

Boating Laws for Maine Camps

As if we all haven't had enough confusing regulatory issues in 2024 already, the new Maine recreational Boating Safety Education requirements are adding to the list of topics that need clarification.

1. Licensed Maine Youth Camps are **not technically** part of the new Maine recreational Boating Safety Education requirements. Click [HERE](#) to see these requirements.

"Recreational boating" means operating a motorboat primarily for the operator's pleasure or leasing, renting, or chartering a motorboat to another person for the other person's pleasure. "Recreational boating" does not include using a motorboat engaged in the carriage of passengers for hire. §13001, sub-§24-A

2. However, licensed Maine Youth Camps also **may not meet** "carrying passengers for hire" because the definition "means receiving remuneration to carry passengers in a motorboat from one predetermined point to another predetermined point on inland waters." §13063, Title 12, Part 13, Subpart 6, Chapter 955

You can see we are "in-between" when it comes to boating laws in the state of Maine. This is because technically we may not fit either of the above categorizations. However, based upon the fact that the majority of us are also accredited by the ACA (which does have Motorized Watercraft Training standards, ST.20), and/or have suggested policies from our insurance carriers, MYCA suggests:

- Camp staff who are directors/supervisors of your motorized watercraft must have verified training (written documentation) in boating safety. One of the best ways to ensure this is to have these directors/supervisors of motorized watercraft complete a boating safety education course. Click [HERE](#) for several online and in-person courses available.
- Camp directors are responsible for ensuring all other camp staff who operate a motorized watercraft with campers (in addition to the directors/supervisors of your motorized watercraft listed above) have their skills evaluated and documented each summer using the appropriate motorized watercraft, as well as documentation that these staff have knowledge of boating safety. Again, an online or in-person motorized watercraft course may be your best option. Documented in-house boating safety training is also acceptable, as long as it is provided by the Director/Supervisor who has completed a boating safety education course.

Up until this point, this memo has outlined guidance for **instructional** purposes (i.e. when working with campers or when teaching other staff). Some camp directors allow their staff to use motorized boats in non-instructional situations (time off, prior to campers arriving, post camp, etc.). These non-instructional situations are considered **recreational**. Therefore, even if your motorboat staff are currently employed by a camp, they must have completed a boater safety education course if they drive a motorized boat in non-instructional situations and fit the criteria for Maine's new law.

Lake Etiquette for Camp Motorized Boating Staff from MYCA:

The legislation that would have limited wake surfing has created more intense scrutiny of all motorized boating activity on Maine Lakes. MYCA will continue to work on best practices for camp boating to help our relationship with the boating coalition that wants to more closely regulate motorized boating on Maine lakes.

In the meantime, share with your motorized boating staff and waterfront director about driving responsibly, keeping in mind shoreline erosion, wildlife protection, other boaters and community members on your lake. Respectfully share the lake with others by:

- Drive headway speed (slowest possible) within 200 feet of shore, including islands.
- It is illegal to waterski/wakeboard within 200 feet of shore. You are allowed to “take off and drop” skiers/boarders at your dock system but it must be at a prudent, safe speed.
- Always assume others do not know where your camp typically run their boats and give right of way to others.
- When wake surfing, always aim enhanced wake away from the nearest shore.
- Keep music and voices in check (sound travels loudly over water).
- Know your rules of the road when overtaking others, observe buoy meanings, comply with controlled speed areas and when in doubt, go slow.
- Be aware of your wake. Smaller craft with limited maneuverability can be tipped over by larger wakes AND are often not easy to see.
- Identify and report invasive species to your lake association.
- What you bring to the lake, take home from the lake.
- Pick up trash in the lake if possible.
- Follow all other state rules and ACA standards, specifically regarding PFDs.
- Encourage all motorized boat operators to complete a Boating Safety course, either in-person or online.