**Michigan Boater Laws**

**Who may operate a boat**

* **Those less than 12 years of age:**
	+ May operate a boat powered by a motor of no more than 6 horsepower (hp) legally without restrictions.
	+ May operate a boat powered by a motor of more than 6 hp, but not more than 35 hp, legally ONLY IF they:
		- Have been issued a boating safety certificate and have it on board the boat and…
		- Are directly supervised on board by a person at least 16 years of age.
	+ May not operate a boat powered by a motor of more than 35 hp legally under any conditions.
* **Those 12 to 15 years of age:**
	+ May operate a boat pwered by a motor of no more than 6 hp leagally without restrictions.
	+ May operate a boat powered by a motor of more than 6 hp legally ONLY IF they:
		- Have passed a boating safety course approved by the DNR and have on board their boating safety certificate or…
		- Are accompanied on board by a person at least 16 years of age.
* **Those 16 years of age** and born on or after July 1, 1996, may operate a boat legally only if they have been issued a boating safety certificate and have it on board the boat.
* Those born before July 1, 1996, may operate a boat legally without restrictions.

**Who may operate a Personal Watercraft (PWC/Jet Ski)**

* **Those less than 14 years of age** may NOT legally operate a PWC.
* **Those 14 and 15 years of age** may operate a PWC legaly ONLY IF they have obtained a boating safety certificate AND…
	+ He or she is accompanied on board by his or her parent or legal gardian or by a person at least 21 years of age who has been designated by the parent or legal gardian or…
	+ He or she is operating or riding the PWC at a distance of not more than 100 feet from his or her parent or legal gardian or from a person at least 21 years of age who has been designated by the parent or legal gardian.
* **Those at least 16 years of age** and born after December 31, 1978, may operate a PWC legally ONLY IF they have obtained a boating safety certificate.
* Those born on or before December 31, 1978, may operate a PWC legally without restrictions.

**Unlawful and Dangerous Operation**

Michigan law designates these dangerous operating practices as illegal.

* **Reckless Operation**
	+ 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 unneccessarily close to the other vessel
* **Improper Distance** is not maintaining a proper distance while operating a vessel or towing a person. To maintain a proper distance when operating at greater than slow, no wake speed” the vessel OR PERSONS BEING TOWED must not be within 100 feet of:
	+ A shoreline
	+ Any moored or anchored vessel
	+ A dock or raft
	+ Any marked swimming area or persons in the water
* **Improper Distance for PWCs** means that, if operating at greater than “slow, no wake speed” PWCs also must:
	+ 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.
* **Riding on the Bow** is illegal if the vessel is not equipped with bow seating and the vessel is 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.
* **Insufficient equipment** is operating a vessel that is not carrying, storing, maintaining, and using marine safety equipment on board the vessel as required by the DNR.

**Specifically for PWCs**

* Each person riding on or being towed behind a PWC must wear a US Coast Guard approved Type I, II or III PFD.
* You may not allow a child under 7 years of age to ride on or be towed behind a PWC unless with a parent or guadian or designee of the parent or guardian.
* The lanyard of the PWCs ignition safety switch must be attached to the person, clothing, or PFD of the operator.
* It is illegal to operate a PWC during the period that begins at sunset and ends at 8:00 a.m. “Sunset” means that time determined by the national weather service.
* PWCs must be operated in a reasonable and prudent manner at all times. It is illegal to:
	+ Jump the wake of another vessel unneccessarily close to the other vessel.
	+ Weave your PWC through congested traffic.
	+ Swerve at the last moment to avoid a collision.
* A PWC must be operated at “slow, no wake speed” if crossing within 150 feet behind another vessel, unless the other vessel is also a PWC.

**Requirements for Towing Skiers/Tubers/Surfers**

* Every person being towed must wear a Coast Guard approved PFD.
* Every vessel towing a person(s) must have a person on board, in addition to the driver, observing the towed person(s) at all times.
* It is illegal to tow person(s) between:
	+ One hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise if towed behind a boat.
	+ Sunset and 8:00 am if towed behind a PWC.
* Persons being towed must stay at least 100 feet away from:
	+ A shoreline
	+ Any moored or anchored vessel
	+ A dock or raft
	+ Any marked swimming area or person(s) in the water

Note: These are Michigan laws that LBV wanted to point out. These are not all the laws. It is the responsibility of the owners/operators to read and understand all laws that pertain to operating a watercraft in Michigan. This information, and more can be found at www.Michigan.gov/DNR

**Lake Bella Vista Rules**

* No watercraft allowed on the lake that are not owned by a resident homeowner. This means you are not allowed to launch your friends/relatives boat that does not live in the neighborhood.
* Prior to being launched, each watercraft is required to be registered with the office.
* Any damage to personal property while using the LBVIA boat launch facility is the sole responsibility of the cardholder and not that of the Lake Bella Vista Improvement Association.
* There is no overnight storage allowed on any of the LBVIA parks. Any watercraft, vehicle, or trailer left overnight at the boat launch, or any other Association green area, may be removed at owner expense.
* No trailers or watercraft are to be placed on any lot except within a completely enclosed building and may not be parked or stored between the street and the front set-back line.
* Only one card per living unit is allowed. Each member is responsible for the protection of his/her key card from being lost or stolen. If a replacement card is issued, the original will be deactivated.

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