

## **Article III Safety Regulations on Columbia Lake**

**Town of Columbia, CT** / **Part II: General Legislation** / **Lake and Beach Use**

### **Article III Safety Regulations on Columbia Lake**

[Adopted 3-7-1964 TM; amended 5-13-1972 TM; 10-4-1976 TM; 11-16-1987 TM; 11-15-1988 TM; 4-8-1991 TM; 11-16-1992 TM; 4-4-1995 BOS]

#### **§ 190-11 Purpose.**

The purpose of this article is to regulate the operation of motorboats, water-skiing and other water activities as defined below for appropriate recreational use that ensures the protection and safety of the public and property, as well as being environmentally safe, on Columbia Lake, a 281-acre waterbody with an average water depth of 14'.

#### **§ 190-12 Definitions**

As used in this Article III, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated. Note, the starred definitions are taken from the 2024 State of Connecticut Boating Safety Enforcement Manual to be consistent with the state definitions as taught in State Boat Certification (SBC) and Certificate of Personal Watercraft (CPWO) courses.

#### **LAKE**

Columbia Lake is the 281-acre lake located within the Town.

#### **VESSEL\***

Every description of watercraft, other than a seaplane on water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water.

#### **MOTORBOAT\***

Any vessel, not more than sixty-five feet in length and propelled by machinery, whether or not such machinery is the principal source of propulsion.

#### **PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (PWC)\***

Any inboard powered vessel less than sixteen feet in length that has an internal combustion engine or an electric system powering a water-jet pump as its primary source of motor propulsion and that is designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the vessel, rather than the conventional manner of sitting or standing inside the vessel.

#### **OPERATE\***

Means to navigate or otherwise use a vessel. A vessel is "under way" when it is not moored, anchored, made fast to the shore or aground.

**MARINE PATROL OFFICER:**

A Marine Patrol Officer is a person appointed pursuant to Columbia Town Ordinances, Section 190-16.

**CONNECTICUT DEEP:**

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is referred to as Connecticut DEEP.

**MARKERS\***

Markers are either a floating or a fixed object to be used to aid or regulate waterway traffic. There shall be three types of markers:

- (i) Regulatory
- (ii) Navigational Markers
- (iii) Special Purpose as an anchorage or mooring area buoy where vessels may be anchored or moored.

**SLOW - NO WAKE\***

A vessel shall not produce more than a minimum wake and shall not attain speeds greater than 6 miles per hour over the ground unless a higher minimum speed is necessary to maintain steerageway when traveling with a strong current. In no case shall the wake produced by the vessel be such that it creates a danger of injury to persons or will damage vessels or structures of any kind.

**SAFE BOATING CERTIFICATE (SBC) and CERTIFICATE OF PERSONAL WATERCRAFT OPERATION (CPWO):**

To legally operate any boat with a motor or a sailboat 19½ feet in length or longer, a Connecticut resident must possess a Safe Boating Certificate (SBC) by taking a DEEP approved boating safety course, per the CT General Statutes, Section 15 – 140 e. All persons must possess a Certificate of Personal Watercraft Operation (CPWO) to legally operate a personal watercraft (PWC) on Connecticut waters, regardless of state residency as required by subsection (b) of Section 15-140j of the CT General Statutes. These should be carried on board at all times while operating the vessel.

**WATER SKIING\***

Includes towing of any person behind a vessel under power, whether such person is connected by a towing line to such vessel or not, and similar forms of activity in which a passenger exits a vessel and uses the suction or wake of the underway vessel to engage in the activity. Examples include waterskiing, tubing, wakeboarding, wake surfing, and knee boarding.

## **§ 190-13 Regulation of Motorboats on Columbia Lake.**

### **A.**

No person shall operate any motorboat on the waters of Columbia Lake during the following hours: between April 1 and September 30 from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., and between October 1 and March 31 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. The only exception for the April 1 and September 30 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. time frame is an electric trolling motor on the bow or stern of a watercraft which is a secondary means of propulsion to move the motorboat through the waters quietly minimizing noise. The trolling motor must operate at a Slow - No Wake speed in order to not produce more than a minimum wake and shall not attain speeds greater than 6 miles per hours in still water.

### **B.**

No person shall operate a motorboat on the waters of Columbia Lake in a figure-eight course or in unreasonable sharp turns. No person while operating a motorboat on the waters of Columbia Lake shall engage in unauthorized pursuit of another vessel or engage in unauthorized racing.

### **C.**

No person shall launch or operate on the waters of Columbia Lake, a motorboat with an outboard engine whose horsepower exceeds 80, or a motorboat with an inboard engine whose horsepower exceeds 150. Engine horsepower or other power specifications prior to conversion to horsepower as provided in Section 190-13D will be measured by the original engine manufacturer's documentation. No modifications may be made to change any motorboat engine's horsepower operated on Columbia Lake. A motorboat launched on Columbia Lake may only have one engine, with the exception of a trolling engine capable of propulsion of no more than at a Slow-No-Wake speed not greater than 6 miles per hours in still water.

### **D.**

No one shall launch a motorboat powered by systems not designating horsepower such as an electric motor system or by pounds of thrust that exceeds the engine horsepower limits in Section 190-13C as measured by the original manufacturers documentation. When a manufacturer does not specify the horsepower of an engine, the units such as, without limitation, watts, kilowatts, or pounds of thrust the horsepower shall be determined by such method that the Board of Selectmen shall designate in writing.

### **E.**

During permitted hours of operation, no person shall operate any motorboat on the lake at a speed greater than 6 MPH between sunset to sunrise.

## **§ 190-14 Water-skiing Regulations**

### **A.**

Every person who operates a motorboat under power with water-skiers on the lake shall, if a water-skier falls, cause the motorboat to immediately return, and render assistance to the fallen skier, or cause another motorboat to be in attendance for that purpose.

### **B.**

On the lake, no person shall erect, and no person engaged in water-skiing shall use or attempt to use any structure for ski jumping.

### **C.**

At no time will a motorboat under power on the lake pull more than three water-skiers.

### **D.**

No person shall engage in water-skiing, and no person shall operate a motorboat under power towing a person so engaged, on the lake after sunset.

### **E.**

Any person engaging in water-skiing shall leave and return to the shore on a course as nearly perpendicular thereto as possible.

### **F.**

Any water-skier must terminate such person's forward motion at least 100 feet from the lake shore or from any swimming area.

### **G.**

No person shall launch on the lake a vessel involving an airborne or underwater component that is part of a vessel or otherwise used with the vessel that allows it to lose contact with the water for more than an incidental moment such as a jetpack, flyboard, self-propelled hydrofoils, efoil boards, ebikes, flyfish tube, or parasailing.

**H.** No person shall launch a vessel to engage in the activity of kitesurfing.

## **§ 190-15 Restricted And Limited Areas.**

### **A.**

The Board of Selectmen may establish, on the waters of Columbia Lake, areas restricted to the use of persons engaged in swimming and bathing, to the use of motorboats and sailing vessels, to the use of vessels other than motorboats and sailing vessels, and to the use of persons engaged in water-skiing or any other recreational activity. The Board shall cause distinctive marking devices, approved by CT DEEP to be placed in such positions that they clearly delineate the boundaries of such restricted areas and denote the nature of the permitted activity. No person shall operate any prohibited watercraft or engage in any prohibited activity in any such restricted area.

**B.**

Markers, when in place, shall not be removed, defaced, or relocated by unauthorized persons.

**C.**

No person shall operate a motorboat at a speed in excess of Slow-No-Wake within one hundred feet of shore, or of a dock, pier, float, or anchored or moored vessel, unless such motorboat is approaching such float, dock, or shore for the purpose of enabling a person engaged in waterskiing to take off or land.

**D.**

No person shall operate a personal watercraft at a speed in excess of Slow - No - Wake within two hundred feet of shore, or of a dock, pier, float or anchored or moored vessel, unless said personal watercraft is approaching such float, dock, or shore for the purpose of enabling a person engaged in waterskiing to take off or land.

**E.**

Swimmers and persons using a flotation device beyond 100 feet from the shore must be accompanied by a vessel and the vessel must be within 25 feet of the person at all times.

**§ 190-16 Marine Patrol Officers.**

The Board of Selectmen, as provided by the Town Charter and Ct General Statutes Section 57-15 – 154(a) or 7-151(b), may appoint such Marine Patrol Officers as it deems necessary to enforce the provisions pertaining to the launch or use of any vessel on the lake or other use of the lake and the boating laws of the State of Connecticut.

**§ 190-17 Penalties for Offenses.**

Any person or vessel that violates any provision of this article shall if applicable terminate the current voyage at the request of a Marine Patrol Officer and may be fined \$200. Any such violation which is of a continuing nature shall be deemed a separate violation each time it occurs. Each day a violation continues shall be deemed a new occurrence. If any operating violation is deemed to be reckless or if ongoing operating violations continue in such a fashion that continued violations are deemed to be evidence of reckless disregard of an applicable provision of this ordinance, the Board of Selectmen acting in conjunction with the Connecticut State Police, reserves the right to prohibit the violator from operating the vessel or any similar vessel on the lake for a designated period of time not to exceed one year.