

RULES FOR BOATING SAFELY

- **ALL VESSELS MUST CARRY A READILY ACCESSIBLE (*AT HAND, UNWRAPPED*) U.S. COAST GUARD APPROVED AND SERVICEABLE LIFE JACKET OF THE PROPER SIZE FOR EVERY PERSON ON BOARD AND THOSE BEING TOWED.**

- **FEDERAL REGULATIONS REQUIRE CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 13 WEAR A U.S. COAST GUARD APPROVED LIFE JACKET ALL THE TIME WHEN UNDERWAY (not anchored or docked) ON ANY SIZE VESSEL.**

- A Children's Life Jacket Loaner Program, sponsored by the Lake Gaston Water Safety Council, is in place at the following locations: Bracey at Americamps, Holly Grove Marina and Poplar Pointe Marine; Gasburg at The Club; Henrico at Washburn's Marina and Sherwood Forest; and Littleton at Eaton Ferry Marina, Outdoor World and Stonehouse Timber Lodge.

- **IN BOTH NORTH CAROLINA* AND VIRGINIA A PERSON MUST BE AT LEAST 14 TO OPERATE A PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (PWC). PERSONS 14 AND 15 YEARS OLD MAY OPERATE A PWC *IF* THEY CARRY PROOF OF AGE AND THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF A NASBLA RECOGNIZED SAFE BOATING COURSE. ALL PERSONS ON A PWC MUST WEAR A COAST GUARD APPROVED LIFE JACKET. THE LIFE JACKET MUST HAVE ALL FASTENERS FASTENED.**

- * In North Carolina a person 14 years old but less than 16 years old, can operate a PWC if they are riding with a person who is at least 18 and is in compliance with the boater safety training certification requirement.

- All vessels operating before sunrise and after sunset must display proper lighting which includes the red and green navigation lights and 360-degree white light(s). All other vessels (canoes, kayaks, rowboats and sail boats less than 23 feet) shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.

- Personal Watercraft (PWC) are *not to be operated* before sunrise or after sundown.

- *For other than PWCs, water-skiing, kneeboarding, towed floats, and wakeboards are allowable between one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset in Virginia and one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset in North Carolina. Special care should be given to ensure that towed persons can be clearly seen when in the water.*

- All vessels must carry one throwable Type IV Personal Flotation Device (throwable cushion or floatable ring) placed near the steering device except for canoes, kayaks and inflatables. In both North Carolina and Virginia, Class A Vessels under 16 feet are exempt.

- Every vessel is required to have *an audible* device for sounding an alarm or signal such as a whistle, horn or bell. Every vessel should have a device for visually signaling for aid such as an orange flag, orange Life Jacket, mirror/reflector or flare.

- Every boater should be alert for and offer assistance to any boater or swimmer in distress.

- Every powered vessel must be equipped with a properly charged, U.S. Coast Guard approved Type B-I fire extinguisher. Vessels over 26 feet require two (over 40 feet must have three). You may substitute a single Type B-II for two Type B-I extinguishers.

- Most vessels carry a capacity plate which identifies the number of persons that can be safely aboard. The number of persons on board and the number of persons being towed (on floats, skis or any other towable) cannot exceed the number of persons for which the vessel is rated.

- The above requirements apply to Personal Watercraft (PWC) as well. If the PWC is rated for three, then two can be on the PWC with one being towed. If the PWC is rated for two then only one person can be on the PWC with one being towed.

- **TOWED PERSON(S):** In both North Carolina and Virginia all persons operating, riding upon, or being towed by a Personal Watercraft must wear an appropriate Type I, II or III Life Jacket (*inflatables are not permitted*). In both Virginia and North Carolina, persons being towed by other than PWCs may optionally decline to wear a Life Jacket (but an appropriate non-inflatable Type I, II or III Life Jacket must be carried aboard the towing vessel for the towed person). In North Carolina, if the towing vessel has no rear view mirror, an observer is required. In Virginia, while there is no law regarding rear view mirrors, an observer is required when towing a person who is not wearing a Life Jacket.

- U.S. Coast Guard, Virginia Conservation Police and NC Wildlife Officers are authorized to cite operators *for reckless operation for speed causing unsafe conditions or operation causing* peril to others.

- When a vessel is underway no person should sit, stand, or lay outside the enclosed seating area, i.e. above the motor or outside the gated area on pontoon and deck boats.

- It is illegal to use docking lights when underway.

- It is illegal for boaters, PWC operators and skiers to jump other vessel wakes. It is unsafe to tow skiers, or persons on floats under bridges.

- Maintain "NO WAKE" idle speeds at all bridges and culverts with "No Wake Buoys" or in proximity to stopped enforcement officers (strictly enforced) and when within proximity to swimmers, skiers down, anchored vessels, docks, and marina areas. PWCs are not to be operated within 50 feet in Virginia and 100 feet in North Carolina of docks, shorelines, other vessels or swimmers. The vessel operator is liable for any damage caused by his vessel to other persons or property. Do not operate in excess of safe speed when entering channels, coves or congested areas.

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RULES FOR BOATING SAFELY (Continued)

- Be alert for buoys and become familiar with their shapes and markings. It is unlawful to tie up or moor to buoys. It is unlawful to move buoys.
- It is unlawful to tie up to or moor to bridges.
- Sailboats not under power and boats propelled by oars or paddles have the right of way.

Any accident involving physical injury, death, or damage exceeding the value of \$2000 in NC or in VA, must be reported to the proper state agency (NC Wildlife Resources or VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries).

OTHER HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS:

- Obtain and review the boating laws of Virginia and North Carolina; they are not the same.
- Create a Float Plan and let people know where you are going and when you intend to return.
- Take advantage of the free Boating Safety Inspections offered by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.
- Sign up for the Safe Boating Courses by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.
- Vessels with enclosed bilge and fuel tank compartments must be properly ventilated.
- Inboard gasoline engine carburetors must be equipped with USCG approved flame arrestors.
- Please do not litter; secure your paper, plastic, cans, cigarette butts and bottles.
- Every vessel should carry a properly rigged anchor with at least 100 feet of line.
- Stay alert and be courteous to fellow boaters.

EMERGENCY SERVICES (Other than VHF Radio):

All counties have 911 services. When using 911, you must clearly identify the location where assistance is needed (State, County, Subdivision, Town, Street and enhanced 911 house number). If possible a person should be assigned to stand at the roadside to signal the emergency unit responding or have an orange signaling device/beacon/flare on the lake.

To make sure that cell phones connect with the correct 911 dispatcher dial the 10 digit number for the county E 9-1-1 - Brunswick - 434 848 3133; Northampton - 252 574-1041; Halifax - 252 583-7051; Warren - 252 257-3456; and Mecklenburg - 434 738-6191

EMERGENCY WEATHER RADIO SERVICE (NOAA) - FREQUENCY - 162.5 MHz

NOAA provides accurate information for dangerous weather including severe thunderstorms, large hail, damaging winds, tornados, and flash floods.

Fuel and food may be obtained on Pea Hill Creek at Washburn's Marina and at The Club (seasonal); on Little Stonehouse Creek at Outdoor World (seasonally); on Big Stonehouse Creek at Stonehouse Timber Lodge; on the main lake at Eaton Ferry Marina; on Poplar Creek at Poplar Pointe Marine and on Great Creek at Holly Grove Marina. Plan ahead and carry a spare tank in an approved container, if possible.

This brochure has been developed by the Lake Gaston Water Safety Council. The Council is a volunteer, *IRS Code 501(c)(3) tax exempt* organization formed to promote safety in all water related programs and activities on Lake Gaston. Contact us at **Lake Gaston Water Safety Council, PO Box 207, Henrico, NC 27842 or <http://www.LKGWSC.org>.**

***Boat Safely! Wear your Life Jacket!
They Float, but People Don't!***

SAFE BOATING TRAINING CERTIFICATION

NORTH CAROLINA - Any person born on or after January 1, 1988, must complete a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) approved boating education course before operating any vessel propelled by a motor of 10 Horsepower or greater.

VIRGINIA - All Ages

A Certificate of Training is required for operating a personal watercraft and all vessels with 10 Horsepower or greater.

