



Lake-Friendly Boating



Did you know? Your motorboat, skicraft, or personal watercraft, if operated improperly, can negatively affect lake quality, plants and animals, and the stability of the shoreline. But, did you also know that, by following some simple the lake-friendly boating guidelines, you can help ensure a clean and healthy lake while enjoying your boating experience?!

Replace your old boat engine with low-pollution engine.

Low-pollution 4-stroke and 2-stroke direct fuel injection outboard engines have been developed to reduce toxic air emissions from marine engines and reduce the release of gasoline and oil into waterways. As of 2006, you can no longer purchase a non-direct fuel injection engine. By using these cleaner burning engines, you can help protect New Hampshire's air and water, while greatly reducing your fuel costs. Although these engines may cost more up-front, they provide many economic and environmental benefits since they:

- Burn 35 to 50 percent less gasoline, which means more fuel savings.
- Use up to 50 percent less oil.
- Reduce pollution, such as smoke and fume emissions, to the air by 75 percent.
- Reduce pollution to the water by reducing the amount of gasoline and oil released into surface waters.
- Reduce noise pollution since they are much quieter than conventional engines.

Operate away from shallow areas.

- Motors can churn-up sediment on the lake bottom. This leads to the nutrient phosphorus being re-suspended in the water, which contributes to increased plant and algal growth and decreased lake clarity.
- Motors can fragment invasive plants, such as variable milfoil, potentially causing new areas of devastating infestations as the fragments travel to other parts of the lake.
- Wildlife and waterfowl may be frightened away from their homes and nests by noisy motors.

Eliminate unnecessary idling.

- It pollutes the air and water, and the wasted fuel can be expensive.

Do not operate at greater than headway speed (6 mph) within 150 feet of any shoreline, other boats, rafts or floats, permitted swimming areas, docks or mooring fields, and swimmers in the water.

- Not only is it illegal, but wakes erode the shoreline and damage property and wildlife habitat. Excessive speed is also a danger to others.

Keep engines well-tuned.

- Routinely check for fuel leaks and repair leaks immediately. Keep a shallow pan under engines to collect any leaking liquids.
- At the end of the boating season, prepare engines properly for winter storage.

Avoid overfilling fuel tanks.

- Use a funnel or a spout with an automatic stop device to prevent overfilling the gas tank.
- Use absorbent materials or petroleum absorption pads while fueling to catch splash-back and any drops when the nozzle is transferred back from the boat to the fuel dock.

Avoid pumping any bilge water with an oily sheen.

- Use absorbent biosocks or pads in the bilge area that capture or digest oil and dispose or recycle this material properly. Contact your local marina to purchase biosocks or pads.

Wash boat hulls by hand out of the water.

- Use non-toxic and phosphorus-free detergents and cleaning products. If possible, use natural cleansers such as baking soda or lemon juice.
- Rinse water should not be discharged to surface waters or storm drains.

Use marina sewage pumpout and dump stations.

- It is illegal to discharge boat sewage in any surface water in New Hampshire. It contains nutrients that cause excessive plant and algal growth and potentially disease-causing organisms that can make people sick. Pumpout stations allow you to empty holding tanks and portable toilets after a day on the water. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services maintains information on the locations of pumpout and dump stations on their website at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/cva/index.htm>.

NH LAKES is the only statewide, member-supported nonprofit organization working to keep New Hampshire's lakes clean and healthy, now and in the future. The organization works with partners, promotes clean water policies and responsible use, and inspires the public to care for our lakes. For more lake-friendly tips, visit www.nhlakes.org, email info@nhlakes.org, or call 603.226.0299.

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