

Coast Guard Announces New Law Requiring Use of Engine Cut-off Switches



WASHINGTON – Operators of recreational vessels less than 26 feet in length will be required to use an engine cut-off switch (ECOS) and associated ECOS link (ECOSL) as of April 1, 2021, as the U.S. Coast Guard implements a law passed by Congress.

The ECOSL is usually a lanyard-style cord that attaches to an ECOS either in close proximity to the helm or on the outboard motor itself if the vessel is operated by a tiller. When enough tension is applied, the ECOSL disengages from the ECOS and the motor is automatically shut down.

Section 503 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2018 required manufacturers of covered recreational boats (less than 26 feet in length, with an engine capable of 115 lbs. of static thrust) to equip the vessel with an ECOS installed as of December 2019. Owners of recreational vessels produced after December 2019 are required to maintain the ECOS on their vessel in a serviceable condition.

Section 8316 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2021 requires individuals operating covered recreational vessels (less than 26 feet in length, with a 3 HP or more engine) to use ECOS “links.” Using the ECOSL is required only when the primary helm is not within an enclosed cabin, and when the boat is operating on plane or above displacement speed. Common situations where ECOSL use would not be required include docking/trailing, trolling and operating in no-wake zones.

Details and more information can be found [Here](#)

Answers to many questions regarding this New Law - can be found in the [FAQ](#)