Bluestone Lake
Boating on Government-owned Reservoirs
in West Virginia

The following rules and regulations are “excerpts” from the State of West Virginia’s Boating Regulations and Special Boating Regulations for the U.S. Government-owned reservoirs as promulgated by the Director of the Division of Natural Resources by virtue of the authority granted the director by Article 7, Chapter 20 of the Official Code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty one, as amended. Complete copies of the boating regulations and the Special Regulations may be obtained by writing Boating Section, Division of Natural Resources, Charleston, WV 25305.

Boating Regulations

Prohibited Operation
a. No person shall operate any motorboat or vessel in a reckless or negligent manner so as to endanger the life, limb or property of any person.

b. No person shall operate any motorboat or vessel while intoxicated, or under the influence of any narcotic drug, barbiturate or marijuana.

c. It shall be unlawful for the owner of any motorboat or vessel, or any person having such in charge or in control to authorize or knowingly permit the same to be operated by any person who by reason of physical or mental disability is incapable of operating such motorboat or vessel in a safe manner under the prevailing circumstances.

d. No person shall operate, or knowingly permit any person to operate, any motorboat or vessel at a rate of speed greater than idling speed on established and marked no-wake zones on a government-owned reservoir.

e. No person shall operate a motorboat at a speed greater than idling speed on established and marked no-wake zones on a government-owned reservoir.

Overloading and Overpowering
a. No motorboat or vessel may be loaded with passengers or cargo beyond its safe carrying capacity.

b. The maximum persons capacity marked on a vessel’s maximum capacities plate must not be exceeded.

c. The maximum weight capacity marked on a vessel’s maximum capacities plate must not be exceeded.

d. No vessel may be operated beyond its safe powering capacity.

e. The maximum horsepower capacity marked on a vessel’s maximum capacities plate must not be exceeded.

Water Skis and Surfboards
a. No person shall operate a vessel on any waters of this state towing a person or persons on water skis, or similar device, nor shall any person engage in water skiing, surfboarding, or similar activity at any time between the hours from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise.

b. No person shall operate a motorboat on any waters of this state for towing a person or persons on water skis, surfboards, or similar devices unless there is in such motorboat a person, in addition to the operator, in a position to observe the progress of the person or persons being towed or such motorboat is equipped with a wide-angle mirror mounted in such a manner as to permit the operator of the motorboat to observe the progress of the or persons being towed.

c. No person shall operate or manipulate any vessel, tow rope or other device by which the direction or location of water skis, surfboard or similar device may be affected or controlled in such a way as to cause the water skis, surfboard, or similar device, or any person thereon to collide with or strike against any object or person.

d. No person may manipulate any water skis, surfboard, or similar device in a reckless or negligent manner so as to endanger the life, limb, or property of any person.

e. No person may manipulate any water ski, surfboard, or similar device while intoxicated, or while under the influence of any narcotic drugs, barbiturates, or marijuana.

Special Regulations

Boats and Other Vessels, Private
a. It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to use any watercraft or vessel for the purpose of establishing or maintaining a dwelling of either permanent or temporary nature on any of the reservoirs.

b. Any watercraft or vessel containing a sink, toilet or sanitary system may be launched and operated on the reservoirs if such sink, toilet or sanitary system is removed or sealed or made to drain into a tank which can be carried or pumped ashore into a receptacle for disposal away from the lands and waters of the reservoir area.

Age of Operators
No person under the age of fifteen (15) years shall operate or permit such person, in the exercise of reasonable care, to bring the motorboat to a stop within the assured clear distance ahead.

Penalties
Any person violating any of the provisions of this chapter, or rules and regulations promulgated under the provisions of this chapter, may be fined up to an amount not exceeding the amount of one-half (1/2) hour after sunset to one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise.

Motorboat Speed
Motor-driven boats shall not be operated at a speed greater than the speed limits established and marked on the waters of the reservoir by the managing government agency.

Water Skiing and Surfboarding
No person shall operate a vessel on any reservoir of this state towing a person or persons on waterski, surfboard or similar device, nor shall any person engage in water skiing, surfboarding or similar activity in any areas of the reservoir except in the Unlimited Speed Zone.

Safety Equipment
a. Class A Motorboats (except personal watercraft) shall be equipped with one Type I, II, III or IV Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device for each person on board or being towed, plus one type IV throwable device. PFD requirements for rowboats, canoes, kayaks and inflatable boats and rafts are the same as requirements for Class A motorboats. All PFD’s must be readily accessible and in good condition.