



## WATERSPORTS SAFETY CODE

**Before you get in the water:** Skiing instruction is recommended before use. Instruction will teach general safety guidelines and proper skiing techniques, which may reduce your risk of injury. For more information on ski schools, contact your dealer, association, or local ski club.

- Know the federal, state and local laws that apply to your area.
- If you are not familiar with a waterway, ask someone who is to tell you about any hidden dangers or things to avoid.
- Whether you plan to be in a watercraft, or skiing behind one, it is important you are wearing a properly fitted life jacket (PFD) approved by your country's agency, USCG Type III, ISO, etc.
- Inspect all equipment prior to each use, check bindings, fins, tube, attachment, tow rope and flotation device. Do not use if damaged.

**Watercraft Safety:** A knowledgeable and responsible driver is the most important safety device on any watercraft.

- Never operate a watercraft or ski under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Only use water ballast and people for additional weight.
- Never exceed the passenger or weight limitations of the watercraft.
- Never allow passengers to hang outside the watercraft or towed device or sit on the gunwales or anywhere outside of the normal seating area.
- Never allow water to overflow the bow or gunwales of the watercraft.
- Uneven weight distribution or additional weight may affect the handling of the watercraft.

**Carbon Monoxide:** The exhaust from the engine on a watercraft contains Carbon Monoxide (CO) which is a colorless, odorless and poisonous gas. Excessive exposure to CO can cause severe injury or death. Follow this advice to avoid injury.

- Never "Platform Drag" by holding onto the boarding platform or be dragged directly behind the watercraft. This is where CO will be.
- Do not sit on the watercraft transom or boarding platform while the engine is running.
- Make sure the engine is properly tuned and running well. An improperly tuned engine produces excessive exhaust and CO.
- If you smell engine exhaust do not stay in that position.
- Go to the United States Coast Guard's website: [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org) for more information on how to help protect yourself and others from the dangers of CO.

**Tow Ropes:** Tow ropes come in different lengths and strengths for different activities. Make sure any rope you are using is suited for skiing and that it is in good condition.

- Never use a rope that is frayed, knotted, unraveling or discolored from use or being left in the sun. If a rope breaks while in use it can recoil at the skier being towed or into the watercraft where it might strike passengers. Replace tow ropes with any sign of damage.
- Never use a tow rope with elastic or bungee material to pull skiers.
- Rope should be attached to the watercraft in an approved fashion with hardware designed for towing. Refer to your boat User's Manual for instructions on proper tow rope attachment for each watersports activity
- Always keep people and tow ropes away from the propeller, even when idling.
- If a tow rope should become entangled in a propeller, shut off engine, remove the key and put it in your pocket before retrieving the rope.
- Tow ropes should be neatly stowed in the boat when not in use.

**Preparing to ski:** Always have a person other than the driver as an observer to look out for the skier.

- Be sure the driver is aware of the experience and ability level of the skier.
- The driver, observer and skier/ rider need to agree on hand signals before skiing. Signals should include READY, STOP, SPEED UP, and SLOW DOWN.
- Start the engine only after making sure that no one in the water is near the propeller.
- **Turn the engine off when people are getting into or out of the watercraft, or in the water near the watercraft.**
- Always make sure the tow rope is not wrapped around anyone's hands, arms, legs, or other parts of the body.
- Start the watercraft and move slowly to remove slack until the tow rope is tight.
- When the skier signals READY and there is no traffic ahead, take off in a straight line. Adjust the speed according to the signals given by the skier.

**Skiing:** The watercraft and skier should always maintain a sufficient distance from obstacles so a skier falling or coasting and/or the watercraft will not encounter any obstacle.

- Do not use in shallow water or near shore, docks, pilings, swimmers, other watercraft, or any other obstacles.
- Use only on water.
- Never attempt land or dock starts. This will increase your risk of injury or death.
- Always wear a properly fitted life jacket (PFD) approved by your country's agency, USCG Type III, ISO, etc.
- The faster you ski, the greater your risk of injury.
- Never make sharp turns that may cause a slingshot effect on the skier's speed.
- Skier should be towed at an appropriate speed for their ability level.

**Fallen skier:** Falling and injuries are common in skiing.

- Circle a fallen skier slowly to return the tow rope handle or pick up the fallen skier.
- Put the watercraft in neutral when near a fallen skier.
- Always keep the fallen skier in view and on the driver's side of the watercraft.
- Display a red or orange skier-down flag to alert other vessels that a skier is down.

**THE WARNINGS AND PRACTICES SET FORTH IN THE WATERSPORTS SAFETY CODE REPRESENT SOME COMMON RISKS ENCOUNTERED BY USERS. THE CODE DOES NOT PURPORT TO COVER ALL INSTANCES OF RISK OR DANGER. PLEASE USE COMMON SENSE AND GOOD JUDGMENT.**

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