

Washington State Boating Education Program

Many recreational boaters in Washington are required by law to complete a boating safety course and carry a Washington State Boater Education Card. Whether you cruise, sail, kayak, fish, or do yoga on a stand-up paddleboard, **you are responsible to know the laws and basics of boating safety**. You are encouraged to take a boating safety course, whether required by law or not.



The **Washington State Boater Education Card** is valid for your lifetime and meets requirements for recreational boating in Canada and many other states.



Resources:

Fish and Wildlife Dept.

<https://wdfw.wa.gov>

Pierce County

www.piercecountywa.gov

Pierce County Sheriff

www.piercecountywa.gov/121/Sheriff

Watercraft Regulations

[Pierce County Chapter 8.88](#)

[Watercraft](#)

Ohop Lake Improvement Club
(OLIC)

<http://www.ohoplake.org/>



Selected Watercraft Regulations of Pierce County, WA

OHOPLAKE



Endorsed by
Pierce County
Commissioner District #3

Created by
OLIC Safety Committee
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This brochure contains summaries of selected watercraft regulations for Pierce County. The complete text of these regulations can be found at Chapter 8.88 of the Pierce County Code, RCW 79A.60 and WAC 352-60.

This is only a partial list of regulations and not a substitute for the full laws or codes.

DEPT. OF FISHERIES & PIERCE COUNTY LAKE ACCESS RULES FOR OHOP LAKE BOAT LAUNCH

- Appropriate Licensing and Registration Required
- Discover Pass or Vehicle Pass is Required
- Dogs must always be on a leash. Owner is responsible to bag and remove waste.
- Dumping Prohibited
- Fires and Fireworks Prohibited
- Parking Lot and Boat Launch are Open From Sunrise to Sunset Year-Round – Activity During Hours of Darkness is Prohibited
- Remove Your Litter
- Swimming Prohibited from Boat Launch



REQUIRED VESSEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Depending on the length, horsepower and vessel design, several regulations may apply to your vessel.

- Personal Floatation Devices
- Sound Producing Device
- Fire Extinguisher
- Visual Distress Signal

LEGAL AGE OF WATERCRAFT OPERATION

It shall be unlawful for any person under the age of 16 to operate any vessel powered by a motor or motors generating a total horsepower in excess of 10 horsepower; except, it shall be lawful for a person under the age of 16 to operate a vessel powered by a motor or motors generating a total horsepower of more than 10 horsepower, as long as, they are under the direct supervision of a parent or legal guardian in the vessel. (PCC 8.88.240)

SPEED RELATED LAWS – Fresh Water

It shall be unlawful to operate a vessel at a rate of speed greater than will permit the operator in the exercise of reasonable care to bring the vessel to a stop within the assured clear distance ahead; provided, however, it shall be unlawful to operate vessels in excess of 5 miles per hour (MPH), or at a speed which produces a damaging wake, within 200 feet of any shore, dock, bridge, or public swimming area, or within 100 feet of swimmers or of any vessel or within 300 feet of any boat launch. (PCC 8.88.150)

DAMAGING WAKE

Operators are responsible for any damage or injuries caused by the wake of their vessel. (PCC 8.88.165)

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

All vessels on fresh water shall keep the closest shore to the operator’s starboard or right-hand side for a counter-clockwise direction of travel. (PCC 8.88.200)

TAKING OFF AND LANDING LAWS FOR ALL VESSELS

Taking off and landing shall be done perpendicular or as near to perpendicular as possible, and at no time less than a 45-degree angle to any shore, dock or other launching facility. (PCC 8.88.160)

WATER SKIER RELATED LAWS

Including water skies, aqua plane, surfboard, inner tube or other similar devices. (PCC 8.88.210)

- The vessel must have a competent operator who must be attentive to the duties of operating a vessel
- The vessel must be manned by a competent skier observer who must be facing the skier at all times
- At all times, when a skier is down in the water, a flag, red or international orange in color, 1 ft. x 1 ft., and attached to a two-foot pole, must be displayed
- All skiers and PWC riders shall wear a U.S.C.G. approved personal floatation device. (RCW 79A.60.170-3) & (PCC 8.88.360-a)

SPECIFIC LAW FOR CLASS “B”, OHOP LAKE

It shall be unlawful to operate a vessel on the waters of Ohop Lake at a rate of speed in excess of 8 MPH, or at a slower speed that produces a damaging wake, except between the hours of 11:00AM and 3:30PM when maximum speed is 40 MPH. (PCC 8.88.470)

