PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (PWC) REGULATIONS

1. A person shall maintain a distance of **100 feet** from any dock, boat, raft, buoyed or occupied swimming area while driving at other than slow-no wake speed. A person must stay **200 feet** away from any Great Lakes shoreline.
2. A person shall not cross within **150 feet** 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 AM 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 vessel and/or swerving at the last moment to avoid a collision, constitute reckless operation.
5. Carrying more persons than the vessel is designed to carry is evidence of reckless operation.
6. Lanyards must be attached to the operator on vessels that are equipped with lanyards.
7. Approved PFDs must be worn during operation.
8. A person of less than fourteen years of age may not legally operate a PWC under any circumstances.
9. A person who was born on or after December 31, 1978, shall not operate a PWC on Michigan waters unless they have obtained a boating safety certificate.
10. A personal watercraft shall not be operated at speeds in excess of **55 mph** except where otherwise posted.
11. A person shall not operate a PWC in waters less than two feet deep unless traveling at a slow-no wake speed.

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.

Michigan Lakes and Streams Association, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting Michigan's inland lakes and streams for future generations.

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Michigan Lakes & Streams Association, Inc. hereby disclaims any responsibility pursuant to your interpretation and application of these laws, rules, and regulations. You are ultimately responsible for knowing the laws as they exist under Michigan's Watercraft and Marine Safety Act.

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MICHIGAN BOATING LAWS Quick Reference

A complete handbook of **Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities** is available at: **boat-ed.com**

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It is the responsibility of the watercraft operator to know these laws.

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 mph** in all water unless otherwise regulated.
3. Michigan law states that a person operating a vessel shall operate it carefully and prudently and at such a rate of speed so as not to endanger the life or property of any person unreasonably.
4. 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 a stop within an assured clear distance ahead.
5. A person shall not operate a vessel in a manner to unreasonably interfere with other persons lawfully using Michigan's water resources.

SLOW - NO WAKE = means operating at a very slow speed to minimize the wake created by your vessel.

TOWING SPORTS

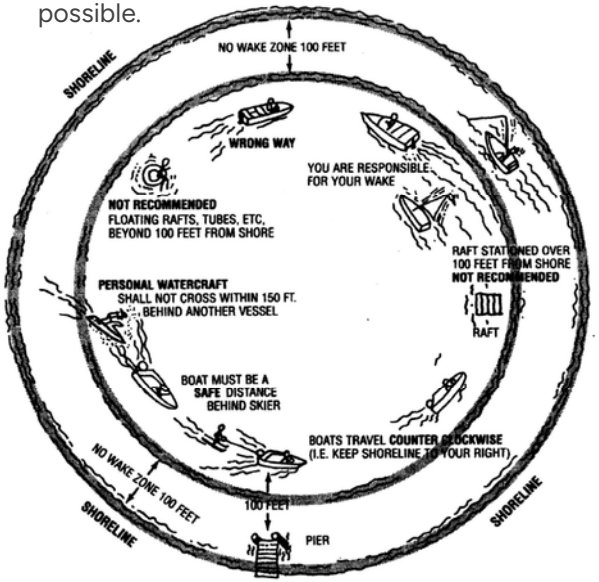
1. No towing between one hour after sunset and one hour prior to sunrise. PWCs have different rules, see section for Personal Watercraft.
2. At least one competent person, in addition to the driver, shall be in any boat towing persons on water skis, tubes, etc. This additional person (the spotter) shall be in a position to observe the progress of the person being towed.
3. The tow boat must be equipped with a 170-degree wide-angle rear-view mirror affixed to permit the driver to observe the progress of the person being towed.

KEEPING DISTANCE WHILE TOWING

Towing vessels and persons being towed shall maintain a distance of 100 feet from the shoreline and any dock, raft, buoyed or occupied swimming areas, or vessels moored or at anchor, except when the vessel is proceeding at a slow - no wake speed or when the towed person is being picked up or dropped off.

COUNTER-CLOCKWISE OPERATIONS

Persons operating vessels shall operate in a counter-clockwise fashion when reasonably possible.



CHILDREN OPERATING MOTORBOATS

1. Persons under 12 years of age can operate a motorboat if:

- They have been issued a boating safety certificate and have it on board.
- Are under the direct supervision of a person aged 16 or older.
- Not using a motor higher than 35 HP.

2. Persons born on or after July 1, 1996, shall not operate a motorboat unless they have been issued a boating safety certificate.
3. A person of less than 14 years of age may NOT legally operate a personal watercraft (PWC) under any circumstances.
4. A person 14 or 15 years of age may operate a PWC if:

- They have obtained a boating safety certificate.
- Are accompanied by or are operating the PWC no more than 100 feet from a parent, legal guardian, or another designated person of 21 or older.

5. A person born on or after December 31, 1978, shall not operate a PWC on Michigan waters unless they have obtained a boating safety certificate.

LIQUOR AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

A person who is intoxicated (as for driving a car) may not operate or be in control of any vessel. The Michigan implied consent law applies to intoxication testing of boat operators. Severe fines and/or jail time await those who are observed operating a watercraft while intoxicated on alcohol or drugs (legal or illegal).

OPERATION OF VESSELS

1. Sailboats have the right-of-way over motorboats while they are under sail power.
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 keep the approaching boat to their left (port side).
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.
5. When two vessels are approaching each other at right angles 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 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 (PFD)*** *per passenger. Each child under the age of 6 years, and in an open deck area is* ***REQUIRED*** *by law to wear a* ***Type I or II PFD AT ALL TIMES!***

Type I Type II

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.