

Effective 5/10/2016

Superseded 3/14/2023

73-18-15.1 Vessel navigation and steering laws.

- (1) The operator of a vessel shall maintain a proper lookout by sight and hearing at all times to avoid the risk of collision.
- (2) When the operators of two motorboats approach each other where there is risk of collision, each operator shall alter course to the right and pass on the left side of the other.
- (3) When the operators of two motorboats are crossing paths and are at risk of a collision, the operator of the vessel that has the other vessel on its right side shall keep out of the way and yield right-of-way if necessary.
- (4) The operator of any vessel overtaking any other vessel shall keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken.
- (5) The operator of a vessel underway shall keep out of the way of a:
 - (a) vessel not under command;
 - (b) vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver;
 - (c) vessel engaged in fishing; and
 - (d) sailing vessel.
- (6) If the operator of one of two vessels is to keep out of the way, the other vessel operator shall maintain his course and speed unless it becomes apparent the other vessel is not taking the appropriate action.
- (7) In narrow channels an operator of a vessel underway shall keep to the right of the middle of the channel.
- (8) The operator of a vessel shall proceed at a safe speed at all times so that the operator can take proper and effective action to avoid collision and be stopped within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances or conditions.
- (9)
 - (a) When the operators of two sailboats are approaching one another so as to involve risk of collision, one of the operators shall keep out of the way of the other as follows:
 - (i) when each has the wind on a different side, the operator of the vessel that has the wind on the left side shall keep out of the way of the other;
 - (ii) when both have the wind on the same side, the operator of the vessel that is to the windward shall keep out of the way of the vessel that is to leeward; and
 - (iii) if the operator of a vessel with the wind on the left side sees a vessel to windward and cannot determine with certainty whether the other vessel has the wind on the left or on the right side, the operator shall keep out of way of the other vessel.
 - (b) For purposes of this Subsection (9), the windward side shall be the side opposite that on which the mainsail is carried.
- (10) The operator of any vessel may not exceed a wakeless speed when within 150 feet of:
 - (a) another vessel;
 - (b) a person in or floating on the water;
 - (c) a water skier being towed by another boat;
 - (d) a water skier that had been towed behind the operator's vessel unless the skier is still surfing or riding in an upright stance on the wake created by the vessel;
 - (e) a water skier that had been towed behind another vessel and the skier is still surfing or riding in an upright stance on the wake created by the other vessel;
 - (f) a shore fisherman;
 - (g) a launching ramp;
 - (h) a dock; or

- (i) a designated swimming area.
- (11) The operator of a motorboat is responsible for any damage or injury caused by the wake produced by the operator's motorboat.
- (12)
 - (a) Except as provided in Subsection (12)(b), the operator of a motorboat that is less than 65 feet in length may not exceed a wakeless speed while any person is riding upon the bow decking, gunwales, transom, seatbacks, or motor cover.
 - (b) Subsection (12)(a) does not apply if the motorboat is:
 - (i) between 16 feet and 65 feet in length; and
 - (ii) the motorboat is equipped with adequate rails or other safeguards to prevent a person from falling overboard.
- (13) If a person is riding upon the bow decking of a motorboat that does not have designed seating for passengers, the person shall straddle one of the upright supports of the bow rail and may not block the vision of the operator.
- (14) The operator of a vessel may not tow a water skier or a person on another device:
 - (a) unless an onboard observer, who is at least eight years of age, is designated by the operator to watch the person being towed; or
 - (b) between sunset and sunrise.
- (15) A person who violates this section is guilty of a class C misdemeanor.