouts "hit-it", push the throttle lever smoothly forward (to propel the boat forward), and then "back off" the throttle to hold a constant speed once the desired skiing speed has been reached.

### **Deep Water Starts**

1. Make sure the motor is down.
2. Allow the skier to get fully prepared.
3. Align the boat in the appropriate take-off direction, and ensure that the skier is facing the same way. Move the boat forward until the rope pulls taut, but try not to unnecessarily drag the skier through the water, especially if they are a beginning skier.
4. Check oncoming traffic — Clasp hands overhead if the starting path is obstructed.
5. When the skier shouts "hit-it", push the throttle lever smoothly and quickly forward (to propel the boat forward), and then "back off" the throttle to hold a constant speed once the desired skiing speed has been reached. (It takes longer for heavier skiers to get up on their ski than lighter weight skiers or skiers using two skis.)

## **Towing the Skier**

1. Drive at the appropriate speed for the skier, provided it is safe to do so. Typical speeds used for towing people on various types of equipment include:
  - Knee board / trick skis / wake board — 18 mph
  - Skier on two skis — 26 mph
  - Skier on single (slalom) ski — 28 to 34 mph
  - Barefooter — 36 to 38 mph
2. When towing the skier in a large area of water, drive around in a counter-clockwise direction.
3. Drive such that you can tow the skier in a straight line as much of the time as possible. For example, in a “circular” or “oval” skiing area, it is best to tow the skier in a “box-like” pattern (rather than in a smooth circular pattern).
4. Do not follow another boat with a skier unless no other safe option exists.
5. Avoid having any other boat(s) following behind your skier. Adjust your course if necessary.
6. Avoid driving close to shore or buoys. If it is necessary to drive close to obstacles, make sure the skier is aware of them. In most cases, the best policy is to hold your arm straight up, indicating to the skier that he or she should ski directly behind the boat

## **Landing the Skier**

1. When a skier indicates his or her desire to return to the starting area (by putting their hand over their head and patting up and down) provide acknowledgment by repeating the signal back to the skier, and immediately head the boat for the landing area.
2. As you approach the landing area, drive parallel to shore and instruct the observer to raise the flag (to signal landing intentions).
3. For beginning skiers, momentarily swing the boat closer to shore to indicate the drop-off point.
4. After the skier drops off, swing away from shore in a perpendicular fashion. Drive far enough away to be out of the landing zone and pull the rope into the boat.

## **How to Handle Beginning or Novice Skiers**

1. Review the skiing signals to ensure they know all of them.
2. Point out the drop-off area before leaving the beach.
3. When starting out, avoid rough water and wakes from other boats as much as possible so that the beginner has the smoothest start possible.
4. Make wide sweeping turns. Most beginning skiers can't negotiate sharp turns, particularly the first couple of times skiing.
5. The most important item: Use common sense.
6. No dog-bone turns (see number 4 above).
7. Make deep landings at slower speeds than beach landings.
8. Tell the observer to watch for boats coming from behind, which are more of a hazard to beginning skiers.
9. After a fall, drive around the skier slowly, and adjust boat speed to avoid dragging the beginner through the water while he or she is still unprepared to yell "hit it". The throttle lever should also be placed into neutral to ease the pull on the skier while he or she is still trying to get set up.
10. When putting the boat "in gear", move the throttle lever from the neutral position to the "drive" position smoothly and quickly. (A slow and gradual movement causes the transmission gears to grind against each other and hastens wear.) Once in gear, when the "hit-it" command has been given, push the throttle lever smoothly forward to propel the boat forward.

## **DRYLAND ORIENTATION INFORMATION**

The purpose of the Dryland orientation is to provide an introduction to the workings of the boats from an experienced, approved Check Driver and/or Launcher. This orientation is to be conducted with a club boat while it is still on the trailer. The Check Driver or Launcher will walk around the boat with you and point out and explain various functions and components of the boat. After identifying the various elements and describing their operation, the Check Driver or Launcher will ask a variety of "on the spot" questions to verify your grasp of the information presented. Once the Check Driver or Launcher is satisfied, he or she will sign and date the Check-out sheet indicating that you have successfully completed the dryland orientation. You should ask about items on the check-list that were not covered.

### **Dryland orientation Check List**

Trailer	_____	Spare tire
	_____	Safety chain
	_____	Winch operation
	_____	Wheel bearing check
	_____	Bearing buddy check
	_____	Tongue padlock
	_____	Tongue operation
	_____	Trailer springs/U-bolts
	_____	Hull supports
_____	Center rollers	

Boat (Hull)	_____	Hull plug (use and storage location)
	_____	Speedometer sensor (engine mount or hull mount)
	_____	Trim Tabs (if available)
	_____	Tow bar
	_____	Tie-down U-bolts
	_____	Aft light connection
	_____	Fuel tank overfill vent

Boat (Operation)	_____	Steering wheel
	_____	Tachometer
	_____	Speedometer
	_____	Engine tilt indicator
	_____	Fuel level indicator
	_____	Voltmeter
	_____	Engine hours meter
	_____	Horn button
	_____	Light switch (2 positions)
	_____	Throttle control

Throttle control operation	_____	Trimming/tilting engine up/down
	_____	Throttle positions (forward, neutral and reverse)
	_____	Overheat alarm
	_____	Low oil alarm
	_____	Control lever tension adjustment
	_____	Emergency kill switch
	_____	Cold start lever
	_____	Choke operation

Engine	_____	Fuel connection
	_____	Engine cover removal
	_____	Spark plug wire connections
	_____	Pull start directions (rope/manual start with cowling off)
	_____	Towing latch
	_____	Bottom bar/engine stop
	_____	Trim tab
	_____	Trim and tilt manual release valve
	_____	Zinc anode
	_____	Gear oil drain plug
	_____	Cooling system indicator
	_____	Trim/tilt sensor
	_____	Battery
	_____	Trim cylinders
	_____	Tilt cylinders
	_____	Propeller

Fuel	_____	Fuel tanks (size, locations, filler locations)
	_____	Auxiliary (Aux) tanks (hose coiling tabs)
	_____	Auxiliary tank fuel level gauge
	_____	Fuel hose connections

Registration	_____	Boat/trailer registration location
	_____	CF number location/information

Emergency	_____	Fire extinguisher
Items:	_____	SOS flag
operation	_____	Horn
and	_____	Throwable cushion
location	_____	Personal floatation Devices (PFD) for adults and children
	_____	Spare ignition key
	_____	Oar(s)

Skiing Items	_____	Flag
	_____	Ski rope use and attachment
	_____	"15 off"
	_____	Ski handle types and attachment
	_____	Ski vest

Boat operation	_____	Cold start procedure
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### **BOAT-HANDLING ORIENTATION** (optional)

If you have never driven a boat before, or simply wish to have some driving practice without pulling a skier, ask an approved Check Driver to let you drive without a skier, and perform the basic maneuvers encountered while pulling a skier.

### **STUDENT CHECK-DRIVING**

After completing the dryland orientation, you can begin your check-driving activity by showing up at the bay or river, and making arrangements with any launcher or check-driver to start your check-driving.

You must accrue at least 10 hours of check driving, at least 5 hours of which **MUST** be at the Bay, within a 6 month time period. Each tow of a skier counts as 15 minutes, so 10 hours of driving time equates to 40 tows. As you check-drive, record the session hours, tally up the cumulative hours, and obtain all the Check Driver's comments and signatures on the check-out sheet. Keep in mind that any driving time logged 6 months prior to the most recent check-driving activity automatically becomes void.

### **ORAL & PRACTICAL CHECK-OUT**

The Oral & Practical Check-out is the equivalent of a final exam that finalizes the student driver training process, and must be conducted by an approved check driver or launcher after you have completed the dryland orientation and 10 hours of check-driving. The purpose is to find out if you are knowledgeable about the operation of each of the club boats, all Mission Bay and Coast Guard rules and regulations, and especially how to handle an emergency. A typical Oral & Practical might include an evaluation of your understanding of information from the Boat Driving Guide, miscellaneous items from the dryland orientation Check-out sheet, and asking you how to perform various functions.

There is no set length of time for the check-out: It depends in part on the level of competence you demonstrate to the check driver or launcher. The Check Driver or Launcher's function is to ensure that you have learned enough during the training program to be a safe and effective club driver. When there is something you don't know, there is no penalty. On the contrary, you will be patiently informed about the subjects where you have difficulty. Once satisfied, the check driver or launcher will sign the final line of the Check-out sheet, signifying the completion of all formal student driver training.

Name of Student Driver: \_\_\_\_\_

Dry Land Orientation	DATE / /	CHECK-DRIVER	REMARKS
_____			

Calif Boater Card (Passing Certificate) \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK-OUT LOCATION	SESSION TIME (hours)	CUMULATIVE TIME (hours)	DATE	CHECK-DRIVER	REMARKS
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Oral and Practical	DATE / /	CHECK-DRIVER	REMARKS
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