

**CAMAS POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
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Camas is home to several waterways, including Lacamas, Round and Fallen Leaf lakes, and portions of the Columbia and Washougal rivers. The increased use of these waterways has created potential dangers to life and property, and prompted complaints of excessive noise, speeding, intoxicated boaters, and illegal fishing. To help address these problems, Chief Don Chaney is proud to announce the formation of a Marine Patrol Unit.

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW), Clark County Code (CCC) and Camas Municipal Code (CMC) govern operation of vessels and conduct of persons to help make waterways as safe as possible and officers will strictly enforce all safety requirements.

We believe public education is key to voluntary compliance, so this brochure has been prepared to explain certain laws and equipment requirements. While not all inclusive, we hope you find it helpful and informative.

Since laws may vary, when boating in another county or state you should check with the local police or sheriff's department.

### **AUTHORITY**

RCW 79A.60.080 requires a vessel to stop when directed to do so by a law enforcement officer. It is a felony to attempt to elude a law enforcement vessel.

RCW 79A.60.100 and CCC 16.00.000 permit officers to stop and board any vessel and direct it to a suitable pier or anchorage to carry out enforcement of laws and regulations.

CCC 16.08.060 and CMC 10.40.157 require the operator or person in charge of a vessel to permit a law enforcement officer to examine any equipment of such vessel required by law.

CCC 16.08.050 and CMC 10.40.060 requires the operator of a vessel to cooperate with officers by providing their name and address, and the name and address of the vessel owner. It is also a crime to give a false name and address.

### **DEFINITIONS**

“Darkness” means that period between sunset and sunrise.

“Operate” means to steer, direct, or otherwise have physical control of a vessel that is underway.

“Slow-no-wake” means the speed at which a particular vessel being operated does not create a discernable wake, but in no event a speed in excess of five miles per hour.

“Underway” means that a vessel is not at anchor, or made fast to the shore, or aground.

“USCG” means United States Coast Guard

“Vessel” includes every description of watercraft on the water, other than a seaplane, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on the water.

“Water skiing” means the physical act of being towed behind a vessel on, but not limited to, any skis, aquaplane, kneeboard, tube, or other similar device.

## **MAJOR VIOLATIONS**

**CMC 10.40.000 INCAPACITY OF OPERATOR** – It is unlawful for any person who owns or is in control of any vessel to authorize or knowingly permit the same to be operated by any person who by reason of physical or mental disability, incapacity or immaturity, is incapable of safely and lawfully operating such vessel under the prevailing circumstances, including the type, size and motor power of the vessel, and the weather and water conditions.

**RCW 79A.60.000 OPERATE VESSEL IN A RECKLESS MANNER** – Operate vessel carelessly and heedlessly with a willful and wanton disregard of the rights, safety, or property of another.

**RCW 79A.60.000 OPERATE VESSEL UNDER THE INFLUENCE** – Operate vessel with .08 grams or more of alcohol per 210 liters of breath as shown by analysis, or while under the influence of or affected by intoxicating liquor and/or drugs.

**RCW 79A.60.000 OPERATE VESSEL IN NEGLIGENT MANNER** – Operate a vessel in disregard of careful and prudent operation, or in disregard of careful and prudent rates of speed that are no greater than is reasonable and proper under the conditions existing at the point of operation.....and so as not to unduly or unreasonably endanger life, limb, property or other rights of any person entitled to the use of such waters.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### ***SWIMMING***

Swimming shall be confined to restricted areas designed for swimming, within 100 feet of a pier, the shore, or an accompanying vessel. Except in an emergency, swimming is prohibited within designated channels or within 100 feet of a boat launch area where such activity would obstruct or hinder navigation or boat operation.

### ***UNDERWATER DIVING***

Must be done within 200 feet of a properly displayed diver’s flag. Vessels must be operated at slow-no-wake speeds within this area.

## **PERSONAL WATERCRAFT**

Personal watercraft, also commonly known as jet-skis, waverunners, etc, are vessels less than 16 feet that use a water jet pump as the primary source of motive power and are designed to be used by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on. Personal watercraft have the potential for causing serious injury because they are small, fast, and quick to maneuver.

Personal watercraft must be registered and display registration numbers and a current decal on each side just like larger vessels.

Operators of personal watercraft must be at least 14 years of age and wear a Type I, II, III or V Personal Floatation Device (PFD), commonly known as a life jacket, although Type V (inflatable) devices are not recommended for this type of activity. It is a misdemeanor for a person, such as a parent or guardian or other responsible person, to allow a minor younger than 14 to operate personal watercraft.

Personal watercraft shall not be operated in a reckless manner, including but not limited to:

- recklessly weaving through congested waterway traffic;
- recklessly swerving at the last possible moment to avoid a collision;
- recklessly jumping the wake of another vessel unreasonably close to that vessel or when visibility around that vessel is obstructed.
- chasing, harassing, or disturbing wildlife.

Personal watercraft shall not be operated after dark.

Personal watercraft must carry a marine-type fire extinguisher and sound device (horn or whistle).

The ignition safety switch lanyard must be attached to the operator at all times.

Personal watercraft shall not carry more passengers than designated by the manufacturer, and every passenger must wear a US Coast Guard approved PFD.

Personal watercraft may be used for water skiing, however the requirements for an observer and orange ski flag still apply (see water skiing section).

## **SPEED RESTRICTIONS**

### ***GENERAL:***

Vessels shall not exceed a slow-no-wake speed within 100 feet of any shoreline, breakwater, person in the water, boat launch, log sorting area, or established moorage, regardless of the speed otherwise authorized on a particular body of water; except on the Columbia River the distance shall be 200 feet.

Vessels shall not exceed a maximum speed of 40 MPH, except on the Columbia River.

Vessels shall not exceed posted speed limits.

Vessels shall not exceed a slow-no-wake speed within 200 feet of a posted divers flag.

Regardless of the 40 MPH speed limit, a vessel shall be operated in a careful and prudent manner and at a speed no greater than is reasonable and proper under the conditions at the time and place of operation, taking into account the amount and character of traffic; size of waters; freedom from obstruction to view ahead; and so as to not unreasonably endanger persons or property or other rights of any person entitled to use of the water. The operator of any vessel shall be responsible for its wake and any damage or injuries caused by a wake.

### **SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS**

#### **LACAMAS LAKE:**

- Vessels shall not exceed slow-no-wake speeds easterly of the buoys at the east end of the lake across from the state boat launch and westerly of the buoys at the west end of the lake.
- Seaplanes, when taxiing, shall not exceed 12 MPH.

#### **ROUND LAKE:**

- No internal combustion engines allowed.

#### **WASHOUGAL RIVER:**

- No motorboats allowed above Hathaway Park and the Washougal corporate limits.

### **WATER SKIING**

Skiers must wear a USCG approved Type I, II, III or V Personal Flotation Device (PFD), commonly known as a life jacket, although Type V (inflatable) devices are not recommended for this activity.

The towing vessel must have an observer on board independent of the operator. The observer must be physically capable and mentally competent to watch the skier.

An orange or red 12X12" ski flag mounted on a two-foot pole must be displayed whenever the skier is down in the water.

Water skiing is prohibited at night (between one hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise).

Reckless water skiing in a willful and wanton manner likely to endanger any person or property is prohibited. This applies to both the skier and the operator of the vessel.

### **VESSEL REGISTRATION**

All vessels with an engine of 10HP or greater, including personal watercraft, must be registered. If you are a Washington State resident, it is a gross misdemeanor to intentionally register a vessel in another state to avoid paying Washington taxes.

All registered vessels must display the registration number and a current year decal on each side of the vessel near the bow. The registration number must be in block letters at least three inches high and of a contrasting color to the paint scheme so as to be readily identifiable. Script lettering is not permitted.



Operators are required to produce a registration certificate when requested by a law enforcement officer (RCW 88.02.090).

### **VESSEL EQUIPMENT**

Please note that the following is the minimum required equipment. Additional safety equipment, such as signal flares, first aid kit, tools, radio, etc, are encouraged.

#### ***CANOES/KAYAKS:***

- Must have a USCG approved Type I, II, III or V Personal Flotation Device (PFD), commonly known as a life jacket, for everyone on board. The PFD must be readily accessible and of the proper size and type for the wearer. All Type V PFD's must be worn to meet carriage requirements.
- Children 12 years of age and younger must wear a PFD at all times.
- Must have a sound device (horn or whistle).
- Must have a white lantern visible when operated after dark.

#### ***VESSELS UNDER 16 FEET:***

- Must have USCG approved PFD's as described above.
- Children 12 years of age and younger must wear a PFD at all times.
- Must have a USCG approved type "B-1" marine fire extinguisher on vessels with enclosed living spaces, enclosed engine or fuel spaces, or permanently mounted fuel tanks.
- Must have a sound device (horn or whistle).
- Must have navigation lights/anchor light when operated after dark
- Must have a backfire flame arrestor for each carburetor of gas-powered engines built after 1940, except outboards.
- Must have a powered ventilation system for enclosed engine spaces on vessels built after August 1, 1980. Older vessels must have either natural or powered ventilation.

#### ***VESSELS 16 FEET TO 26 FEET***

- Must have all of the above, and:

- One Type IV throwable PFD (cushion or ring).

### ***VESSELS 19 FEET AND OVER***

- Must have all of the above, except:
- Children 12 years of age and younger do not need to wear life vest (one must still be available).

### **GENERAL VESSEL OPERATION**

#### ***OVERLOADING/OVERPOWERING:***

No person shall knowingly load or power a vessel beyond the maximum capacity specified by the manufacturer.

#### ***RIDING ON DECKS/GUNWALES:***

No person shall be allowed to ride or sit on the gunwales or on the decking over the bow of a vessel underway unless the vessel is equipped with adequate guards or railings.

#### ***MOORING TO BUOYS:***

No person shall moor a vessel to or obstruct any of the buoys or beacons placed in any waters, nor in any manner hang on to any buoy or beacon.

#### ***NAVIGATION RULES:***

Familiarity with the rules is recommended, but not required. Boaters should be familiar with the “rules of the road” for crossing and overtaking situations, as well as meeting other vessels head on.

#### ***REGATTAS:***

It is unlawful for any person to hold or participate in any regatta, motorboat race, boating exhibition, water ski tournament, or similar event unless a permit is obtained through the police department.

### **VESSEL ACCIDENTS**

The operator of a vessel involved in a boating accident must stop immediately and assist anyone injured or in danger.

It is a felony for the operator of a vessel to leave the scene of an accident where someone has been injured without rendering all practical and necessary assistance to the person(s) injured.

A boating accident report must be completed if:

- A person dies or disappears from the vessel;
- A person is injured and requires medical treatment beyond first aid;
- Damage to vessels or property exceeds \$500 or there is complete loss of a vessel.

Failure to give accident information to a law enforcement agency is a violation of RCW 79A.60.200.