



# Lake Minnetonka

## SUMMER RULES 2023

— *Enjoying the lake safely and responsibly* —

Be a safer boater. Know the rules of Lake Minnetonka.

LEARN MORE



# LAKE MINNETONKA SUMMER RULES 2023

- Lake Minnetonka Conservation District . . . . . 2
- What's new in 2023 . . . . . 3
- Summer access map . . . . . 4
- Speed limits & quiet water restrictions . . . . . 5
- Safety regulations . . . . . 6
- Top summer violations . . . . . 7
- Boating safety . . . . . 9
- Youth-specific regulations . . . . . 11
- Identifying inland waterway markers/buoys . . . . . 13
- Stop aquatic hitchhikers . . . . . 14
- Agency links & resources. . . . . Back Cover

This brochure offers 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)  
Main Office: 952-745-0789 | [lmc.org](http://lmc.org) | email: [lmcd@lmc.org](mailto:lmcd@lmc.org)  
5341 Maywood Road, Suite 200 | Mound, MN 55364



## DID YOU KNOW?

### Lake Minnetonka is known for its:

- 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
- Water depth of less than 15 feet for 39 percent of the lake
- 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”
- Location 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 U.S. (1881)



Visit the [LMCD.org](https://www.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 that brings together 14 different cities, two counties, and many state and local agencies to protect, preserve and enhance Lake Minnetonka’s economy and vitality. Since 1967, LMCD has worked to adopt rules, provide resources and funding, and create educational programs.

## A NOTE FROM OUR INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello,

My name is Jim Brimeyer, the new interim executive director for the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD). It is an honor to have been selected for this important role.

Over the past four decades, I have devoted my life to public service. Most recently, I was the interim city administrator for the city of Spring Park. Some of you may recognize me, as I previously served as LMCD's interim executive director in 2016.

My goal in this role will be to continue the efforts of the LMCD to ensure that your family and future generations can enjoy Lake Minnetonka to its fullest extent.

I am deeply appreciative of our stakeholders and the work they do to make Lake Minnetonka a great place to be all year long. I look forward to a safe and fun 2023!

**JIM BRIMEYER**

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## NEW WATERCRAFT SPEED LIMIT NOW IN EFFECT

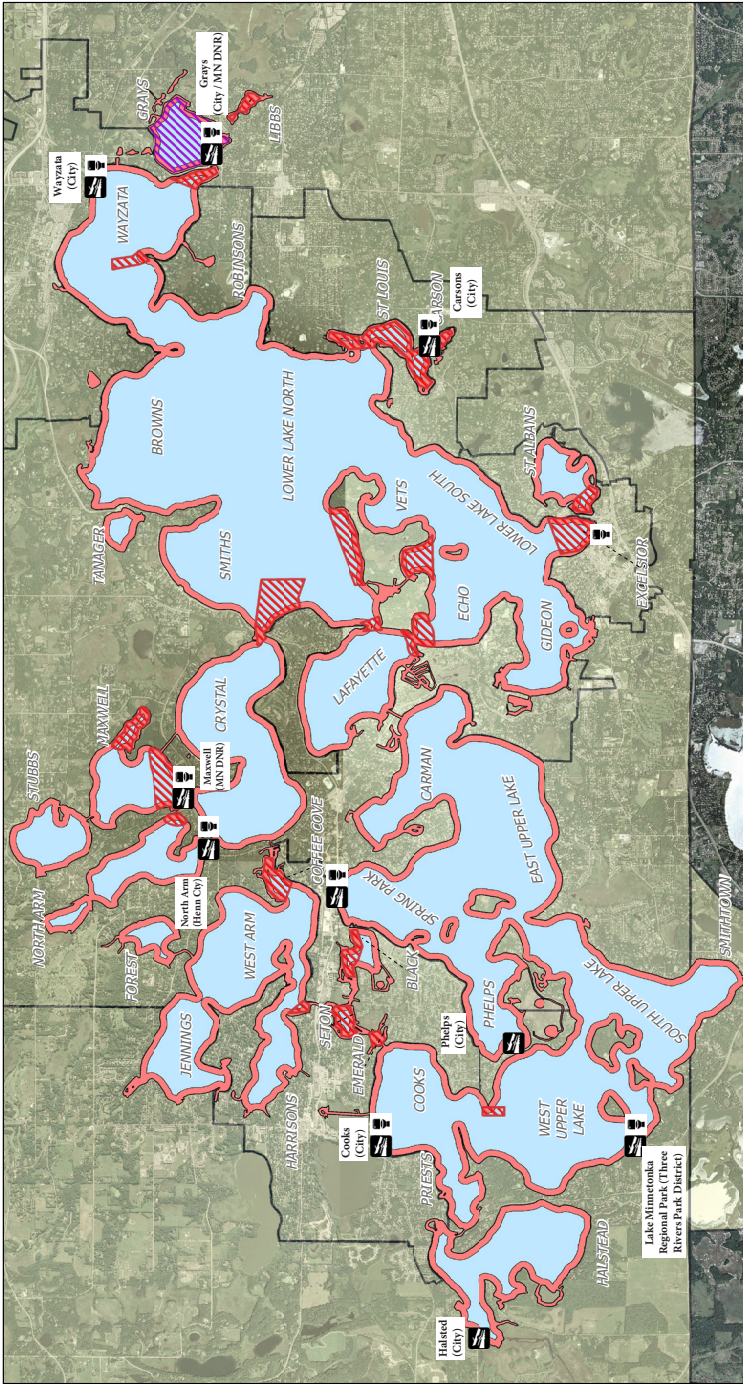
The LMCD has a new rule that places a 5-miles-per-hour speed limit on all watercraft and personal watercraft within 300 feet from the shore. This is an increase from the previous 150-foot distance.

The rule requiring a 150-foot distance from docks, anchored boats, swimmers or scuba divers' warning flags throughout the lake has not changed.

The LMCD board approved this updated rule last summer after hosting a listening session, engaging community members and conducting research.

You can learn more about the new rule at [LMCD.org/safety/safety-boat-generated-wakes](https://www.lmcd.org/safety/safety-boat-generated-wakes).





1,000 Feet  
0 0.25 0.5 Miles

- Public access / Boat launch
- Public toilets
- Quiet water / Slow area (OWA)
- Weekend & Holiday quiet / Slow area
- 300 foot buffer from shore

- Lake Minnetonka 2023 Informational Map**
- Minimum wake 300 feet from the shoreline of the entire lake
  - Minimum wake 150 feet from parked boats, swimmers, ect
  - Minimum wake in quiet waters

Disclaimer: This map is based on estimates and intended for illustrative purposes only.

## MAXIMUM WATERCRAFT SPEED LIMITS



### DAYTIME

Speed limit: **40 mph**



### NIGHTTIME

Speed limit: **20 mph**



### AT ALL TIMES FOR ALL WATERCRAFT

Speed limit: **5 mph** within

- 300 feet of the shore
- 150 feet from dock structures, authorized bathing areas, swimmers, scuba diver's flag, anchored craft or structures

## LAKE MINNETONKA QUIET WATER AREA LOCATIONS

### PARTIAL BAYS

- Black Lake—north side
- Coffee Cove—east of Fagerness Point to Park Lane
- Excelsior Bay—south end
- Harrisons Bay—north of Seton channel area
- Lower Lake North—north side of Big Island/Cruiser's Cove
- Maxwell Bay—south shore from Noerenberg Bridge to Boy Scout Bridge and Noerenberg Inlet
- St. Albans Bay—southwest corner
- Wayzata Bay—southeast corner near Hwy 101 Causeway

### CHANNEL AREAS

- All channels between bays
- Channels between Black/Emerald/Seton Lakes Echo and Lafayette Bays—west end of Big Island by West Point
- Lower Lake North—west side, northwest of Huntington Point and Arcola Bridge Lower Lake North and Lafayette Bay—south of Huntington Point
- Wayzata Bay—south side, north of Cedar Point east of Huntington Point
- Cedar Point [West] – 150' north and south of Cedar Point on the Upper Lake

## KEY DEFINITIONS

**QUIET WATER AREAS (QWAs):** Established areas where motor-operated watercraft (including waterborne aircraft) cannot be operated in excess of 5 mph or at a speed that results in more than a minimum wake. Designated QWAs are delineated by waterway markers.

**WATERCRAFT:** Any vessel, boat, sailboat, canoe, raft, barge, paddleboard, sailboard, or any similar device used or usable for carrying and transporting persons on the lake.

**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.

**DAYTIME:** Thirty minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset—except when weather or other conditions do not provide sufficient light to see people or watercraft at a distance of 500 feet.



## CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

Sophia's Law, named for a seven-year-old who died from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning while boating on Lake Minnetonka, requires functioning marine-grade CO alarms on certain motorboats. To learn more about CO alarms, stickers and when they are required, visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website at [dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater](https://dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater).

## BEWARE OF ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING (ESD)

ESD results from paralysis caused by electrical currents in the water—from electricity leaking into the water from faulty wiring of boats, docks and lifts. ESD kills both humans and animals. There are many ways to prevent ESD. The most important is to never enter water around boats and docks using electrical power. For more information, visit [ElectricShockDrowning.org](https://ElectricShockDrowning.org) or [LMCD.org](https://LMCD.org).

The LMCD Code and links to applicable state laws can be found on the LMCD website.

## UNIQUE LAKE MINNETONKA REGULATIONS

**BIG ISLAND PUBLIC SAFETY LANES:** Public safety lanes are installed at the north end of Big Island to provide better access by the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office for emergency purposes. Buoys delineate these lanes and extend 600 feet from shore. Watercraft may not be anchored in these lanes but may use them for traveling.

**BOWFISHING:** Bowfishing is prohibited 30 minutes after sunset to sunrise and from November 15 through May 1. Bow fishing is also prohibited in designated areas and during specific dates and times.

**SPECIAL "HIGH-WATER" AND "LOW-WATER" DECLARATIONS:** When the LMCD declares "High Water," minimum wake restrictions are implemented for user safety and shoreline protection. During "High Water," watercraft must maintain minimum wake within 600 feet from shore for some bays and entirely for other bays, or as otherwise directed.

When the LMCD declares "Low Water," dock extensions may be allowed under certain conditions. Watch for updates at [LMCD.org](https://LMCD.org).

## MARINE TOILETS & WASTEWATER DISCHARGE

To prevent illnesses from the accidental or intentional discharge of sewage into the lake, any watercraft operating on Lake Minnetonka must have:

- Macerator/grinder pumps removed; and,
- Discharge valves ("Y-valves") locked. If the watercraft has been re-piped to satisfy regulations on other waters, this may comply.

## TOP SUMMER VIOLATIONS

Here are the most common boating violations to avoid.

- 1 LIFE JACKETS & THROWABLES**

One coast guard-approved life jacket must be readily available for each person on board the watercraft. Watercraft measuring 16 feet or longer must also have a throwable flotation device. Children under the age of 10 must wear a life jacket while on a watercraft that is underway. All PWC operators and passengers must wear life jackets.
- 2 BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE**

Boating while under the influence of alcohol, or any other controlled or illegal substance, is illegal. The Minnesota alcohol concentration level for impaired operation is 0.08. Designate a captain for safety. Underage drinking is also strictly enforced. Watercraft owners or operators may be held liable for violations.
- 3 FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

Fire extinguishers, horns, marine-grade carbon monoxide detectors (for specified watercraft) and lighting must be in compliance with state law.
- 4 REGISTRATION**

All motorized watercraft and unmotorized watercraft over 10 feet in length must be registered by the Department of Natural Resources.
- 5 RIDING ON GUNWALES OR DECKING**

It is illegal to ride or sit on, or operate a motorboat while someone is riding or sitting on the gunwale, bow, transom, decking over the bow, side or stern while underway (unless it is equipped with an adequate railing).
- 6 OPERATING PERSONAL WATERCRAFT AFTER HOURS**

Personal watercraft may only be operated from 9:30 a.m. until one hour before sunset and no longer than 30 consecutive minutes in a single area.
- 7 QUIET WATERS/MINIMUM WAKE ZONES**

Motor-operated watercraft (including waterborne aircraft) cannot be operated in excess of 5 mph or at a speed that results in more than a minimum wake in designated quiet water areas. See page four for a map of locations.
- 8 TOWING OBSERVER**

In addition to the watercraft operator, an observer (not a rear-facing mirror) is required to continuously observe the person(s) being towed. The observer must be at least 12 years old and able to communicate with the driver.
- 9 NAVIGATIONAL LIGHTS**

Proper navigational lights, including a red light to port, a green light to starboard, and a white light 360 degrees around the watercraft, must be displayed when boating after sunset and before sunrise.





**10 SPEED LIMITS**

The daytime speed limit is 40 mph; the nighttime speed limit is 20 mph; the speed limit for quiet water areas or within 300 feet of shoreline and 150 feet from docks, swimmers, etc., is 5 mph.

**11 LITTERING**

Littering on Lake Minnetonka is illegal. Carry out what you carry in. Please be kind and remove any litter you notice. Help prevent hazards to people and animals.

**12 PUBLIC NUISANCES**

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

**13 EXCESSIVE 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.

**14 NOT RESPECTING QUIET HOURS**

Please keep the sound down, whether from music, yelling or other actions. It may also protect your hearing. Sound travels easily across the lake. Noise must not unreasonably disturb the peace, quiet or comfort of anyone nearby. Between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., sound from any device plainly audible at a distance of 150 feet is a violation of LMCD code.

**15 SANITATION**

If bathroom facilities are not available on the watercraft, find a location with public facilities. Find a list of Lake Minnetonka amenities at [LMCD.org](http://LMCD.org).

**16 TRESPASSING**

Lake Minnetonka has several public accesses, commercial marinas and transient docks for use by the general public. However, some multiple-dock facilities are intended for the exclusive use of their tenants. Further, other docks and shoreland are private property with restricted access. Please respect nonpublic docks and do not trespass.

**17 WAKES**

It is a violation to operate a watercraft in a manner that its wash and wake will endanger, harass or unnecessarily interfere with any person or property. Learn about wake safety and the importance of watching your wake regardless the type of watercraft, e.g., large cruisers, wake boats, etc., at [dnr.state.mn.us](http://dnr.state.mn.us).

**18 CHANNELS & NAVIGATION**

No person may interfere or block navigation of watercraft, moor, or otherwise create safety hazards in channels or public passageways. Swimming, jumping from bridges or overtaking boats in channels is also prohibited.

**The LMCD Code and links to applicable state laws can be found on the LMCD website.**

## PERSONAL WATERCRAFTS

All regulations for motorboats apply to personal watercrafts (PWCs) (or “jetskis”), in addition to the following specific PWC requirements.

### AUTOMATIC CUTOFF DEVICES

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. It may not be altered, disabled or removed.

### CARELESS OPERATION

A PWC may not be operated in a manner that unreasonably or unnecessarily endangers life, limb or property. This includes weaving through congested boat traffic or swerving at the last moment to avoid a collision if you weren't paying attention.

### WAKE JUMPING

PWC operators may not jump wakes within 150 feet of another watercraft or PWC.



### PROLONGED OPERATION

PWC may not be operated more than 30 consecutive minutes in a single area (defined as a small area where noise emanating from the PWC may be a nuisance or cause substantial annoyance to one or more shoreline properties).

### RENTAL REQUIREMENTS

A PWC may not be rented to anyone less than 16 years of age. Further, a watercraft operator's permit is required for all persons under 18 years of age.

#### Businesses are required to:

1. Distribute summary of laws free of charge (including instructions to laws and safety factors)
2. Provide required safety equipment
3. Ensure those less than 18 years of age show their watercraft operator's permit

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## TOWING (SKIING, WAKEBOARDING, WAKESURFING, ETC.)

### NUMBER TOWED

No more than three persons may be towed at one time.

### OBSERVER

In addition to the watercraft or PWC operator, an observer (not a rear-facing mirror) is required to continuously observe the person(s) being towed. The observer must be at least 12 years old and able to communicate with driver.

## HOURS

Towing is prohibited from 30 minutes after sunset until sunrise.

**PWC** - 9:30 a.m. to one hour before sunset.

## LIFE JACKETS

A person being towed must wear a life vest, belt or other buoyant device. If the buoyant device is not U.S. Coast Guard-approved, a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket must also be on board and readily available to the person being towed.

**PWC** - Anyone operating or riding on a PWC must wear a compatible U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket.



## LENGTH OF TOW

Maximum length of 85 feet (except with written permission from the Sheriff).

## DISTANCE

Towing may not occur within 150 feet of a swim area, skin or scuba diver's flag, swimmer, watercraft, or dock or pier (except dock/pier where initially operating from).

## EMPTY TOW

An unoccupied tow line may not be dragged 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. It is unsafe.

## SHARE THE LAKE

**SURF IN THE  
MIDDLE OF THE BAY**

**AVOID REPETITIVE  
PASSES**

**KEEP THE  
SOUND DOWN**

## SAFETY TIPS FOR NONMOTORIZED WATERCRAFT

If you are kayaking, canoeing or paddleboarding, you can make yourself more visible to other lake users to prevent accidents by:

- Wearing vibrant clothing
- Flying a flag
- Installing a light
- Paying attention to lake conditions such as wakes, boat traffic and weather



## YOUTH REGULATIONS

In addition to the minimum age requirements for Minnesota youth operators, state regulations for operator's permits are followed and vigorously enforced on Lake Minnetonka. What's more, lake-wide curfew regulations also apply.

Youth operators—know the rules and keep your boating experience fun and safe!

### CURFEW

Youth under the age of 15 may not be on a watercraft between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.—unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Those between the ages of 15 and 17 must be supervised by a parent or guardian while on watercraft between the hours of 12 a.m. (midnight) and 6 a.m.

### OPERATOR'S PERMIT

Permits may be obtained by successfully completing an approved boating safety course—including the boater safety education course offered through the LMCD or one offered online by the MN DNR. See below for more information.

## OPERATOR'S PERMIT & BOATING SAFETY COURSES

### LMCD BOATER SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Funded through its Save the Lake Fund, the LMCD partners with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Water Patrol and Mound Fire Department to offer the Boater Safety Education Program. Adults and youth (ages 12 to 17) work directly with presenters to obtain their MN DNR watercraft operator's permit in a single full-day session. Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend to enhance the training. Additional educational materials are being created for the website. Visit [LMCD.org](https://www.lmcd.org) or call the LMCD Office at 952-745-0789.

### BOAT MINNESOTA: MN DNR'S ONLINE BOATING SAFETY COURSE

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources offers an online Minnesota watercraft operator's permit program for youth ages 12 to 17. Adults who want to learn more about boating safety or to enhance their current knowledge can also take the course. Some insurance companies offer premium discounts for such certification; check with your insurance company for participation and possible discounts. For more information visit the MN DNR site at [mndnr.gov/boatingcourse](https://mndnr.gov/boatingcourse).



## STATE OF MINNESOTA AGE REGULATIONS

### WATERCRAFT AGE MINIMUMS

Operators less than 12 years of age:

- 25 horsepower (hp) or less—no restrictions
- 25 hp to 75 hp—must have someone at least 21 years of age on board and within reach of the controls
- Over 75 hp—cannot operate watercraft even with an adult on board

Operators 12 to 17 years of age:

- 25 hp or less—no restrictions
- Over 25 hp—must have either a valid watercraft operator’s permit or someone at least 21 years of age on board and within reach of the controls



### PWC-SPECIFIC AGE MINIMUMS












- Operators less than 13 years of age: Cannot operate (even with an adult on board)
- Operators 13 years of age: Must have someone at least 21 years of age on board or have a valid watercraft operator’s permit and be in visual supervision by someone at least 21 years of age
- Operators 14 to 17 years of age: Must have a valid watercraft operator’s permit or someone on board who is 21 years of age




## KNOW YOUR MARKERS/BUOYS BEFORE YOU SET SAIL!

Comprehensive boating safety information, regulations and tips—including details on all inland waterway markers—can be found on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources’ website at [mndnr.gov/boatingsafety](http://mndnr.gov/boatingsafety). Inland markers are used to help boaters safely navigate channels, direct traffic, control speeds, protect resources and identify dangerous waterways/areas.

### Minnesota Waterway Markers

			
Channel lies between green and red markers		Do not pass between buoy and shore	Mid-Channel pass close on either side
			
Diver below stay 150' away	Mooring Buoy	Milfoil Area Boats Keep Out	
			
Controlled Area	Danger	Boats Keep Out	Information



Minnesota  
DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

**Life jackets save lives! Wear it!**  
[mndnr.gov/boatingsafety](http://mndnr.gov/boatingsafety)

2/14

## IT'S THE LAW!

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are non-native plants, animals and other organisms that live primarily in water. They can drive out and eat native plants and wildlife, and spread disease.

Lake Minnetonka currently has identified five AIS in its waters—the zebra mussel, Eurasian watermilfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, flowering rush and purple loosestrife. Help keep other AIS out of Lake Minnetonka by taking the following steps.



### CLEAN

Clean visible aquatic plants, zebra mussels and/or 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—dead or alive.

**Spray:** Use a high-pressure washer to spray down your watercraft and equipment.

**Rinse:** Rinse with very hot water whenever possible—using water at 120° F for at least two minutes (or 140° F for at least 10 seconds) kills zebra mussels and some other AIS.



### DRAIN

Drain water-related equipment (boat, trailer, ballast tanks, portable bait containers, motor) and drain bilge, livewell and baitwell by removing drain plugs before leaving a water access or shoreline 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.

**Dry:** Allow your watercraft or equipment to dry for at least five days whenever possible.

**Run the motor:** Discharge all water by running your motor (or personal watercraft) for a few seconds before leaving a water access.



### DISPOSE

Be prepared! Transport your catch in a cooler. 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 bait into the water or release worms onto the ground.



**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](mailto:lmcd@lmcd.org)

**Website:** [lmcd.org](http://lmcd.org)

 [LakeMinnetonkaConservationDistrict](https://twitter.com/LakeMinnetonkaConservationDistrict)

 [@LakeMikaCD](https://www.facebook.com/@LakeMikaCD)

- Licensing and surface regulations
- Docks, structures and watercraft storage
- Boater safety course
- Solar lights program
- Some services funded by SAVE the LAKE Fund contributions



**Hennepin County Sheriff's Office (HCSO)**

Water Patrol Unit  
4141 Shoreline Drive  
Spring Park, MN 55384

**Emergency: Call 911**

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

Website: [HennepinSheriff.org/water-patrol](http://HennepinSheriff.org/water-patrol)

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



**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](http://mndnr.gov/officerpatrolareas)

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

- Boating and fishing regulations and enforcement
- AIS prevention and management