

Division of Boating and Waterways
Boating Safety Unit
Yacht and Ship Broker Licensing Program Summary
May 8, 2025

Summary:

The Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW), oversees the licensing and regulation of yacht and ship brokers and salespersons in California. Under California law, any individual selling used vessels that are 16 feet or longer and less than 300 gross tons on behalf of others who do not own those vessels must obtain a license. DBW enforces Article 2 of the Harbors and Navigation Code (HNC §§ 700–740), which governs the activities of licensees to ensure compliance with regulations and to provide consumer protection.

A "**Broker**" refers to a person who, under a consignment agreement, negotiates the purchase, sale, lease, or exchange of (used) yachts and who does not own the vessels; and is defined in HNC as:

A person who, except as otherwise excluded by Section 710, for compensation or in expectation of compensation, does, or negotiates to do, one or more of the following acts for another or others:

- 1) Sells or offers to sell, buys or offers to buy, solicits or obtains listings of, or negotiates the purchase, sale, or exchange of yachts, and who does not own those yachts.
- 2) Leases or rents, offers to lease or rent, places for rent, solicits a listing of a yacht for rent, or negotiates the purchase, sale, or exchange of a lease on a yacht for a rental or lease period of more than 90 consecutive days to any one person or business during any 12-month period, and who does not own that yacht.

Minimum Qualifications to Apply:

- **Be at least 18 years of age; and**
 - Employed as a licensed Salesperson for at least one year in the past five years or licensed as a Broker in the past five years; **or**
 - Have owned and operated a marine business in California selling new or used yachts for a minimum of three continuous years immediately preceding application for a broker license. ["Yacht" refers to vessels 16 feet or longer and under 300 gross tons]; and have an established place of business located in California (post office box, mail drop or telephone answering service is not a "Place of Business"); **or**
 - Only for Out-of-State Applicants - Have been employed, as the primary occupation, as a yacht broker or yacht salesperson in another state for a minimum of three continuous years immediately preceding application for a California broker license.

Yacht and Ship Broker Fees:

License

\$ 200 – Original License

\$ 25 – Written Examination

Total - \$225

License Renewal

\$75 (One-year)

\$150 (Two-year)

According to HNC, Division 1. Department of Boating and Waterways and the Boating and Waterways Commission [30 - 88], Chapter 4. Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund [85 - 88], funding for this program helps to support personnel who administer and enforce the yacht and ship program.

Total Number of Yacht and Ship Broker Licenses in California:

There are currently **296** licensed active yacht and ship brokers in the yacht brokerage industry in California.