

Excerpts from Maine law:

SKI SLALOM COURSE, WATER: All water ski slalom courses shall be marked with RED and YELLOW, minimum nine (9) inch spherical markers and arranged in compliance with the American Water Ski Association Regulations for slalom courses. No part of a water ski slalom course shall be within the Water Safety Zone (within 200 feet of any shoreline) unless authorized to do so by the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

SKI JUMP, WATER: All water ski jump structures will be equipped with orange reflectors or reflecting tape visible from all sides. Any such structure anchored beyond the water safety zone (200 feet from any shore) between the hours of sunset and sunrise, shall be illuminated with a single white light showing all around the horizon.

No person may operate a watercraft at a speed greater than headway speed while within the water safety zone (200' from any shoreline) or within a marina or an approved anchorage in coastal or inland waters except while actively fishing. For the purposes of this section, "headway speed" means the minimum speed necessary to maintain steerage and control of the watercraft while the watercraft is moving.

The operator of any watercraft must operate at a reasonable and prudent speed for existing conditions and regulate the speed of a watercraft so as to avoid danger, injury or unnecessary inconvenience in any manner to other watercraft and their occupants, whether anchored or under way. The operator must consider the effect of the wash or wave created by their watercraft to waterfront piers, floats or other property or shorelines.

A person is guilty of imprudent operation of a watercraft if that person, while operating a watercraft on the inland or coastal waters of the Maine, engages in prolonged circling, informal racing, wake jumping or other types of continued and repeated activities that harass another person.

It is illegal to operate any watercraft, water ski, surfboard or similar device in such away as to recklessly create a substantial risk of serious bodily injury to another person.

A person is guilty of operating a watercraft to endanger if he operates any watercraft, water ski, surfboard or similar device so as to endanger any person or property.

- Any person under 16 years of age may not operate a personal watercraft which includes jet-skis. •A person between 16 & 18 years of age may operate a personal watercraft if they have successfully completed an approved education course, or if they are accompanied by a person 18 years of age or older. Proof of age and course completion must be possessed while operating a personal watercraft.
- Anyone operating or riding on a personal watercraft must wear a Type I, II or III PFD. •The parent or guardian of a minor under 18 years of age is responsible for the minor's actions while operating a personal watercraft. •Personal watercraft may not be operated during the hours between sunset and sunrise.

Personal Watercraft Basics

Operation of a personal watercraft does not require the vocabulary of an "old salt". Knowledge of some nautical terms will facilitate your learning the basics about your boat and help you to understand the information in this manual. More boating terms and explanations can be found in the glossary at the back of this manual and in your owner's manual.

It's vital for a PWC operator to possess respect for the environment, other boat operators, and property owners in the area where they are boating. PWCs are regulated by the same laws as other boats. There are additional rules that specifically cover PWCs. It is the PWC operator's responsibility to know and follow these regulations.

Understand what other boaters and people on the shore are expecting. The PWC operator is rarely the only one around. Put yourself in their shoes. How would you feel if someone passed by close and at a high speed? It would be pretty jarring. Reckless or inconsiderate use of PWCs has caused considerable ill will. Ride smart, ride safe and ride with respect. Know the PWC's capabilities and limitations as well as your own. Often boaters develop a "false sense of mastery" causing their awareness to lapse. A boat or PWC operator must always be prepared for change. They must maintain a proper lookout. Watching and listening for other watercraft or watercraft signals and reacting to them are a key to an enjoyable and safe boating experience. They must constantly keep a look out for obstacles and dangers at all times. The relationship of your operating speed and distance is a key factor in your safety and the safety of others. Always operate your PWC or boat at a safe speed and safe distance from others at all times. Keep a 360-degree perspective. Don't just focus on what's in front of you. a PWC operator must have a lanyard attached at all times. The lanyard is attached to the operator and the ignition switch. When the lanyard is disconnected or when the operator falls off, the PWC will come to a stop.

Because of their smaller size and weight, PWC create less wake than conventional boats thereby causing less damage to docks and other personal property. This feature also minimizes erosion of the shoreline and waterway bottoms. However, high-speed/high-RPM operation in very shallow water or near shore can cause significant erosion.

Some things to remember when operating your PWC:

1. Running your PWC close to shore, the jet drive can disturb the bottom environment by sucking up sand, gravel, plant life and small animal life. The thrust from the discharge can also disturb the fragile environment of the shoreline. This area is used by many aquatic animals for nesting and hatching young and many insects and small aquatic plants that grow here are

food for fish and wildlife. Always respect the shore environment and push your PWC into at least waist deep water before starting the engine, then idle out from there.

2. When approaching the shoreline do so at a right angle or 90 degrees if possible. Idle in then shut off your PWC engine and let the craft drift into shallow water, dismount and push the PWC onto the beach or shoreline. This will not only save the shoreline environment but the fiberglass bottom of your PWC from damage.
3. PWCs and boats up to 26 feet must carry one B-I fire extinguisher.
4. PWCs or boats built after 1/1/93 must not exceed a noise level of 88 decibels while PWCs or boats built before 1/1/93 must not exceed a noise level of 90 decibels
5. People are prone to single out PWC operators. How a single PWC operator behaves influences how PWC's are perceived.

WATERSKIING

- A. Watercraft towing a person or persons on water-skis, surfboards, aquaplanes or similar devices shall not operate within the water safety zone. A person may not manipulate any watercraft, tow rope or other device in a way that will cause the device, or any person on the device, to enter the water safety zone.

EXCEPTION: A watercraft may enter or leave the water safety zone, as directly as possible, to pick up or drop off water skiers, surfboarders or persons on similar devices. In doing so, it is the watercraft operator's responsibility not to endanger any person or property.

- B. Watercraft towing a person or persons on water skis, surfboard or other similar devices must have a person

in the watercraft who is at least 12 years of age, in addition to the operator, who is in a position to continually observe the person or persons being towed

- C. No person shall operate any watercraft for the purpose of towing a person or persons on water-skis, surfboards, or similar devices nor shall any person water-ski, surfboard or use similar devices on any waters of this State between the hours of 1/2 hour after sunset until 1/2 hour before sunrise.
- D. Any person being towed on water skis, surfboards, or similar devices must wear a life jacket, life belt, or similar life saving device. The operator of a watercraft shall not tow a person or persons on water skis, a surfboard or similar device, unless the person being towed has complied with this requirement.

EXCEPTION: Performers engaged in exhibitions or tournaments authorized by the Department do not need to comply with this requirement.

While wearing your PFD is not normally required by law, there are some exceptions to this.

- Children 10 years of age and under must wear a Type I, II, or III PFD while on board all watercraft.
- Anyone canoeing or kayaking on the Saco River between Hiram Dam and the Atlantic Ocean between January 1st and June 1st must wear a Type I, II, or III PFD.
- Anyone operating a watercraft on the Penobscot River, between the gorge and the head of Big Eddy, and on the Kennebec River, between Harris Station and Turtle Island, at the foot of Black Brook Rapids, must wear a Type I, II or III PFD.
- Anyone operating or riding on a personal watercraft (jet-ski, etc.) must wear a Type I, II, or III PFD.
- Any person being towed on water-skis, surfboards, or

similar devices must wear a life jacket, life belt, or similar lifesaving device.

NAVIGATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. It is illegal to operate a watercraft to molest wild animals or wild birds so as to pursue, molest, harass, drive or herd any wild animal or wild birds, except as may be permitted during the open season on that animal.
2. When watercraft are approaching each other head on, or nearly so, each watercraft shall direct their course to the right and pass on the port side of each other and at a distance and speed so that the wake of each will not endanger the other.
3. When a watercraft desires to pass another watercraft on either side in the same direction, the overtaking watercraft shall keep clear of the overtaken watercraft and shall not pass until it is safe to do so, and then at such speed and distance so as not to endanger the overtaken watercraft. The overtaken watercraft has the right-of-way until the overtaking watercraft has safely passed.
4. When watercraft approach each other at right angles or obliquely, the watercraft approaching on the right (starboard) side has the right-of-way and the other watercraft which has such watercraft on its right side shall keep out of the way of the other by directing her course to starboard so as to cross the stern of the other watercraft, or stop and reverse if necessary to avoid collision.
5. Watercraft under sail alone or being propelled by oars or paddles have the right-of-way over watercraft propelled by machinery, except when overtaking.
6. In narrow channels, streams, thoroughfares, every watercraft shall keep to the right of the middle of the channel in the direction which it is traveling when it is

safe and practicable to do so.