

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 451 of 1994

324.80205 Operation of personal watercraft; requirements; violation; fine; exception.

Sec. 80205.

(1) A person shall not operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this state unless each person riding on or being towed behind the personal watercraft is wearing a type I, type II, or type III personal flotation device as described in R 281.1234 of the Michigan Administrative Code.

(2) A person shall not operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this state unless each person on board the personal watercraft is wearing a personal flotation device that is not inflatable.

(3) A person shall not operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this state if a child who is under 7 years of age is on board or being towed behind the personal watercraft unless the child is in the company of his or her parent or guardian or a designee of the parent or guardian.

(4) While operating a personal watercraft equipped by the manufacturer with a lanyard-type engine cutoff switch on the waters of this state, a person shall have the lanyard attached to his or her person, clothing, or personal flotation device as is appropriate for the personal watercraft.

(5) A person shall not operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this state during the period that begins at sunset and ends at 8 a.m. As used in this subsection, "sunset" means that time as determined by the National Weather Service.

(6) A person operating a personal watercraft on the waters of this state shall not cross within 150 feet behind another vessel, other than a personal watercraft, unless the person is operating the personal watercraft at slowâ€”no wake speed. A person who violates this subsection is responsible for a state civil infraction and may be ordered to pay a civil fine of not more than \$500.00.

(7) A person shall not operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this state where the water depth is less than 2 feet, as determined by vertical measurement, unless 1 or both of the following circumstances exist:

(a) The personal watercraft is being operated at slowâ€”no wake speed.

(b) The personal watercraft is being docked or launched.

(8) A person who violates subsection (7) is responsible for a state civil infraction and may be ordered to pay a civil fine of not more than \$500.00.

(9) A person shall operate a personal watercraft in a reasonable and prudent manner. A maneuver that unreasonably or unnecessarily endangers life, limb, or property, including, but not limited to, all of the following, constitutes reckless operation of a personal watercraft under section 80208:

(a) Weaving through congested vessel traffic.

(b) Jumping the wake of another vessel unreasonably or unnecessarily close to the other vessel or when visibility around the other vessel is obstructed.

(c) Waiting until the last possible moment before swerving to avoid a collision.

(10) A person shall not operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this state carrying more persons than the personal watercraft is designed to carry.

(11) A violation of subsection (10) is prima facie evidence of reckless operation of a watercraft under section 80208.

(12) A person operating a personal watercraft in excess of the speeds established under part 801 is guilty of reckless operation of a personal watercraft under section 80208.

(13) This section does not apply to a performer engaged in a professional exhibition or a person preparing to participate or participating in a regatta, race, marine parade, tournament, or exhibition held in compliance with section 80164 under a permit issued by the department and at the time and place specified in the permit.

History: Add. 2000, Act 229, Imd. Eff. June 27, 2000 ;-- Am. 2004, Act 27, Imd. Eff. Mar. 16, 2004 ;-- Am. 2007, Act 8, Imd. Eff. May 11, 2007 ;-- Am. 2008, Act 178, Eff. Mar. 31, 2009 ;-- Am. 2012, Act 61, Eff. Nov. 1, 2012 ;-- Am. 2018, Act 237, Eff. Sept. 25, 2018

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