

# LAKE MINNETONKA WINTER RULES

Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD)  
(952) 745-0789 - [www.lmcd.org](http://www.lmcd.org)

LMCD is a governing body set up by the State Legislature to enact ordinances to regulate activity on Lake Minnetonka

Hennepin County Sheriff's Office: Water Patrol Unit  
(612) 596-9880 - [www.waterpatrol.org](http://www.waterpatrol.org)



The contents within this pamphlet is a summary of the various rules governing conduct on Lake Minnetonka (as of December, 2011). 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 should be consulted for the exact language of such laws, rules, and ordinances.



# Lake Minnetonka Winter Public Accesses

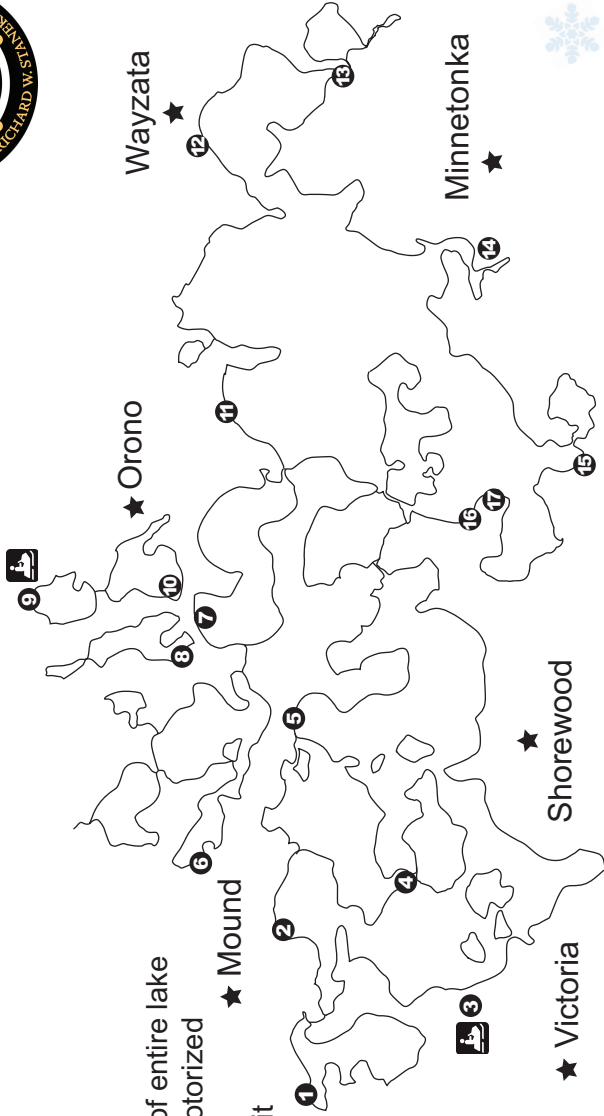
# 911

Police • Fire • Medical  
EMERGENCY



## “Shorezone”

- 150’ from shoreline of entire lake
- Reserved for non-motorized activities
- Maximum speed limit within shorezone is 25 mph



1. City of Minnetrista – Halsted Drive
2. City of Mound – Cooks Bay
3. Lake Minnetonka Regional Park – West Upper Lake
4. City of Minnetrista – Tuxedo Road
5. Hennepin County – Spring Park Bay
6. City of Mound – Centerview Lane
7. City of Orono – County Road 51 & Baldur Park Road
8. Hennepin County – North Arm Bay
9. City of Orono - Bayside Road & Stubbs Bay Road

10. MN DNR – Maxwell Bay
11. City of Orono – Adjacent to North Shore Marina Smiths Bay
12. City of Wayzata – Swimming Beach
13. City of Minnetonka – County Road 101
14. City of Deephaven – Carsons Bay
15. City of Excelsior – Excelsior Commons
16. City of Tonka Bay – Adjacent to Tonka Bay Marina
17. City of Tonka Bay - Adjacent to the Caribbean



Stroller/walker  
access only



## GENERAL RULES

**Access:** You must enter the Lake at a public access (see map to the left) or from your own property, unless you have written permission from another property owner to use their property.

**Barriers Around Thin Ice or Open Water:** The Sheriff's Water Patrol may, when deemed necessary, place markers, signs, barriers, fences, etc., around or near thin ice or open water. It is unlawful to disobey such signs, drive or walk in the forbidden area, or move, remove, deface, or damage such signs.

**De-icing:** A license to use underwater bubblers to open water around permanent docks is permitted in special circumstances by the LMCD. These sites will be lit and identified with thin ice signs and fencing. You are advised to stay away from these areas.



**Water Skipping:** The skipping of motorized vehicles over open water is prohibited.

**Pieces of Ice:** Pieces of ice cut from the Lake may not be left on the surface, but must be put back in the hole or slid under the ice.

**Special Events:** Permits are required by the LMCD and the Sheriff's Water Patrol for most types of special events on Lake Minnetonka. Currently, the LMCD has delegated its winter special event permitting authority for most activities to the Sheriff's Water Patrol. For questions on whether your activity requires a special event permit, you are encouraged to contact the Sheriff's Water Patrol.

**Operating a Motorized Vehicle While Under the Influence:** No person shall operate or be in physical control of any motorized vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance, or a hazardous substance. Any officer who has probable cause to believe that the operator of the motorized vehicle is under the influence may request the operator to submit to chemical testing. By law, the operator of the motorized vehicle is required to submit to chemical testing.

**State Statutes:** In addition to local ordinances, state statutes and rules also apply on the Lake.

## MOTORIZED VEHICLES

**Definition:** Motorized vehicles are all vehicles with internal combustion engines including, but not limited to, autos, trucks, motor homes, snowmobiles, all terrain vehicles (ATV), motorcycles, and dirt bikes.

**Operation:** To operate on the Lake ice (surface), a motorized vehicle must have current registration, be equipped with specific safety equipment, and be muffled, all of which are described herein.

**Registration:** Motor vehicles must display current and correct registration.

**Safety Equipment:** Vehicles must be equipped with at least one head lamp, one red tail lamp, brakes, and muffler. Snowmobiles must have a safety throttle that disengages the motor when pressure is released. All equipment must conform to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) regulations.

**Muffler:** All motor vehicles must be equipped with a muffler in good working order that reduces exhaust noise to overall permitted levels. “Cut outs” or “by passes” are prohibited. The exhaust system may not produce a sharp popping or crackling sound. Noise levels must not exceed those established by the MN DNR.

**Shorezone:** The shorezone is that area of the ice on the Lake within 150 feet of the shoreline (including channel areas). The shorezone is reserved for non-motorized activities including, but not limited to, walking, skating, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and fishing. Motorized vehicles must stay clear of the shorezone and comply with speed restrictions, which are contained herein.

**Speed Limits:** Maximum speed limits for motorized vehicles on Lake Minnetonka are as follows:

- a) 25 miles per hour within the shorezone (\*); channel; all of Black, Emerald, and Seton Lakes; or within 150 feet from persons fishing, a fish house, pedestrian, skier, skater, skating rink, property, or people
- b) 30 miles per hour outside of shorezone during nighttime hours (except snowmobiles, as defined by Minnesota Statutes, 50 miles per hour)
- c) 50 miles per hour outside of shorezone during daytime hours

(\* ) A person operating a motorized vehicle within the shorezone may traverse within, provided they take the shortest, most direct route to leave shorezone.

**Helmet:** A person under 18 years is required to wear an approved helmet that complies with helmet standards established by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety while operating a snowmobile or ATV.

**Unattended Motorized Vehicles:** It is unlawful to leave a motorized vehicle unattended on the Lake while the motor is running, with the key in the ignition, or without a lockable ignition switch.

**Impounding Motor Vehicles:** Motor vehicles may be removed from the Lake by the Sheriff's Water Patrol, or by other duly authorized law enforcement officers, if the motor vehicle:

- a) is unattended and represents a hazard,
- b) is unattended for more than 6 hours,
- c) is unattended during nighttime hours,
- d) is unattended and missing vital component parts,
- e) constitutes a hazard and the person in charge of the motor vehicle is physically incapacitated in such a way as to be unable to properly provide for its custody and control, or
- f) operator has been taken into custody by a law enforcement officer and the vehicle would otherwise be left unattended.

## CLASS 1 ATV OPERATOR AGE RESTRICTIONS

OPERATOR AGE	RESTRICTIONS
Under 10 years of age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. May operate on private lands (with permission).</li><li>2. Must have parent/guardian permission to operate.</li></ol>
10-11 years of age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. May operate on private lands (with permission).</li><li>2. May operate ATV up to 90cc on public lands and frozen waters if accompanied by parent/guardian.</li><li>3. Must wear an approved helmet while operating or riding on public lands, trails, and frozen public waters.</li><li>4. Must have parent/guardian permission to operate.</li></ol>
12-15 years of age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Must have an ATV safety certificate valid only after successfully completing BOTH the ATV Safety Training CD and Safety Training Class.</li><li>2. Must be able to properly reach and control the handle bars and foot pegs while sitting upright on the seat.</li><li>3. May operate ATV on public lands and frozen waters and make direct crossing of roadways with a valid safety certificate if accompanied on another ATV by a person 18 years of age or over who has a valid driver's license.</li><li>4. Must wear an approved helmet while operating or riding on public lands, trails, frozen waters, and when crossing road rights-of-way.</li><li>5. Must have parent/guardian permission to operate.</li></ol>
16-17 years of age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Must successfully complete the ATV Safety Training CD before operating on public lands, frozen waters, public road rights-of-way, or state or grant-in-aid trails.</li><li>2. Must have a valid driver's license for direct crossing of a roadway or operate on road rights-of-way.</li><li>3. Must wear an approved helmet while operating or riding on public lands, trails, frozen public waters, and on road rights-of-way.</li></ol>

CLASS 2 ATVS are motorized flotation-tired vehicles with at least three, but no more than six, low pressure tires that have an engine displacement of less than 1,000 cubic centimeters and total dry weight of 1,000 to 1,800 lbs. For regulations pertaining to Class 2 ATV's, contact the Sheriff's Water Patrol.

## MOTORIZED VEHICLES CONTINUED

**Operation of Snowmobiles and ATVs by Minors:** It is unlawful for the owner of a snowmobile or ATV to permit it to be operated on Lake Minnetonka by a minor (under 18 years of age) unless they comply with regulations of the State of Minnesota. A summary of these age minimum restrictions are contained herein.

### SNOWMOBILE & ATV SAFETY

#### SNOWMOBILE OPERATOR AGE RESTRICTIONS With a Snowmobile Safety Certificate

**Any resident of Minnesota born after 12/31/76 must have a snowmobile safety certificate to operate a snowmobile in Minnesota.**

OPERATOR AGE	RESTRICTIONS
12-13 years of age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. May operate on public lands, public waters, and grant-in-aid trails (parent/guardian or certificate).</li> <li>2. May operate on private lands (with permission).</li> <li>3. May not cross state/cty. rds. or drive streets/hwys.</li> </ol>
14-18 years of age  Certificate required. Local ordinances may apply.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. May operate on public lands, public waters, and grant-in-aid trails.</li> <li>2. May operate on private lands (with permission).</li> <li>3. May cross state or county roads.</li> </ol>

Non-residents of Minnesota certified in snowmobile safety training in another state will be recognized in Minnesota. Non-residents 18 years of age and older do not need a snowmobile safety certificate.

**WITHOUT A SNOWMOBILE SAFETY CERTIFICATE** (Both residents and non-residents) - Individuals under 14 years of age may operate a snowmobile only if they are supervised by a parent, guardian or other person 18 years of age or older designated by the parent or guardian. The supervising adult needs to be close enough to be able to direct the youth's operation of their snowmobile. This exception does not allow an operator under the age of 14 to cross a public road.

CLASS 1 ATVs are motorized flotation-tired vehicles with at least three, but no more than six, low pressure tires that have an engine displacement of less than 1,000 cubic centimeters and total dry weight of less than 1,000 lbs.

**Recommended Minimum Ice Thickness**  
*(Rough Guidelines for New Clear Ice Only)*

2" or less  
**STAY OFF!!**



4 Inches  
Ice Fishing

5 Inches



Snowmobile  
or ATV

8 - 12 Inches



Car or  
Small Pickup

12 - 15 Inches



Medium Truck



Department of Natural Resources



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Due to many factors, ice can **never** be considered  
100% safe.