

Boating Rules and Regulations

Since boating season is upon us here is a quick refresher on some of the boating ordinances. You can pickup the complete set of rules at the sheriff's office. Please consider having your children and guests read through the following and the complete booklet. You might even want to measure out some of these lengths to give your children and guests an idea as to the distance that is required for the various situations.

- ⇒ It shall be unlawful for any person to operate a vessel while under the influence of liquor or drugs (a person cited under this rule may upon request be given a breath test for blood alcohol or a blood test for analysis).
- ⇒ It is unlawful for any minor under the age of 16 years to operate or be permitted to operate a motorboat powered by a motor of 10 horsepower or more unless accompanied by a person who is over the age of 18 and is not under the influence of drugs or alcohol and/or is incapacitated
- ⇒ Speeds Limits: No More Than
 - Six MPH within 100 feet of a swimmer
 - Six MPH within 150 feet from shore
 - Six MPH within 150 feet of any vessel not propelled by a motor
 - Six MPH within 300 feet of any public boat launch
 - Eight MPH one half hour after sunset to one half hour before sunrise
- ⇒ No vessel shall exceed 50 MPH during daylight hours in unrestricted area unless otherwise posted.
- ⇒ A person shall not operate a personal watercraft during darkness.
- ⇒ All vessels in fresh water lakes shall travel in a counter-clockwise pattern at all times.
- ⇒ Shoreline Marker Buoys: Lake waterfront property owners may place one appropriate floating buoy 150 feet from their respective shoreline to mark the minimum water skiing distance on fresh water. Such buoy shall be anchored individually and shall not be connected to any other neighboring buoy by any means. An appropriate buoy shall be round in shape, with a diameter of at least twelve inches and shall be red in color. Any person choosing to place out such a buoy shall assume all responsibility for the buoy.
- ⇒ Water Skiing: No vessel shall be operated with a skier or other occupied contrivance in tow unless the vessel is occupied by two persons, one legal operator and one observer at least 12 years of age Both vessel and person in tow are over 150 feet from the shoreline and any pier or restricted area thereof, provided; that the person being towed may start at the shore or a pier and must proceed directly to a point at least 150 feet from the shoreline before paralleling the shoreline; provided further, that persons in tow may return to shore or a pier at an angle of no less than 45 degrees to the shoreline with the shoreline on the right of the person being towed, maintaining the counter-clockwise direction. The operator of the vessel displays a red warning flag when a skier is down.



For a complete list of the boating ordinances please contact the sheriff's office.



Boating Rules on Benson Lake

Boating rules on Benson Lake are the same as shown in "Boating Rules and Regulations" for fresh water on the next page. However, on July 1, 1996, Mason County Board of County Commissioners, at the request of Benson Lake residents, passed Resolution No. 76-96 which prohibits internal combustion powered motorboats or watercraft on the lake. Only electric motors are allowed on Benson Lake.