



In addition to the laws mentioned previously, here are some other Michigan regulations that apply when vessel operators are on the water.

Unlawful and Dangerous Operation

Michigan law designates these dangerous operating practices as illegal.

- ◆ **Reckless Operation** of a vessel or reckless manipulation of water skis, a surfboard, or similar device is defined as operation which disregards the safety or rights of others or endangers the person or property of others. Some examples are:
 - Weaving your vessel through congested waterway traffic or swerving at the last possible moment in order to avoid collision
 - Jumping the wake of another vessel unnecessarily close to the other vessel or when visibility around the other vessel is restricted
 - Chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife with your vessel
 - Causing damage from the wake of your vessel
- ◆ **Failure To Regulate Speed** is operating a vessel at speeds that may cause danger to life or property of any other person or at speeds that will not permit you to bring your vessel to a safe stop. It is illegal to operate a vessel:
 - In excess of 55 mph unless you are at least one mile offshore on the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair
 - At greater than “slow, no wake speed” when a person is in the bow of a vessel without proper seating
 - Faster than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions (weather, vessel traffic, etc.)

- ◆ **Improper Distance** is not maintaining a proper distance while operating a vessel or towing a person. To maintain a proper distance when you are operating at greater than “slow, no wake speed” (except in channels that are not posted), the vessel or persons being towed must not be within 100 feet of:
 - A shoreline (if operating in water less than three feet deep)
 - Any moored or anchored vessel
 - A dock or raft
 - Any marked swimming area or person(s) in the water

“**Slow, No Wake Speed**” means the slowest speed at which it is still possible to maintain steering and which does not create a wake.

- ◆ **Improper Distance for PWCs** means that, if operating at greater than “slow, no wake speed,” PWCs also must:
 - Stay at least 200 feet from any Great Lakes shoreline.
 - Not cross within 150 feet behind another vessel other than another PWC.
- ◆ **Improper Direction** is defined as the failure to operate in a counterclockwise direction except in areas marked by well-defined channels or rivers.
- ◆ **Boating in Restricted Areas** is defined as operating within a restricted area clearly marked by buoys, beacons, diver-down flags, etc.
- ◆ **Riding on the Bow** is illegal if the vessel is not equipped with bow seating and the vessel is operating at greater than “slow, no wake speed.” Persons also are not allowed to ride on the gunwale. While underway, persons on a vessel may not sit, stand, or walk on any portion of a vessel not designed for that purpose.

Alcohol and Drugs

Michigan law prohibits anyone from boating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It is also unlawful for the owner of a vessel to allow anyone else to operate their vessel if that person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- ◆ The following conditions determine if you are boating under the influence.
 - If your blood alcohol content is 0.10% or greater by weight of alcohol as determined by a breath, blood, or urine test, you are considered to be under the influence of alcohol.
 - If your blood alcohol content is greater than 0.07% but less than 0.10% by weight of alcohol as determined by a breath, blood, or urine test, a law enforcement officer can consider that fact along with other evidence in determining if you are under the influence.
- ◆ Michigan law establishes the following penalties.
 - People arrested for boating under the influence are guilty of a misdemeanor. Upon a third conviction within 10 years, a person will be guilty of a felony.
 - If a person boating under the influence causes great bodily injury or death of another person, he or she will be guilty of a felony.
- ◆ By operating a vessel on Michigan waters, you have consented to be tested for alcohol or drugs if arrested by a law enforcement official.



Obstructing Navigation

It is illegal to:

- ◆ Anchor a vessel in the traveled portion of a river or channel in a way that will prevent or interfere with any other vessel passing through the same area.
- ◆ Moor or attach a vessel to a buoy, beacon, light, or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities.
- ◆ Move, displace, tamper with, damage, or destroy any navigational aid.
- ◆ Obstruct a pier, wharf, boat ramp, or access to any facility.

Accidents and Casualties

- ◆ An operator involved in a boating accident must:
 - Stop his or her vessel *immediately* at the scene of the accident *and ...*
 - Assist anyone injured or in danger from the accident, unless doing so would seriously endanger his or her own vessel or passengers *and ...*
 - Give, in writing, his or her name, address, and vessel identification to anyone injured and to the owner of any property damaged by the accident.
- ◆ The operator of a vessel, or each person on board, must report an occurrence without delay, and by the quickest means available, to the nearest conservation officer, sheriff of the county, or nearest state police post when:
 - A person dies *or ...*
 - A person disappears from a vessel.
- ◆ The operator or the owner of a vessel involved in a boating accident must file an accident report form supplied by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
 - The form must be filed within 48 hours if:
 - A person dies within 24 hours of the occurrence *or ...*
 - A person loses consciousness, receives medical treatment, or is disabled for more than 24 hours.
 - The form must be filed within five days if:
 - Damage to the vessel and other property damage totals more than \$2,000 *or ...*
 - A person disappears from the vessel under circumstances that indicate death or injury.