



**Lake Minnetonka Conservation District  
2016 Summer Rules  
Watercraft Operation and General Recreation**



125 Miles of Shoreline  
14,043 Acres of Surface Use Area (42 Bays/Areas)  
30 Foot Mean Water Depth  
Maximum Water Depth of 113 Feet (Crystal Bay)  
Approximately 39% of the Surface Use Has a Water Depth of Less Than 15 Feet

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The contents within this pamphlet are a summary of the various rules governing conduct on Lake Minnetonka (as of April, 2016). It is distributed for purpose of educating the public, but it is not a text of the actual laws applicable to the Lake. Laws and rules of the State of Minnesota and ordinances of the LMCD and its member cities should be consulted for the exact language of such laws, rules, and ordinances.

## WELCOME TO LAKE MINNETONKA

On behalf of the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD), Hennepin County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) Water Patrol Unit, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) Conservation Division welcome to Lake Minnetonka! To make sure your Lake Minnetonka experience is enjoyable and that you remain safe, please take a moment to review this brochure.

### **Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD)**



The LMCD is a governing body set up by the State Legislature to enact ordinances to regulate activity on Lake Minnetonka. This activity not only covers the summer and winter boating and vehicle regulations but also the placement of structures (year round) and storage of watercraft during the boating season.

Lake Minnetonka Conservation District Telephone: (952) 745-0789 / Fax: (952) 745-9085  
5341 Maywood Road, Suite 200 Email: [lmcd@lmcd.org](mailto:lmcd@lmcd.org)  
Mound, MN 55364 Website: [www.lmcd.org](http://www.lmcd.org)

Chapter 3 of the LMCD Code of Ordinances is located on the website under "Rules and Regulations" and provides a full detail of the regulations summarized within. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The LMCD welcomes your comments and questions. Please take a moment to view the website.

### **Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Water Patrol Unit (HCSO)**



The HCSO Water Patrol Unit performs the statutory duties of law enforcement on waterways and actively patrols the 104 lakes and three major rivers in the county. When patrolling Lake Minnetonka, both LMCD and State laws are exercised.

Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Emergency: 911  
4141 Shoreline Drive Non-Emergency (24/7): 763-525-6216  
Spring Park, MN 55384 Office: 612-596-9880

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officers (MN DNR)**

The MN DNR Conservation Officers enforce all laws related to fish and wildlife, boating, and other recreational activities



MN DNR Non-Emergency (24/7): 651-582-1502  
500 Lafayette Road Officer Locator: [www.mndnr.gov/enforcement](http://www.mndnr.gov/enforcement)  
St. Paul, MN 55155

## IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

**Day Time:** “One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset (except when weather or other conditions do not provide for sufficient light to render clearly discernible persons and watercraft at a distance of 500 feet).”

**Minimum Wake:** “The wave moving out from a watercraft and trailing in a widening "V" of insufficient size to affect other watercraft or be detrimental to the shoreline.”

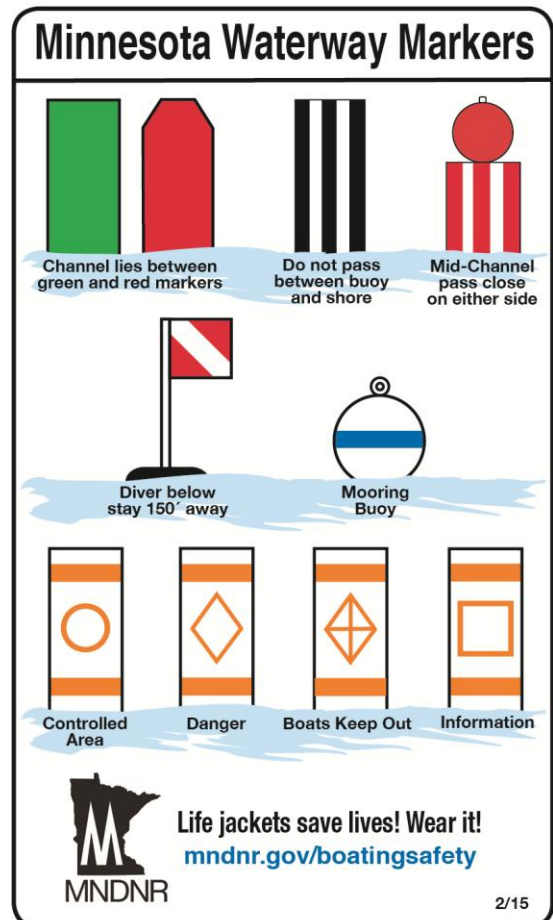
**More Restricted (\*):** Some of the LMCD ordinances are more restricted than the State of Minnesota. Please note those areas as marked “(\*)”.

**Personal Watercraft (PWC):** “A watercraft less than 14 feet in length, which uses a motor powering a water jet pump, as its primary source of motive power. A PWC is designed to be operated by a person, sitting, standing, or kneeling on, rather than the conventional manner of sitting or standing inside a watercraft.”

**Watercraft:** “Any vessel, boat, canoe, raft, barge, sailboard, or any similar device used or useable for carrying and transporting persons on the Lake.”

## IMPORTANT RESOURCES

[www.mndnr.gov](http://www.mndnr.gov)



## LAKE MINNETONKA WATERCRAFT SPEED LIMITS

### MAXIMUM WATERCRAFT SPEED – LMCD REGULATED (\*)

Daytime	40 miles per hour (m.p.h.)
Nighttime	20 m.p.h.
All Times	5 m.p.h. within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 feet of the shoreline;</li> <li>• 150 feet of a dock structure (except from which a person is being towed); and</li> <li>• 150 feet of an authorized bathing area, swimmer, scuba diver's flag, anchored craft, or structure.</li> </ul>

### QUIET WATER AREA SPEET LIMIT – LMCD REGULATED (\*)

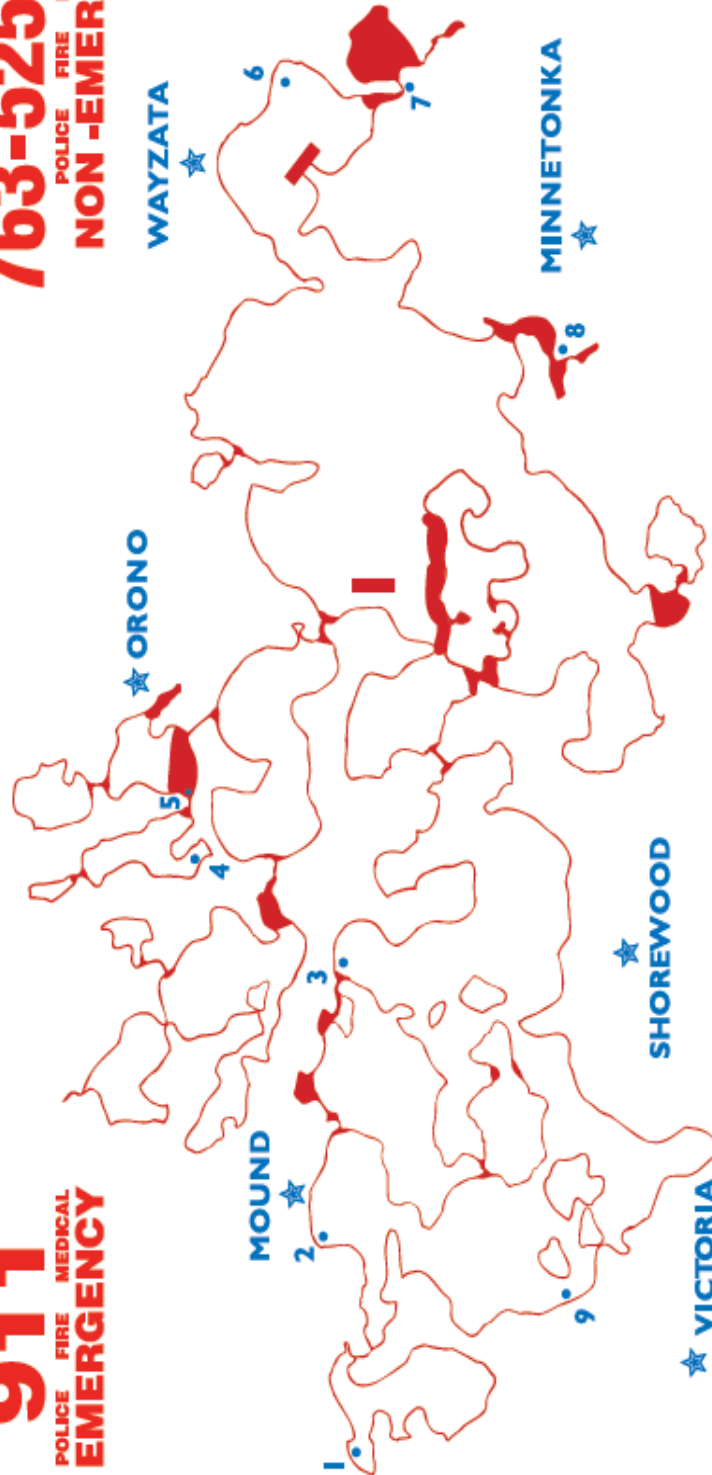
Some areas on Lake Minnetonka have been established as a Quiet Water Area (QWA). Motor operated watercraft (including waterborne aircraft), cannot be operated in excess of 5 m.p.h. or at a speed that results in more than a minimum wake. The designated QWAs are outlined below and delineated by waterway markers.

Entire Bays	Partial Bays	Channel Areas
1. Carsons Bay	1. Black Lake (north side)	1. All channels between bays
2. Emerald Lake	2. Coffee Cove (east of line from Fagerness Point to Park Lane)	2. Big Island Passage
3. Grays Bay (from 4:00 p.m. on Fridays through 12 a.m. on Sundays, including entire day on holidays)	3. Excelsior Bay (south end)	3. Black-Emerald-Seton Lakes (channels between three bays)
4. Libbs Lake	4. Harrisons Bay (north of Seton Channel area)	4. Echo and Lafayette Bays (west end of Big Island near West Point)
5. St. Louis Bay	5. Lower Lake North (north side of Big Island- Cruiser's Cove)	5. Lower Lake North (west side northeast of Huntington Point and Arcola Bridge)
	6. Maxwell Bay (south shore from the Noerenberg Bridge to the Boy Scout Bridge and Noerenberg Inlet)	6. Lower Lake North and Lafayette Bay (south of Huntington Point)
	7. St. Albans Bay (southwest corner)	7. Wayzata Bay (south side north of Cedar Point East)
	8. Wayzata Bay (southeast corner near 101 Causeway)	

**PUBLIC ACCESS - QUIET WATER AREA – MINIMUM WAKE**

**911**  
POLICE FIRE MEDICAL  
**EMERGENCY**

**763-525-6216**  
POLICE FIRE MEDICAL  
**NON-EMERGENCY**



**“QUIET WATERS” AND “SLOW” AREAS**

Proceed at minimum wake along shoreline and in other areas indicated on Lake Minnetonka

“SLOW” AREAS — 150’ from shoreline and/or dock structure  
“QUIET WATERS” —

**Public Launching Ramps (managed by)**

1. Halsted Bay (City)
2. Cooks Bay (City)
3. Spring Park Bay (Hennepin city)
4. North Arm (Hennepin city)
5. Maxwell Bay (MN DNR) (DNR Access)
6. Wayzata Bay (City)
7. Grays Bay (City / MN DNR) (DNR Access)
8. Carsons Bay (City)
9. Lake Minnetonka Regional Park (Three Rivers Park District)

## OPERATION OF WATERCRAFT/PWC

### WATERCRAFT AGE MINIMUMS - STATE REGULATED

Operator Age	Restrictions
Less than 12 years of age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 25 h.p. or less- no restrictions</li> <li>2. More than 25 h.p. - 75 h.p.- must have someone at least 21 on board within reach of the controls</li> <li>3. Over 75 h.p.- cannot operate (even with adult on board)</li> </ol>
12 - 17 years of age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 25 h.p. or less- no restrictions</li> <li>2. Over 25 h.p.- must have either: 1) a watercraft operator's permit or 2) someone at least 21 on board within reach of the controls</li> </ol>

### PWC WATERCRAFT AGE MINIMUMS – STATE REGULATED

Operator Age	Restrictions
Less than 13 years of age	Cannot operate, even with adult on board
13 years of age	Have: 1) someone at least 21 on board or 2) a watercraft operator's permit and be in visual supervision by someone at least 21
14 - 17 years of age	Have: 1) a watercraft operator's permit or 2) someone at least 21 on board

### OPERATION OF PWC WATERCRAFTS - STATE REGULATED

Type of Regulation	Regulation Specifics
Automatic Cut-off Device	If the machine is equipped by the manufacturer with a lanyard-type engine cutoff switch, it must be attached to the person, life jacket, or clothing of the operator when underway
Careless Operation	PWC may not be operated in a manner that unreasonably or unnecessarily endangers, life, limb, or property
Hours of Operation	9:30 a.m. to one hour before sunset
Life Jackets	Anyone operating or riding on a PWC must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III, or V life jacket
Speed	Must travel at slow no-wake speed (5 m.p.h. or less) within 150 feet of non-motorized boats, shore (unless landing or skiers directly to or from open water), docks, swim rafts, swimmers, or any moored or anchored boat
Wake Jumping	Prohibited within 150 feet of another watercraft (including other PWC)

### OPERATION OF PWC WATERCRAFT – LMCD REGULATED (\*)

Type of Regulation	Regulation Specifics
Operation Between 150 Feet and 300 Feet From the Shoreline (*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speed limit of 5 m.p.h. or minimum wake within this area</li> <li>• Normal speed limit if being driven perpendicular to the shoreline to the nearest point 300 feet from the shore</li> <li>• Normal speed limit when driven parallel to the shoreline from one location to another (non-repetitive manner)</li> </ul>
Prolonged Operation (*)	Operation of a PWC for more than 30 minutes is prohibited
Towing (*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person may not be towed on water skis, an aquaplane, surfboard, saucer, or similar device unless such PWC has an observer 12 years or older in addition to the operator</li> <li>• Person being towed must wear approved life jacket</li> </ul>
Rental Restrictions (*)	No rental to: 1) less than 16 years of age or 2) over but less than 18 years without possession of permit

## GENERAL WATERCRAFT OPERATION - STATE REGULATED

Type of Regulation	Regulation Specifics
Life Jackets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A readily accessible and wearable approved life jacket for each person onboard a boat</li> <li>2. State law requires children under 10 years of age to wear a life jacket while a watercraft is underway</li> <li>3. One Type IV throwable is required on boats 16 feet or longer (except canoes and kayaks) and must be immediately available</li> <li>4. Personal watercraft operators and passengers must each wear a life jacket.</li> </ol>
Lighting	Watercraft when underway or in use between sunset and sunrise must display the proper navigation lights (consistent with state law)
Littering	Littering on Lake Minnetonka is prohibited
Noise	All watercraft motors must have a muffler, underwater exhaust, or other device that suppresses the sound of the motor to levels consistent with state law.
Public Nuisances	No person shall commit or engage, or allow any person to commit or engage, in any conduct which constitutes a public nuisance
Riding on Gunwales or Decking	It is illegal to ride or sit on the gunwales, bow, transom, decking over the bow, sides or stern while underway (unless it is equipped with an adequate railing). It is also illegal to operate a motorboat while any person is so riding or sitting.
Safety Equipment	Fire extinguishers, horns, and lighting must be consistent with state law
Under the Influence	Operating a motorboat while under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance (or its metabolite), or other illegal chemical is illegal. Operators who may be impaired may be required to take tests by an enforcement officer (there is a penalty for refusal). <b>Note: Minnesota alcohol concentration level for impaired operation is .08.</b>
Wash and Wake	No person shall operate a watercraft in such a manner that its wash and wake will endanger, harass or unnecessarily interfere with any person or property.

## MINNESOTA YOUTH WATERCRAFT OPERATORS PERMIT



**LMCD Boater Safety Education Program:** Through its Save the Lake Fund, the LMCD has partnered with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Water Patrol to create a Lake Minnetonka Boater Safety Education Program. Participants (ages 12 to 17) work directly with presenters in obtaining their MN DNR permit (all day session). Guardians are encouraged to attend to enhance the value of training. Contact the LMCD office for additional information.

**MN DNR On-Line Program:** Youths may also obtain their watercraft operator's permit on-line at: [www.mndnr.gov/boatingcourse](http://www.mndnr.gov/boatingcourse).



## LAKE MINNETONKA TOWING REGULATIONS – (\*)

Type of Regulation	Regulation Specifics
Observers Required (*)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Observer required in addition to watercraft operator</li> <li>2. Observer must continually observe the person being towed</li> <li>3. Must be at least 12 years of age</li> </ol>
Hours (*)	Prohibited from 1/2 hour after sunset to sunrise
Life Jackets (*)	No person shall be towed, or shall operate a watercraft towing a person, unless the person being towed is wearing a life vest, belt, or other buoyant device. If the buoyant device is not a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket, a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket must also be on board and readily accessible to the person being towed.
Number Towed (*)	No more than three persons may be towed at one time (except with written permission of the sheriff)
Length of Tow (*)	Maximum of 85 feet (except with written permission of the sheriff)
Distance (*)	May not come within 150 feet of a bathing area, skin or scuba diver's warning flag, swimmer, watercraft, dock or pier (except the raft, dock, or pier from which they are operating)
Empty Tow (*)	No person shall drag an unoccupied tow line behind a watercraft for an unreasonable length of time
Towing in Channels (*)	No person shall tow or be towed into or through any marked channel connecting two bodies of water

## OTHER LAKE MINNETONKA UNIQUE REGULATIONS – (\*)

Type of Regulation	Regulation Specifics
Curfew (when not accompanied by a parent or guardian) (*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the age of 15 (shall not be on a watercraft between 10 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.)</li> <li>• Between the age of 15 and 17 (shall be supervised on any watercraft from 12:00 midnight to 6:00 a.m.)</li> </ul>
Public Safety Lanes (*) (Big Island)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Installed at the north side of Big Island</li> <li>2. To provide the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office better access to the rafting area (emergency and management purposes)</li> <li>3. Signed buoys will delineate these lanes</li> <li>4. No anchoring of watercraft allowed in these lanes (although watercraft may use them for traveling purposes)</li> </ol>
Special "High Water Declaration" (*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LMCD has the ability to declare "High Water" when lake levels reach 930.00 and 930.25 feet NGVD</li> <li>• When a "High Water" is declared, minimum wake restrictions are installed on a lake wide basis</li> <li>• 600 feet from shore for some bays and the entire bay for others</li> <li>• See LMCD website</li> </ul>
Bowfishing (*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/2 hour after sunset to sunrise and from 11/15 through 5/1)</li> <li>• Prohibited in other designated areas (during specific dates and times)</li> <li>• The LMCD's ordinance, a summary of LMCD/State laws, and contact information to the 14 cities can be found on the LMCD website, under "Rules and Regulations"</li> </ul>

# AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES – STATE REGULATED

## HELP PREVENT THE INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD OF AIS

LAWS



### STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Take these decontamination actions required by law:

#### ✓ CLEAN

Clean visible aquatic plants, zebra mussels, and other prohibited invasive species off all watercraft, trailers, and water-related equipment *before* leaving a water access or shoreland property. It is illegal to transport aquatic plants, zebra mussels, or other prohibited species whether dead or alive.

#### ✓ DRAIN

Drain water-related equipment (boat, ballast tanks, portable bait containers, motor) and drain bilge, livewell, and baitwell by removing drain plugs *before* leaving a water access or shoreland property. **Keep drain plugs out and water-draining devices open while transporting watercraft.** It is illegal to transport a watercraft or water-related equipment without draining water.

#### ✓ DISPOSE

Dispose of unwanted bait, including minnows, leeches, worms, and fish parts in the trash. If you want to keep live bait, drain bait containers and refill with bottled or purified tap water. **It is illegal to release live bait into the water or to release worms on the ground.**

You can help prevent the introduction and spread of AIS by following both the **required** and **recommended** actions listed below.

Additional recommendations:

#### ✓ DRY

To further decontaminate your watercraft and equipment, it's important to spray, rinse, or dry everything before going to another waterbody, especially if your boat has been in the water or moored for more than 24 hours – or if you have recently been in zebra mussel and spiny waterflea infested waters. Do one or more of the following:

- **Spray with high-pressure water**
- **Rinse with very hot water\***
- **Dry for at least 5 days**

- **Run motor and personal watercraft for a few seconds to discharge water** *before* leaving a water access.
- **Transport fish on ice** — be prepared, bring a cooler.

\* These water temperatures will kill zebra mussels and some other AIS: 120°F for at least 2 minutes; or 140°F for at least 10 seconds.



## Know the Law.

**You may not ...** transport watercraft without removing the drain plug • arrive at a lake access with drain plug in place • transport aquatic plants, zebra mussels, or other **prohibited invasive species** such as faucet snails, ruffe, and round goby • launch a watercraft with prohibited species attached • transport water from Minnesota lakes or rivers; or release live bait into water.

There are also many **regulated invasive species** – such as spiny waterfleas, rusty crayfish, and mystery snails, that may not be placed into another waterbody. Docks and boatlifts must be dried for 21 days before placing in another waterbody. Violating these regulations may result in fines up to \$1,000.

© MN DNR

Learn how to protect Minnesota waters from zebra mussels and other AIS by contacting the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources at 651-259-5100 or log on to their website at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquatic](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquatic).