

Safe and fun water sports require boaters to **use common sense and make good judgment calls**. Don't stay on the water too long. The effects of the sun, vibration, waves and wind can impair judgment.

Drinking alcoholic beverages, taking prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications, or using illegal drugs can contribute to impaired judgment. Never operate a vessel while intoxicated—it is dangerous and illegal.

Vessel operators are responsible for keeping towed people away from dangerous areas. If there is an obstruction, shut down the boat and wait for the area to clear. Before turning, look to each side and behind to make sure that there are no overtaking boats and that making a turn will not endanger the skier. Remember, the person at the end of the towrope is an extension of the boat, and the operator must continually be aware of their presence and safety.

### SAFETY TIPS

- Know and obey the rules.
- Display required dock number plate and use the nearest number to identify your location in an emergency event.
- Be attentive and look out for others.
- Control your speed and dock slowly—boats have no brakes.
- Navigate carefully into narrow coves and watch for restrictions.
- Watch your wake. You're responsible for damage it may cause.
- Never swim near a running engine.
- Always sit in a moving boat—never on it.
- Be respectful of Natural Resources Police officers, who are there for your safety.
- Control personal watercraft speed safely—jet drives have no steering when you cut power. Keep required distances from other boats, docks and the shore.
- When overtaking another boat from behind, the boat in front has the right of way.
- When tubing, the operator, not the rider, has control:
  1. Be aware of the length of towrope.
  2. Avoid the shore, other boats and docks.
  3. Don't roughhouse.
  4. Make sure you have enough room for turns.
- When wakeboarding/wake surfing, watch your wake and avoid damage to other boats, docks and shoreline. Empty the ballast tank when not towing someone.
- When waterskiing, have a good observer, obey distance rules and use hand signals.
- Powerboats must yield right of way to canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, sailboats, sailboards and rowboats.
- Smaller craft should ensure they are visible to larger craft.



## Maryland

Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor



Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary



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[DNR.MARYLAND.GOV](http://DNR.MARYLAND.GOV)



[DEEPCREEKLAKEPOA.COM](http://DEEPCREEKLAKEPOA.COM)

### FOR PROBLEMS ON THE WATER, CALL...

Deep Creek Lake Manager  
**301-387-4112**

Department of Natural Resources Western Office  
**301-777-7771**

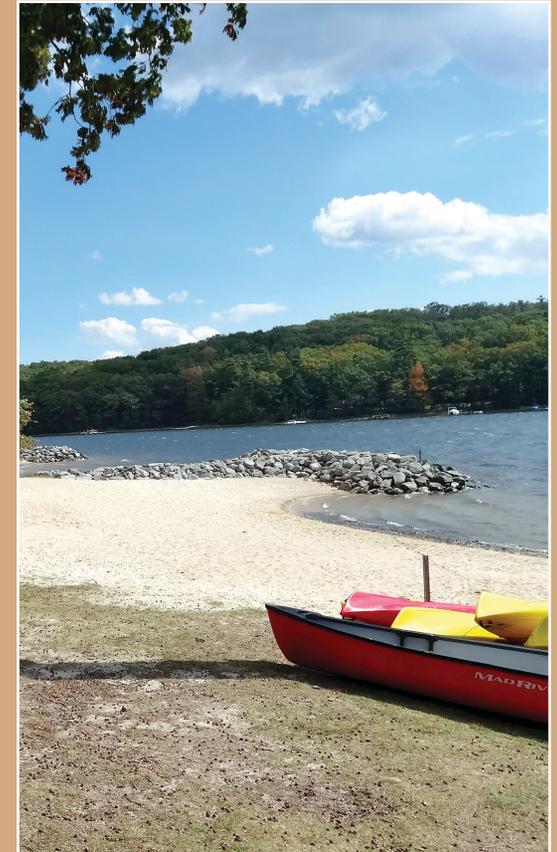
Natural Resources Police Emergency Hotline  
**800-628-9944**

The facilities and services of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin or physical or mental disability. This document is available in alternative format upon request.

This brochure is only a summary of Maryland's boating regulations. Please refer to COMAR for more detailed information.



# DEEP CREEK LAKE BOATING



SAFETY EDUCATION SECTION





# BOAT SMART FROM THE START

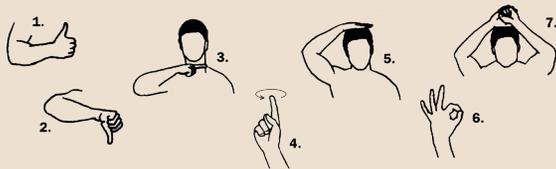
Deep Creek Lake offers many wonderful recreational opportunities. With the ever-increasing number of boaters, everyone shares responsibility for working together to ensure our waters are clean and safe. Invest the time to educate yourself in the necessary safe practices by reviewing the following laws and safety tips.

## REGULATIONS SPECIFIC TO DEEP CREEK LAKE

- Vessels may not exceed 26 feet in length, except pontoon boats, which may not exceed 30 feet.
- Vessels must be muffled so as not to exceed the state noise level limit of 88 decibels.
- Engines may not exceed the manufacturers' recommended capacity or a displacement of 550 cubic inches—whichever is less.
- Houseboats are not permitted.
- Parasailing is not permitted.
- No garbage, sewage or other waste materials may be discharged into the water.
- Aircraft are prohibited on both the lake and buffer strip unless prior approval has been obtained from the Department of Natural Resources.
- Hovercraft and personal watercraft (Jet Skis, Sea Doos, etc.) may not be operated on the lake between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday - Monday of Memorial Day Weekend, and Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from July 1 through Labor Day.

## HAND SIGNALS FOR SKIERS

Knowing proper hand signals will help the skier(s) communicate with their boat operator and/or observer.



1. **Speed up the boat:** Thumb up.
2. **Slow down the boat:** Thumb down.
3. **Cut Motor/Stop:** Slashing motion over neck.
4. **Turn the boat:** Circle motion with arms over head, then point in desired direction.
5. **Return to dock:** Pat on head.
6. **Speed and boat path OK, or signals understood:** OK signal with hand.
7. **Skier OK after falling:** Hands clasped over head.



## LAWS FOR TOWING VESSEL OPERATORS

- Anyone being towed behind a vessel on water skis or any other device must wear a type I, II or III life jacket.
- No one under 12 years old may operate a vessel towing a person(s) on water skis, or any other device.
- Every vessel towing a person(s) must have onboard both an operator and an observer 12 years old or older.
- A vessel may tow a person(s) only from sunrise to sunset.
- It is illegal to operate any vessel, or manipulate any water skis or any similar device, in a careless, reckless or negligent manner that endangers the life, limb or property of anyone.
- Except for taking off from shore, the towing vessel must stay at least 100 feet from bridges, piers, people in the water and other vessels, and the shore.
- A personal watercraft may not be used to tow unless it has the capacity to carry at least three people: the operator, a rear-facing observer 12 years old or older, and the skier.
- Ski ropes may not be more than 75 feet long, except when barefoot skiing, in which case a ski rope 100 feet long may be used.



**Help eliminate the spread of aquatic invasive species by thoroughly washing and cleaning your boat prior to launching!**



## REGULATIONS FOR INLAND WATERS

- Anyone born on or after July 1, 1972 operating a motorized vessel on Maryland waters must carry onboard an approved boating safety certificate.
- It is unlawful to operate a boat in a reckless or negligent manner, or while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- A valid registration must be correctly displayed onboard.
- Navigation lights must be displayed from sunset to sunrise.
- A wearable life jacket must be carried for each person on board.
- Children under 13 years old must wear a life jacket when onboard a recreational vessel less than 21 feet long while underway. These include motorboats, sailboats, canoes, kayaks, rowboats, stand-up paddleboards and any other mode of transportation on the water.
- Children under 4 years old must wear a life jacket that has additional safety precautions appropriate for an infant that will:
  1. Hold the child securely with a strap secured between the legs to fasten the front and back;
  2. Have a high collar to help maintain the buoyancy of the child; and
  3. Ensure a quick recovery of the child from the water by including a web handle.
- Personal watercraft may not be operated at speeds above six knots within 100 feet of any abutment, bridge, pier, shore, wharf, other personal watercraft or people in the water.
- All Maryland registered personal watercraft must display regulation stickers provided by the Natural Resources Police explaining the rules of operation.
- Operators of personal watercraft must be 16 years old or older.
- When wakeboarding, water skiing or tubing, there must be both an operator and an observer in the boat 12 years old or older.
- Wakeboarding, water skiing and tubing are not permitted within 100 feet of bridge pilings, docks, shore, boats or other people.
- Water skiing is not allowed from sunset to sunrise.