

# GULL CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION PUBLIC MISSION STATEMENT

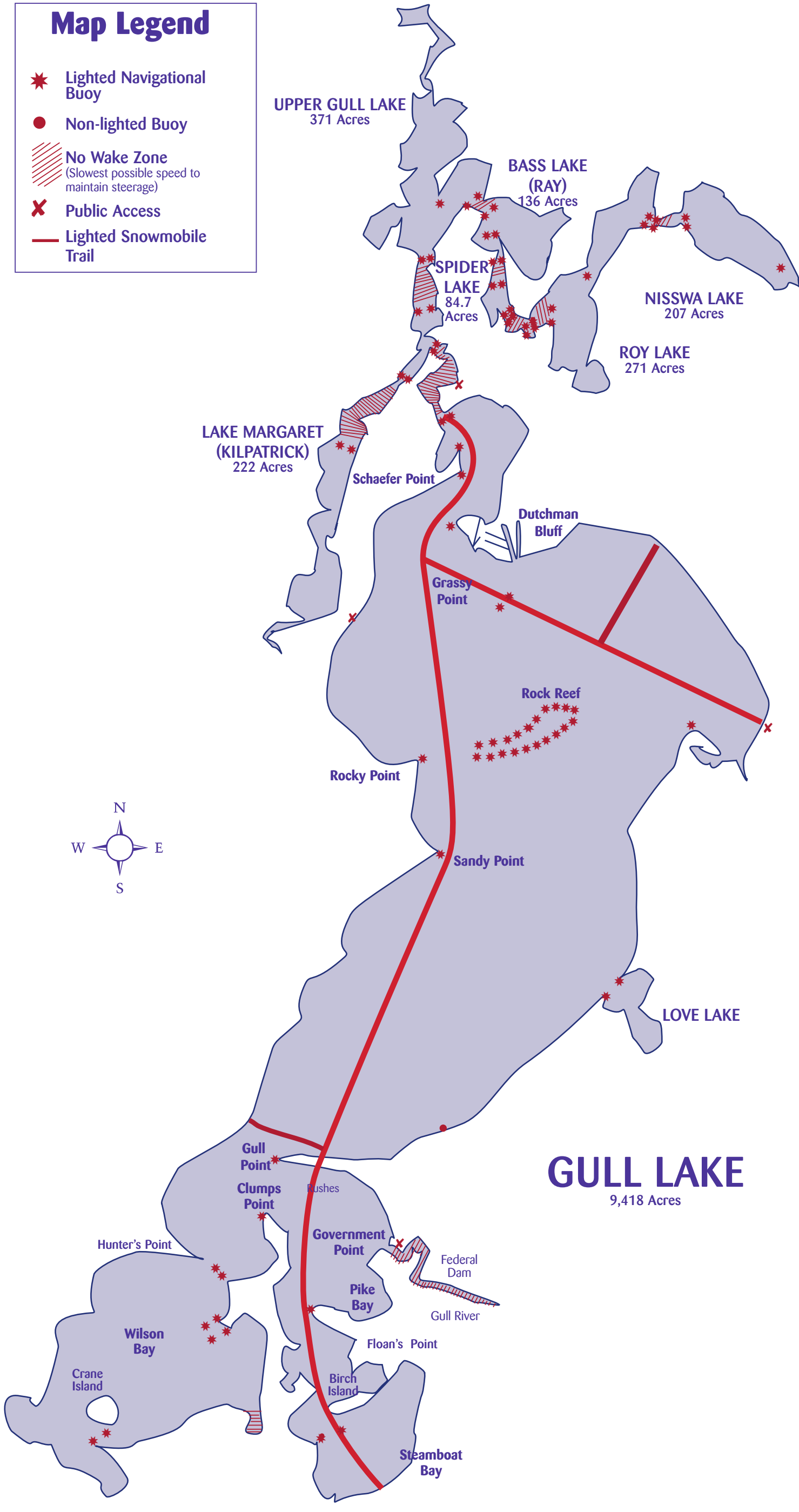
The Gull Chain of Lakes Association is an alliance of individuals, families and business owners in the Gull Chain of Lakes region in Cass and Crow Wing Counties. The Association is devoted to the restoration and continued preservation of the highest water quality and environmental standards achievable, promotion of the responsible use of land and water resources and recreational safety on the Gull chain of lakes.



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### Map Legend

- Lighted Navigational Buoy
- Non-lighted Buoy
- No Wake Zone (Slowest possible speed to maintain steerage)
- Public Access
- Lighted Snowmobile Trail



## Emergency Phone Numbers

Emergency Only	911	Essentia Health Convenient Care - Baxter	218-454-5802
Cass County Sheriff	800-450-2677 / (218) 547-1424	Nisswa Police Department	218-963-4301
Crow Wing County Sheriff	218-829-4749	DNR Enforcement (MN State Patrol Headquarters)	218-828-2400
Lakeshore Police	218-963-8073	Your Boat Club (Buoy Problems)	218-963-1010

# Water Safety Rules

## Aquatic Invasive Species Update (January 2012)

Zebra mussels and other harmful invasive species continue to be introduced into new waters.

Under State Law (as of July 1, 2011),

Your compliance with aquatic invasive species inspection requirements is an express condition and legal requirement of operating and transporting water-related equipment.

You must...

- **CLEAN** all aquatic plants and animals, zebra mussels, and other prohibited species off of watercraft, trailers, and equipment before transport from any water access.
- **DRAIN** water from the boat's bilge, livewell, motor, ballast tanks, and portable bait containers before transport from water access or shoreland riparian property.
- **KEEP DRAIN PLUG OUT** and water draining devices open while transporting watercraft.

Recommended...

Spray, rinse or dry boats and recreational equipment before going to another water body. Do one or more of the following:

- **SPRAY** boat with high pressure water.
- **Rinse** with very hot water - over 120°F.
- **Dry** for at least 5 days.

You may not...

- **Transport** aquatic plants, water, or prohibited invasive species (e.g. zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil).
- **DUMP** live bait into state waters, on shore, or on the ground
- **LAUNCH**, or attempt to place, watercraft or trailers with aquatic plants, zebra mussels, or prohibited invasive species into any waters of the state.
- It is **illegal** to transport aquatic plants or aquatic invasive species on any boat, trailer, or other water-related equipment on any road.
- It is **illegal** to launch or attempt to launch a boat/trailer with aquatic plants or prohibited species (e.g., zebra mussel, New Zealand mudsnail) attached.
- It is **illegal** to transport water from infested waters without a permit.
- It is **illegal** to harvest bait at infested waters, except by permit for commercial minnow dealers.
- Transporting prohibited invasive species in Minnesota is subject to a **\$250 civil penalty**, launching is subject to **\$500 to \$1000 civil penalties**.

Failure to comply with these and other AIS rules will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law such as civil and criminal penalties and/or the suspension of a watercraft license for up to a year .

Contact your local conservation officer to report violations - <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/officerpatrolareas/index.html>

Please take these steps to minimize the spread of invasive species:

- **INSPECT** and **REMOVE** aquatic plants & animals before entering/leaving the access.
- **DRAIN** all water before leaving the access.
- **DISPOSE** of unwanted live bait in the trash, not in the water or on land.
- **RINSE** with hot water, **SPRAY** with high pressure, and/or **DRY** for five days before entering another body of water.

## Personal Watercraft

Personal watercraft (a.k.a. Jet Skis, Sea Doos, Wave Runner, Water Scooters, etc.) have become increasingly popular on Minnesota lakes; and numerous calls and complaints regarding their operation has prompted the Minnesota Legislature to take action. In addition to the existing laws and rules governing operation of all boats, the new law also includes some specific to personal watercrafts.

In general these include:

- All personal watercraft must be licensed.
- All personal watercraft must display valid registration decals and Minnesota registration numbers on both sides of the craft.
- All personal watercraft with enclosed engine or fuel compartments (almost all of them!) must carry a fully charged readily accessible U.S. Coast Guard approved fire extinguisher.
- May not exceed the maximum motorboat noise levels. Also may not be modified in a way that amplifies or increases the noise it emits above watercraft noise limits.

Specifically, these laws include:

- Anyone riding or operating a personal watercraft must be wearing a U.S. Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD or life jacket).
- Personal Watercraft may only be operated from 9:30 a.m. to one hour before sunset (formerly 8:00 a.m. to sunset).
- Personal Watercraft will need to operate at slow-no wake speed (5mph or less) within 150 feet (formerly 100 feet) of shore, docks, swimmers, swimming rafts, any moored/anchored watercraft, or a non-motorized watercraft at anytime. An exception is provided for a PWC launching or landing a water skier by the most direct route to open water.
- If you tow a person on water-skis or any other device, skier must wear a PFD or there must be one available on the watercraft. Also, there must be either an additional person on board to act as an observer OR the watercraft must be installed with accessory mirrors giving wide view of vision to the rear.
- If it is equipped with lanyard-type engine cut off switch, it must be attached to the person, life jacket, or clothing of the operator.
- You **MAY NOT** chase or harass wildlife.
- You **MAY NOT** travel through emergent/floating vegetation at greater than no-wake slow speed.
- You **MAY NOT** weave through congested water traffic or jump wake of another water craft within 150 feet of other watercraft.
- Each personal watercraft will need to have a decal, which summarizes the PWC restrictions, in full view of the operator (decal provided by DNR).
- Operation of a PWC while facing backward is prohibited.
- PWC dealers and rental operations will need to keep a signature record of those persons who buy or rent PWCs, acknowledge that they have been provided a copy of the PWC laws and rules (dealers and rental operations have been required to provide this information since 1991). Those persons less than 18 years of age will need to show their watercraft operator's permit before renting a PWC and the rental agency must record this information on the signature record.
- When on official duties, PWCs operated by enforcement, emergency or safety personnel are exempted from the restrictions on hours and location of PWC operation.

Age requirements for motorboats include:

- Less than 12 years old: 25 hp or less-no restriction; more than 25 hp thru 75 hp-must have someone at least 21 on board in reach of controls; over 75 hp-cannot operate, even with an adult on board.
- 12-17 years old: 25 ph or less-no restriction; over 25 hp-must have: watercraft operator's permit or someone at least 21 on board.

Personal water craft age requirements include:

- Less than 13 years old: cannot operate, even with an adult on board.
- 13 years old: must have: someone at least 21 years old on board or a watercraft operator's permit and be in unaided visual contact by someone at least 21.
- 14-17 years old: must have:a watercraft operator's permit, or have someone at least 21 on board.

## Required Water Equipment

Personal Flotation Devices

There are four types of personal flotation devices (PFDs or life preservers) approved for use on recreational boats.



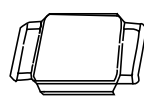
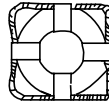
**Type 1 - Off-Shore Life Jacket.** This is a vest or yoke type device generally found on commercial craft. It is designed to turn most unconscious person from a face downward to a face upward position in the water.

**Type 2 - Near-Shore Buoyant Vest.** The buoyant vest usually looks like a bib. It has an unconscious turning ability similar to the Type 1, but it will not turn as many persons under the same conditions.



**Type 3 - Flotation Aid.** These devices are usually foam-filled and come in several colors and styles, including vests of canoeing, sailing, waterskiing, hunting and general boating as well as full-sleeved jackets. Type 3 devices are not designed to turn an unconscious victim, but they do provide the best protection of all PFD types for immersion hypothermia (exposure to cold water).

**Type 4 - Throwable Devices.** (Buoyant Cushion, Ring Buoy or Horseshoe Buoy.) These devices are designed to be thrown to the victim in the water, rather than worn. Cushions especially should be checked often to see if they are in serviceable condition.



**Type 5 - Special Use Devices.** A Coast Guard approved Type V PFD may be carried in lieu of a Type 1 - 4 if the Type V device is approved for the activity in which the craft is being used. (Note: Type V devices are approved for specific and restricted uses and may have to be worn to be approved.)

A state law requires all children under the age of 10 to wear a life jacket while boating, unless they are below the top deck, in an enclosed cabin or the boat is anchored for swimming or diving.

On all boats regardless of length (including canoes, kayaks and duckboats) there must be a readily accessible Coast Guard approved Type I, II or III wearable PFD (life jacket) for each person on board. Type IV throwable devices, such as buoyant cushions, will no longer be accepted as primary life saving devices.

IN ADDITION, on boats 16 feet or longer (except canoes and kayaks,) there must be at least one Coast Guard approved Type IV throwable device, such as buoyant cushion or ring buoy immediately available for each boat. The law does not state the PFDs must be worn, only that they are accessible **except for personal watercraft (water scooters, Jet Skis, etc.)** HOWEVER, it is highly recommended that PFDs always be worn by everyone on board any boat.

**New for 2014: Stand up paddleboards must be registered as a watercraft, display a valid registration and carry a USCG approved life jacket for each person.**

Navigation Lights

- Navigation lights must be on from sunset to sunrise. Non-motorized boats (see illustration). All non-motorized watercraft whether underway or at anchor must carry a white lantern or flashlight. This light should be strong enough so that other boats can see it from around the horizon at a distance of two miles or more.



The light must be displayed in sufficient time to avoid a collision with another watercraft. (Note: motorized canoes, kayaks, and sailboats must follow the light rules for motorboats.)

- Motorboats. Most motorboats 16 feet or more in length will be equipped with the correct navigation lights by the manufacturer. In any case, the lights must be displayed according to the state rules described below or under the current federal regulations.
- State Lighting Rules: White lights must be visible for two miles on a dark, clear night (with one exception under the International Rules). Combination or side lights must be visible for one mile. Combination or side lights must shine red to port (left side) and green to starboard (right side). They must be attached so the light shows from directly ahead to 22 1/2° to the rear of the beam (midpoint of the boat) on the respective side. Lights may be displayed from sunset to sunrise.

Carbon Monoxide Detector

All boats with an enclosed accommodation area must have a marine-certified carbon monoxide detector and post 3 warning stickers about carbon monoxide poisoning.

Fire Extinguishers

All fire extinguishers must be Coast Guard approved, fully charged, and readily accessible. Two sizes of approved extinguishers are available, B-I and B-II.

- Motorboats less than 26 feet long with built-in enclosures where fuel or engines are housed, require one B-I fire extinguisher. Personal watercraft (Jet Skis, water scooters, etc.) fall into this category.

Whistles/Horns

Motorboats 16 feet to less than 26 feet long must be equipped with a hand, mouth, or power-operated whistle or horn capable of producing a continuous sound for two seconds and audible for at least one-half mile.

Mufflers/Noise Limits

Watercraft motors must have a muffler, underwater exhaust, or other device that adequately suppresses the sound of the motor. Cut-outs are illegal. You may not operate (except under a permit from the Coast Guard or county sheriff), or sell a motorboat or parts that exceed the following noise levels or their equivalent:

- 84 decibels on the A scale at a distance of 50 feet for engines or motorboats built before January 1, 1982.
- 82 decibels on the A scale at a distance of 50 feet for engines or motorboats built on or after January 1, 1982.

Equivalent measurements can be taken with the motor at idle and the sound meter held a few feet away.

Penalties

Violation of any boat or water safety statute or rule carries a fine of not more than \$700, imprisonment for not more than 90 days, or both. The court may also revoke the operator's permit of persons 12 through 17 years of age for a period of one year.

## Rules of the Road

**Passing** - When overtaking another watercraft going in the same direction, the craft being overtaken must maintain course and speed. The passing watercraft must keep a sufficient distance to avoid collision or endangering the other craft from its wake.

**Meeting** - When two watercraft approach each other "head on", each must alter course to the right to avoid collision. If the two watercraft are far enough to the left of each other, no change in direction is needed for safe passage. Both watercraft will maintain their course and speed so as to pass clear of each other, and keep to the right in narrow channels.

**Crossing** - If two watercraft approach each other at a right angle, the watercraft to the right shall have the right-of-way.

**Non-Motorized Craft** - Non-motorized craft (sailboats, canoes, etc.) have the right-of-way over motorized craft in all situations, except when the non-motorized is overtaking or passing.

**Commercial Vessels** - Small boats should not insist on the right-of-way when approaching large commercial vessels, which are limited in maneuverability.

**Emergency Craft** - All watercraft will yield right-of-way to an authorized watercraft displaying a red or blue flashing light.

## General Prohibitions

It's against the law:

- To operate a watercraft in a careless or reckless manner.
- To operate a watercraft so that its wash or wake endangers, harasses, or interferes with any person or property.
- To operate a watercraft so it obstructs or tends to obstruct ordinary navigation.
- To operate a watercraft within an area legally marked off or set aside as a swimming area, or within 150 feet of a diver's warning flag.
- To operate a watercraft loaded with passengers or cargo beyond its safe carrying capacity, or equipped with a motor or other propulsion machinery beyond its safe power capacity.
- To ride or sit on the gunwales, bow, or transom of any motorboat while underway, unless it is equipped with an adequate railing, or to operate a motorboat while any person is so riding or sitting.
- To operate a watercraft so that it obstructs or interferes with the take off, landing, or taxiing of a seaplane.
- To moor or attach a watercraft to any buoy, except a mooring buoy, or to any other marking device or guide, or to tamper, molest, remove, or destroy a navigational aid.
- To deposit or leave refuse in or upon the waters of the state or at public access areas.

## Boating While Intoxicated (BWI)

Conservation officers, sheriffs or other peace officers, who suspect from the actions of a motorboat operator that drugs or alcohol have impaired their ability to safely control the craft, may require the operator to take tests to determine their sobriety.

If the test is taken and the operator is found to be over the legal limit of .08 alcohol concentration, he or she is subject to loss of operating privileges for 90 days, a fine up to \$700, and any other penalties the court may impose, including a jail sentence.

If the operator refuses to take the test, he or she can still be arrested for BWI, and will have to pay a \$500 civil penalty and automatically lose their motorboat operating privileges for one year, in addition to any additional penalties set by the court.

## Water Skiing

1. It is unlawful to tow a person on water skis, aqua-plane, surfboard, saucer, or similar device unless there is a mirror providing the operator a wide field of vision to the rear, or unless another person in the towing watercraft is continuously watching the person being towed.
2. Water skiing and similar acts are prohibited between one hour after sunset to sunrise of the following day.
3. Water ski tow ropes may not be longer than 150 feet in length, unless a permit is obtained from the county sheriff.
4. A Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) must either be worn by a person being towed on water skis or other device, or carried in the towing watercraft.

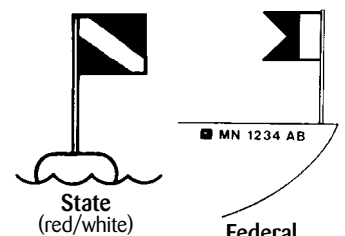
## Accidents

An accident can happen whenever you are on the water despite all the precautions you may have taken. If an accident does occur, follow these simple steps:

1. Stop at the scene and assist others who are in trouble if you can do so safely (required by law).
2. Don't risk your life or the lives of others to save equipment.
3. Summon help by dialing 911 anywhere in Minnesota.
4. If a second boat or other property is involved, exchange your name and boat number with the other operator or owner (as required by law).
5. Promptly report all boating accidents to the county sheriff where there is: 1) property damage exceeding \$500, 2) personal injury or 3) a fatality. This is required by law.

## Scuba Diving

- Scuba divers must display a warning flag when diving.
- The diver's flag must measure at least 15 inches horizontally and 12 inches vertically. Both sides must have a red-colored background bisected diagonally by a three-inch wide white strip. There is also a blue and white diver's flag authorized under the federal rules of the road.
- No more than four divers shall dive under one flag.
- Divers must remain within 50 feet (measured horizontally) of the warning flag.
- If a group of divers is using a contained area, the perimeter of the area must be marked. The area must be outside the normal area of navigation. These markings must consist of the official diver's flag and must be placed around the perimeter of the diving area at intervals of not more than 150 feet.
- Do not place a diver's flag where it will obstruct navigation.
- The diver's flag may be displayed on a watercraft or float or anchored to the bottom. The top of the flag must be at least 30 inches above the surface, however.
- Boats not involved with the diving operation must remain 150 feet away from a flag.
- Persons who dive at any time from sunset to sunrise must carry a diver's light visible when above the water for a distance of 150 feet.
- Scuba or skin diving while in possession of a spear is unlawful from sunset to sunrise.



## Swimming

**Private Areas:** The owner or lessee of shoreline property may mark off up to 2,500 square feet, but not more than 50 feet along the lake frontage, for a swimming area directly in front of his or her property. Markers to designate a private swimming area must be white with an orange diamond and cross on each side. The markers must extend out of the water at least six inches but no more than 14 and should be spaced no more than 15 feet apart. (Note: a white gallon plastic bleach bottle with the orange markings painted on each side fulfills this requirement.)

**Public Areas:** Public swimming areas (including resorts) must be marked off with the standard buoy: "Boats Keep Out". This buoy is white with an orange band at the bottom and top. Between the orange bands is an orange diamond with a cross inside. The design appears on opposite sides of the buoy. Above or below the diamond shapes are the words SWIM AREA in black, two-inch lettering. Marker buoys must not be spaced more than 75 feet apart. Smaller all-white markers may be used to add definition to the area marked by regulation markers. No specific size limits are imposed on public swimming areas.