



Wisconsin Boating Regulations



Please note that this is not a complete set of boating laws. This is the information published in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Boating Regulations pamphlet.

Whenever your boat is approached by an authorized patrol boat displaying **blue lights** you shall reduce the boat speed to slow-no-wake speed and yield the right-of-way to the patrol boat. The operator of a boat shall stop when requested to by a law enforcement officer or patrol boat. These officers are charged with the responsibility of providing safety afloat. Law violators can expect enforcement action and conscientious boaters will find these officers helpful protectors of their recreation.

Wisconsin's Personal Watercraft/Boating Law

Personal Watercraft (PWC) are classified as Class A (less than 16 feet in length) inboard boats. All PWC must be registered and display valid registration decals and registration numbers on the forward half of both sides of the craft.

Personal watercraft operators must obey all boating regulations just as any other motorboat. In addition, PWC operators must comply with the following additional regulations:

1. No person may operate a PWC from sunset to sunrise. *[Note that Diamond Lake Association Guidelines limit use of recreational boating* activities to the hours of 10am-6 pm.]*
2. Effective August 1, 1998, **no person may operate a personal watercraft faster than slow-no-wake within 200' of shore on any lake in Wisconsin.**
3. All persons riding a PWC must wear a PFD of the proper size and type (type I, II, III, or V).
4. Persons at least 12 but under 16 must be in possession of a valid boating safety student certificate to operate a PWC. (Parental supervision is not a substitute for a boating safety certificate as with other motorboats. PWC operators must have a certificate.)
5. It is illegal to operate a PWC facing backwards.
6. There is no towing of persons engaged in water skiing, aquaplaning, or similar activities unless the PWC is designed to seat 3 people. There is no limit on number of skiers.
- 7.. Operation of a PWC within 100 feet of another boat or PWC is only allowed if the following requirements are met:
 - * Operation does not exceed a slow-no-wake speed.
 - * Neither boat is involved in any type of water skiing or similar activity.
- 8.. It is illegal to operate a PWC within 100' of the following:
 - * Another boat towing a skier or person engaged in similar activity.
 - * The tow rope of another motorboat towing a skier or person engaged in similar activity.
 - * A person involved in skiing or a similar activity.
9. No person operating any type of motorboat (including PWC) that is towing persons engaged in water skiing, aquaplaning, or similar activity may operate within 100' of any occupied anchored boat, any personal watercraft, any marked swimming area, or public boat landing.
10. No person who is water skiing or engaged in similar activity, may get within 100 feet of a personal watercraft or allow the tow rope to get within 100 feet of a personal watercraft.

Speed Restrictions

- * It is unlawful to operate a **motorboat** within **100** feet of any dock, raft, pier, or buoyed restricted area on any lake at a speed in excess of "slow-no-wake."
- * It is unlawful to create hazardous wakes.
- * It is unlawful to operate a **personal watercraft** faster than slow-no-wake within **200'** of shore on any lake.

Age Restrictions

- * No person under the age of 10 years may operate a motorboat.
- * No person under 12 may operate a personal watercraft (PWC).
- * Persons at least 10 years of age but less than 12 years of age may operate a motorboat (except PWC) if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian or a person at least 18 years of age designated by the parent or guardian.
- * Persons at least 12 but less than 16 years of age may operate a motorboat (except PWC) only if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian or by a person 18 years or older designated by the parent or guardian or if they have successfully completed a Department of Natural Resources prescribed Boating Safety Course and possess a safety certificate issued by the Department or another state.
- * No person under the age of 16 may rent a personal watercraft.
- * Persons at least 12 but less than 16 years of age may operate a personal watercraft if they have successfully completed a DNR prescribed Boating Safety Course and possess a safety certificate issued by the Department or another state. **Parental accompaniment may not be substituted for possession of a valid DNR safety certificate.**
- * Parents or guardians are punishable by law for knowingly allowing unauthorized persons to operate a motorboat.

Water Skiing

It is unlawful:

- * To operate a motorboat towing a person whether or not on water skis, aquaplane, parasail or similar device, unless there is in the boat a competent person in addition to the operator in a position to observe the activity of the person being towed. The observer must be able to observe the person being towed and relay signals to the operator.

source for above information: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/>

The Diamond Lake Association Guidelines limit recreational boating activities to the hours of 10am-6 pm.

(Other area lakes impose more stringent regulations: Tahkodah Lake prohibits jet skis and limits noise.)

Definition: Recreational Boating: 1) water crafts towing persons on tubes, skis and similar equipment; (2) water-jet skis or other powered small personal craft and/or (3) motor-driven watercraft going up and down (or around in a circular fashion) the lake creating a significant wake. Fishing boats and pontoon craft proceeding from one place to another on the lake are not considered as being recreational. Time-of-day operating limits 10 AM to 6PM apply only to recreational water craft.