

Lake Minnetonka Winter Rules

2020/21



ENJOYING THE LAKE SAFELY AND RESPONSIBLY



Lake Minnetonka Winter Rules 2020/21

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This brochure is a summary of the most common rules of conduct for Lake Minnetonka, one of the busiest lakes in the area. These regulations help protect the public’s health, safety, and welfare, as well as the Lake. **Please remember that in addition to meeting the minimal code requirements, being courteous of the residents, businesses and visitors of Lake Minnetonka is also important.** Thank you for your cooperation in protecting Lake Minnetonka and all those who enjoy it.

Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD)
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DID YOU KNOW?

Lake Minnetonka is known for:

- 125 miles of shoreline
- 14,043 acres of surface area—the ninth largest lake in Minnesota
- 42 bays/named bodies of water
- Deepest bay of 113 feet (Crystal Bay)
- 30-foot mean water depth
- 39 percent of the lake has a water depth of less than 15 feet
- Vibrant community, including 14 cities in 2 counties surrounding the Lake
- Sacred indigenous areas, featured in Dakota legends
- Dakota name of “Minn-ni-tanka,” meaning “Big Water”
- Year-round recreation



Variety of photos for purchase at lmcd.org

- Located within the Minnehaha Creek Watershed
- Abundance of nature, including regional parks, islands and trails
- Numerous sightings of “Lou,” a legendary sturgeon in-excess of 10 feet in length (per local folklore)
- First known “Electric-lit” inland steamboat in the US (1881)

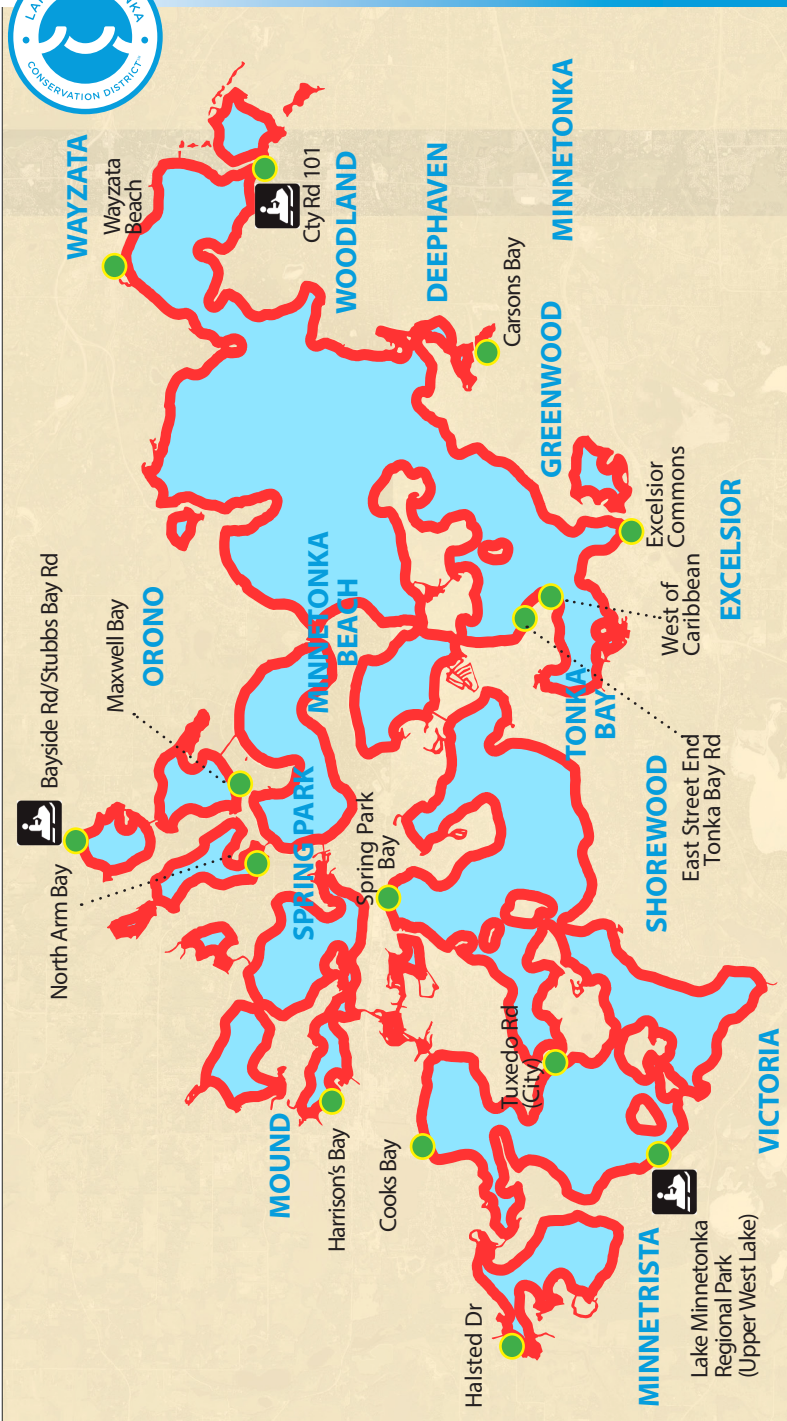
Visit the LMCD.org website and join us on Facebook and Twitter for more information about Lake Minnetonka.

Who We Are and What We Do

For more than 50 years, the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) has been managing the use of Lake Minnetonka in its mission to preserve and enhance the “Lake Minnetonka experience.” The LMCD is a regional governmental agency created by State statute in 1967. The District is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of one member appointed by the City Councils of each of its 14 surrounding cities. The District provides leadership to provide a coordinated, effective approach to balance the interests of the lake, abutting property owners, businesses, local municipalities, partnering agencies, and the general public.



Some services, activities, and safety equipment are supported by the generous contributions of lake enthusiasts through the **SAVE the LAKE Fund**. Lake Minnetonka is a highly valued year-round asset with vibrant aesthetic, recreational, commercial and natural qualities. The LMCD works to ensure these qualities and values will be protected and preserved not just today, but for generations to come.



KEY

Shorezone (150 ft from shoreline)

Public Access

Public Access—Snowmobile/walking access only

"Shorezone"

- 150 ft from the shoreline of the entire lake
- Reserved for non-motorized activities
- Maximum speed within the Shorezone is 25 mph

MAXIMUM SPEED LIMITS FOR MOTORIZED VEHICLES



DAYTIME
Speed Limit
OUTSIDE of Shorezone
50 mph



NIGHTTIME
Speed Limit
OUTSIDE of Shorezone
30 mph*

*EXCEPT snowmobiles—50 mph, as defined by MN Statutes

AT ALL TIMES
Speed Limit

25 mph*

When within:

- Shorezone
- Channels
- All of Black, Emerald & Seton Lakes, or
- 150 ft from persons fishing, a fish house, pedestrians, skiers, skaters, a skating rink or property of any kind

***EXCEPT All-Terrain Vehicles—10 mph**, when within 100 ft of a person not on an ATV or within 100 ft of a fishing shelter, per MN Statutes.

***Note:** Motorized vehicles operated within the designated shorezone may traverse within it, provided they take the shortest, most-direct route possible to leave the shorezone.*

KEY DEFINITIONS

Motorized Vehicles

All vehicles with internal combustion engines—including, but not limited to autos, trucks, motor homes, snowmobiles, all terrain vehicles (ATVs), motorcycles and dirt bikes.

Shorezone

Area on the Lake within 150 ft of the shoreline (including channel areas)—reserved for non-motorized activities such as walking, skating, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and fishing. Motorized vehicles must stay clear of the shorezone and comply with the speed restrictions.

Daytime

One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset—except when weather or other conditions do not provide sufficient light to see people, vehicles or structures (e.g., fish houses, open water, ice rinks, etc.) at a distance of 500 ft.

Safe Operation

To operate safely on lake ice surface, a motorized vehicle must have current registration, be equipped with specific safety equipment, and be muffled.

TOP WINTER VIOLATIONS

The following are the most common winter-use violations observed by HCSO Water Patrol. Be mindful of the rules and use common sense so everyone can have a safe and enjoyable time on the lake.



1

ICE SHELTER & VEHICLE REGISTRATION

All non-portable ice shelters, as well as any portable ice shelter left unattended, must be licensed through the Minnesota DNR. The ice shelter license must be readily visible from the shelter's exterior.

All snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and off-road vehicles (ORVs) must be registered through the Minnesota DNR.

2

SHOREZONE VIOLATIONS

In general, uses of the shorezone (within 150 feet of shore) are limited to non-motorized activities, such as walking, snowshoeing, skating, cross-country skiing, and fishing. Motor vehicles may traverse the shore zone by the shortest direct route from shoreline to open ice beyond the shore zone, but are prohibited from operating at a speed in excess of 25 miles per hour while in the shore zone.

3

LITTERING & WASTE

It is unlawful for any person to deposit on the ice of the Lake any garbage, rubbish, litter, propane tanks, or bodily waste. Plan ahead to bring any waste or garbage with you when leaving.

4

REFLECTIVE MATERIAL ON ICE SHELTERS

Ice shelters left out overnight must have at least 2 square inches of reflective material on each side.

TOP WAYS TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS

While there are many safety precautions that should be taken during winter activities, some of the most common causes of accidents and injuries are listed below. Learn about additional safety measures in this brochure.

- **Under the influence** of drugs including alcoholic beverages.
- **Passing through channels** and other areas with unsafe ice depths.
- **Unsafe speeds** for the conditions such as low visibility times such as dusk or snowfall.
- **Unexpected hazards** such as pressure ridges, structures or temporary hazards, etc.
- **Lack of safety equipment and winter preparedness** when bad things happen.

REPORT ACCIDENTS IMMEDIATELY

If an accident occurs, **report the incident immediately**. If a snowmobile or other vehicle falls through the ice, notify Hennepin County Sheriff's Office—even if there are no injuries. Reporting the incident will save valuable time and resources from being expended on unnecessary search and rescue efforts.

DRIVING UNDER INFLUENCE & VEHICLE IMPOUNDING

DON'T DRINK & DRIVE!

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Operating any motorized vehicle on a frozen lake (autos, trucks, snowmobiles, ATVs, etc.) while under the influence of alcohol, or any controlled substance, is illegal. The consequences of operating a motorized vehicle under the influence include criminal penalties, civil litigation, and other liabilities. **The Minnesota alcohol concentration level for impaired operation is 0.08.**

Laws regarding underage drinking and for providing alcohol to those who are underage are also strictly enforced.



Legal and administrative penalties are similar for DWI/DUI regardless of the type of vehicle whether on land, off-road, or water. Learn more at dnr.state.mn.us.

IMPOUNDING MOTOR VEHICLES

Motorized 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 is:

- Unattended and represents a hazard;
- Unattended for more than 6 hours;
- Unattended during nighttime hours;
- Unattended and missing component parts; or
- 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 the
- Operator has been taken into custody by a law enforcement officer and the vehicle would otherwise be left unattended



WATCH FOR THIN ICE

Certain facilities are licensed to have deicing operations on Lake Minnetonka under certain conditions. Springs, fish, channels, weather, and other factors affect ice safety. Watch for Thin Ice signs and fencing. Use extra caution when recreating in bays with open water.

COLD WATER SAFETY

Even the strongest swimmers do not fare well when immersed in cold water. As air temperatures fluctuate during the changing of seasons, warm air does not necessarily mean warm water. Always wear a life jacket, wear cold water protection gear, and check the weather and water temperatures before heading out onto the Lake.

ICE SAFETY

The MN DNR does not measure ice thickness on Minnesota lakes. Your safety is your responsibility—check ice thickness at least every 150 feet using an ice chisel, ice auger or a cordless 1/4 inch drill with a long bit.

Ice thickness and strength can vary drastically over the same body of water depending on age, temperature, snow cover, springs, fish schools, and other factors. For example, white ice is half as strong as newer, clear ice. View the chart for some basic ice safety guidance.

For safety, wear a life jacket and carry ice picks—these safety items will be a great help if you need to pull yourself out of the water. Let someone know your location and schedule.

THIN ICE/OPEN WATER BARRIERS: The HCSO Water Patrol may place markers, signs, barriers, and/or fences around or near thin ice or open water. It is unlawful *and dangerous* to disobey, drive, or walk in these areas. Do not move, remove, or damage such signs.

DE-ICING/OPEN WATER REGULATIONS: Where licensed or allowed by LMCD regulations, underwater bubblers (aerators) may be used to open water around docks. These sites are required to be properly operated, lit and clearly identified with signs, fencing, and reflectors. For safety, stay clear of these areas.

WATER SKIPPING IS PROHIBITED: Skipping motorized vehicles over open water is dangerous and strictly prohibited.

ICE FISHING, EVENTS, & ACTIVITIES

CUT ICE SAFETY HAZARD: Pieces of ice cut from the Lake can pose a safety hazard and must be removed from the surface—put it back in the hole or slide it under the ice.

ICE HOUSE SAFETY & REMOVAL DEADLINE: Implement safe practices such as identification, minimum location distance of 10 feet or more depending on safe ice depth, access from outside, carbon monoxide prevention, and good sanitation. Dark houses, fish houses and portables must be off Lake Minnetonka ice no later than midnight on the first Monday in March.

SPECIAL EVENTS & TEMPORARY STRUCTURES

TEMPORARY STRUCTURES/RINKS/HAZARDS: Ice rink walls (plowed, shoveled, wooden, plastics, etc.) must be clearly marked (and with reflectors) for safety reasons. Other items placed onto the ice may also become hazards if not expected or clearly visible, and **create liability issues for those who install them.** Be courteous of neighbors by locating rinks and structures in front of your own property or gain consent of your neighbors. Permits may be required from the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office. Links are available on the LMCD website.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Permits are required for most special events on the Lake. The LMCD works with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Water Patrol to ensure special events are properly managed. Please contact the Sheriff's Water Patrol Office for special event application information. Proper planning will help ensure your event is fun and safe.

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

WINTER ACCESS: The Lake must be entered at one of the designated public access sites (see map) or from your own property, unless you have written permission from another property owner to use their property.

NUISANCES: No person may commit or engage in any activity that constitutes a public nuisance—including excess noise, bright light or glare, inappropriate behavior, indecent exposure, etc.

LITTERING: Be sure to carry out what you carry in and properly dispose of litter, trash, propane tanks, and garbage properly on land. Please help keep the Lake clean by removing any litter you notice.

PLAN AHEAD FOR SANITATION: If portable bathroom facilities are not available, find a location with public facilities to dispose of bodily waste.





SNOWMOBILE SAFETY CERTIFICATE

Any **resident of Minnesota** born after 12/31/1976 must have a snowmobile safety certificate, drivers license, or ID card with snowmobile indicator in order to operate a snowmobile in Minnesota.

For **non-residents** of Minnesota, certification for snowmobile training in another state will be accepted in Minnesota. Non-residents 18 years of age and older DO NOT need a snowmobile safety certificate.

SNOWMOBILE OPERATIONS- YOUTH REGULATIONS

Some regulations are in place to minimize the safety risks and nuisances associated with snowmobiles and ATVs. A summary of State of Minnesota regulations associated with age groups is provided below.

WITH A SNOWMOBILE SAFETY CERTIFICATE

12-13 YEARS OF AGE

- May drive on public lands/waters and grant-in-aid trails IF with a parent/guardian or certificate
- May drive on private lands WITH owner permission
- May NOT cross state/county roads or drive on streets or highways

14-18 YEARS OF AGE

- May drive on public lands/waters and grant-in-aid trails WITH Certificate
- May drive on private lands WITH owner permission
- May cross state/county roads WITH certificate, license or ID card

WITHOUT A SNOWMOBILE SAFETY CERTIFICATE

UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE

- May drive snowmobiles on public lands, public waters, or grant-in-aid trails if accompanied by a parent, guardian or adult;
- May not drive a snowmobile across state or county roads
- May not drive snowmobiles on streets or highways in a municipality. This DOES NOT allow an operator under the age of 12 to cross a public road.



All motorized vehicles must display current/accurate registration

IT'S THE LAW—HELMETS ARE REQUIRED FOR UNDER-AGE OPERATORS & PASSENGERS

All persons under the age of 18 who are operating—or riding on—an ATV or snowmobile on public land, waters, or roadways are required to wear an “approved” helmet. Approved helmets comply with strict Federal motor vehicle safety standards and can be identified with the DOT symbol.



ATV SAFETY CERTIFICATE

Any **resident of Minnesota** born after July 1, 1987, and who is 16 years of age or older, must successfully complete the independent study course component of all-terrain vehicle safety training before operating an all-terrain vehicle on public lands or waters, public road rights-of-way, or state or grant-in-aid trails.

DEFINITIONS—ATV, CLASS 1, CLASS 2

ATVs are defined as: 1) three to six low-pressure or non-pneumatic tires; and 2) total dry weight of 2,000 lbs. or less; and 3) total width from outside the tire rim to outside the tire rim of 65 in. or less. **Class 1** has total width of 50 in. or less and **Class 2** is greater than 50 in. but less than 65 in.)

CLASS 1 ATV OPERATOR SAFETY—YOUTH REGULATIONS

OPERATION OF ATVS BY YOUTH

It is unlawful for the owner or operator of an ATV to permit its operation on Lake Minnetonka by a person under 18 years of age—unless in compliance with regulations of the State of Minnesota. A summary of regulations associated with age groups is provided below.

Effective 2017, Youth ages 6 - 15 must complete an Online ATV safety course AND a hands-on riding performance class. Guardian must be present for ages 6 - 10.

CLASS 1 ATV OPERATOR AGE RESTRICTIONS

The following outlines Class 1 ATV operator age restrictions. For regulations pertaining to Class 2 ATVs, contact the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office.

UNDER 10 YEARS OF AGE (WITHOUT SAFETY CERTIFICATE)

- May operate on private lands WITH owner permission

10-11 YEARS OF AGE

- Must be able to properly reach and control the handle bars and foot pegs while sitting upright on the seat
- May operate on private lands WITH owner permission
- May operate ATV up to 90cc on public lands and frozen waters IF accompanied by a parent or guardian

12-15 YEARS OF AGE

- Must be able to properly reach and control the handle bars and foot pegs while sitting upright on the seat
- 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 with a person 18 years of age or older who has a valid driver's license
- May operate on private lands WITH owner permission

16-17 YEARS OF AGE

- May operate on public lands, frozen waters, public road rights-of-way, or state or grant-in-aid trails WITH an ATV Safety Training Certificate AND a valid drivers license
- May operate on private lands WITH owner permission

YOUTH OPERATORS WITH PASSENGERS

As an operator 12 to 17 years of age, you may carry one passenger on a Class 1 ATV only if the passenger is your parent or legal guardian.

LAKE MINNETONKA WINTER RULES RESOURCES & LINKS



Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD)

5341 Maywood Road, Suite 200
Mound, MN 55364

Office: 952-745-0789

Connect with us at:

Email: lmcd@lmcd.org

Website: lmcd.org



[/LakeMinnetonkaConservationDistrict](https://www.facebook.com/LakeMinnetonkaConservationDistrict)



[@LakeMtkCD](https://twitter.com/LakeMtkCD)

- Lake Safety Administration
- Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention & Management
- Lake Minnetonka Conservation and Preservation
- Save the Lake Program



Hennepin County Sheriff's Office (HCSO)

Water Patrol Unit
4141 Shoreline Drive
Spring Park, MN 55384

EMERGENCY: Call 911

Non-Emergency 24/7: 952-258-5321 Office: 612-596-9880

Website: HennepinSheriff.org/water-patrol

- Patrol and enforcement of State and LMCD laws on Lake Minnetonka
- Emergency and rescue operations
- Special events and temporary structure permits



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR)

Conservation Officers
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155

DNR Information Center: 651-296-6157 or 888-MINNDNR (646-6367)

Officer Locator: mndnr.gov/officerpatrolareas

Website: mndnr.gov

- Ice safety and vehicle escape plans
- State permits, licenses and regulations
- Snowmobile and ATV regulations
- Fishing permits

