



Michigan Marine Law & Boater Safety

It is the Responsibility of the Water Craft Operator to Know these Laws !

I. SPEED LIMITS

1. Slow – no wake speed within **100 feet** of the shoreline, any watercraft, pier, person, raft, swimming area, and swimmers.
2. Maximum speed **55 m.p.h.** in all water unless otherwise regulated.
3. Michigan law states that a person operating a vessel shall operate it in a careful and prudent manner and at such a rate of speed so as not to unreasonably endanger the life or property of any person. A person shall not operate a vessel at a rate of speed greater than will permit him, in the exercise of reasonable care, to bring the vessel to stop within an assured clear distance ahead.
4. A person shall not operate a vessel in a manner so as to unreasonably interfere with other persons lawfully using Michigan's water resources.

SLOW – NO WAKE ! Means operating at a very slow to speed in order to minimize the wake created by your vessel.

II. TOWING OF PERSONS

1. No water skiing between one hour after sunset and one hour prior to sunrise.

2. Motorboats shall give way to non-motorized vessels.
3. When two vessels are approaching each other head-on, or nearly so, the operator of each shall cause his vessel to pass on the port (left) side of the other (i.e. keep the approaching boat to your left).
4. When overtaking a vessel proceeding in the same direction, the operator of the overtaking vessel, unless it is not feasible to do so, shall pass on the port (left) side of the vessel ahead (i.e. keep the overtaken boat to your right).
5. When two vessels are approaching each other at right angles or obliquely so as to involve risk of collision, the operator of the vessel which has the other on his own port (left) side shall hold his course and speed, and the operator of the vessel which has the other on his own starboard (right) side shall give way to the other by directing his course to starboard so as to cross the stern of the other vessel or, if necessary to do so, shall slacken his speed, stop or reverse.

All vessels are required to provide at least one United States Coast Guard approved PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE per passenger. Each child under the age of 6 years, and in an open deck area is REQUIRED by law to wear a PFD AT ALL TIMES!

IX. RESPONSIBILITY FOR VESSEL WAKE

The owner of any vessel is personally responsible for any damage to life or property resulting from a wake or swell created by the negligent operation of the vessel, where the vessel is being operated with his consent. Always maintain safe speeds and follow no-wake laws.

X. DISTANCE FROM SCUBA DIVER'S FLAG

A vessel shall not be operated within 200 feet of a buoyed diver's flag unless it is involved in tendering the diving operation. A person diving shall stay within a surface area of 100 feet of a diver's flag.

XI. PERSONAL WATERCRAFT REGULATIONS

1. A person shall maintain a distance of 100 ft. from any dock, boat, raft, buoyed or occupied bathing area while driving at other than slow - no wake speed.
2. A person shall not cross within 150 ft. behind another vessel other than a personal watercraft, that is moving at greater than a slow - no wake speed.
3. A person shall not operate a PWC on the waters of this state from one hour before sunset to 8:00 A.M local time.
4. Maneuvers that endanger life, limb, or property, including weaving through congested traffic, jumping the wake of another vessel or turning unnecessarily close to another other vessel and/or swerving at the last moment to avoid a collision constitutes reckless operation of a vessel.
5. Carrying more persons than the vessel is designed to carry is prima facie evidence of reckless operation of a vessel.
6. Lanyards must be attached to the operator on vessels that are equipped with lanyards.
7. As of October 1, 2011, a person of less than fourteen (14) years of age may not legally operate a PWC under any circumstances.
8. A person who was born after December 31, 1978 shall not operate a PWC on Michigan waters unless they have obtained a boating safety certificate.

9. A personal watercraft shall not be operated at speeds in excess of (55 mph) except where otherwise posted.

10. A person shall not operate a PWC in waters less than two feet deep unless traveling at a slow no-wake speed.

A complete handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities is available for free download on the internet at www.boat-ed.com

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