



Welcome

Bass Lake provides many enjoyable boating opportunities, including water skiing, fishing, riding personal watercraft (PWC), and general pleasure boating. To ensure a safe boating experience for yourself, passengers in your craft, and other boaters, knowing the lake's boating regulations and good boating practices are essential. Before boating on Bass Lake, vessels must register at either the Forks Resort, Miller's Landing Resort, or Pines Marina.

Please be advised that everyone who boats on Bass Lake does so at their own risk.



Lake Regulations

This brochure summarizes pertinent State and County boating regulations but does not contain them all. Actual regulations can be obtained from the Madera County Sheriff's Boat Unit and the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways.

Please take responsibility for informing all parties using your vessel of the following regulations:

- **AGE:** All boaters must have a California Boater Card (<http://californiaboatercard.com/>). A person at least 16 years old, supervised by an adult 18 years of age or older with a California Boater Card, can operate a motor vessel designed to carry one or more persons, powered by a motor greater than 15 horsepower or a vessel towing persons on water skis or similar devices. Water ski observers must be at least 12 years old.
- **PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFD):** Vessels must carry a class 1, 2, 3, or 5 wearable PFD for each person on board. Children less than 13 years old must wear a PFD while riding in a vessel.
- **SAFE BOATING PRACTICES:** A PFD is required by state law to be worn by anyone (of any age) who is being towed by a vessel in any manner.
- **TOWLINE NAVIGATION:** Vessels may not navigate between a ski boat and its towline. A skier may not pass a towline over another boat or skier.
- **ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION:** No person who has 0.08% or more, by weight, of alcohol in their blood shall operate any vessel, water ski or similar device. *Conviction of intoxicated boat operation could result in a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail.*
- **LITTERING:** Throwing, dropping, placing, depositing, sweeping or causing any such on land or water in other than appropriate storage containers or areas designated for those purposes is prohibited.
- **SPEED LIMIT:** Madera County Ordinance 9.28.140 has established a 40 MPH speed limit for Bass Lake during periods when, in the opinion of the Sheriff's enforcement personnel, speeds in excess are hazardous and create unsafe conditions on the lake resulting in direct notice or red flag postings.

Red flag warnings will be posted on all days of the Memorial and Labor Day weekends. Red flag warnings will also be flown on all days of the Fourth of July weekend or just on that weekend.

Red flags will be raised at the Pines Marina, Miller's Landing Resort, The Forks Resort or other conspicuous locations along the lake shore, when the 40 MPH speed limit is in effect.

Personal Watercraft (PWC)

A personal watercraft is a small internal combustion engine vessel that can carry one or more persons sitting, standing, or kneeling on or astride the vessel. It is a power boat by definition and subject to all state, local (Madera County Ordinance No. 9.28.070), and federal regulations governing the operation of power boats of similar size.

The operation of personal watercraft upon Bass Lake is restricted to the personal watercraft special use zones, except as follows:

- Personal watercraft shall take as direct a route as possible when traveling to a special use area or traveling from one area to another. During such times the normal counterclockwise boat patterns on the lake shall be used.
- Personal watercraft that are designed to carry more than three persons are considered to be boats and are not allowed in the PWC areas.

Additional PWC regulations include:

- A PFD is required by state law when operating a PWC.
- **ENGINE CUT-OFF SWITCH:** If a PWC is equipped with a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch or a self-circling device, the operator must attach the lanyard to his or her person, clothing, or PFD.
- **HOURS OF OPERATION:** No person shall operate a PWC at any time from 8 PM to 8 AM or to one-half hour before sunset.
- **RECKLESSNESS:** PWCs should not be operated in an unsafe or reckless manner so as to endanger life, limb, or property.
- **WAKE JUMPING:** Jumping a wake within 100 feet of another vessel is prohibited.
- **SPRAYING:** Operating a PWC so as to spray a person or another vessel with water is prohibited.
- **OPERATIONAL PROXIMITY:** A PWC shall not be operated at a speed or proximity to another vessel so that either vessel must swerve at the last minute to avoid a collision.

Rules of the Road

- **PROPER LOOKOUT:** Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look out by sight, hearing and all available means.
- **SAFE SPEED:** Safe speed appropriate for prevailing condition must be maintained. Factors to be considered include: visibility, traffic density, maneuverability of vessels, water conditions and navigational hazards.

- **RISK OF COLLISION:** Vessels shall determine risk of collision.
- **AVOID COLLISIONS:** Actions shall be made in ample time, be apparent to another vessel and may include changing or reversing direction or slackening speed.

Safe Boating Practices

- Watercraft are to be registered at either the Forks Resort, Miller's Landing Resort or the Pines Marina.
- Persons who do not know how to swim should wear a PFD.
- Do not overload a vessel above its rated capacity.
- Slow down when approaching congested and shallow areas.
- Watch for swimmers especially near docks and shorelines.

WATER SKIING/WAKE BOARDING

- Wearing a PFD for water skiing is required by state law.
- Each boat should maintain a 200-foot wide "ski corridor" (100 feet on either side of the boat).
- A minimum depth of five to six feet of obstacle-free water is suggested.
- Use hand signals between skier and observer. Agree before you start what each signal means so there is no confusion at a critical moment.
- Never ski in rough water. High waves or choppy water will prevent the tow boat from maintaining a steady course and speed.
- An observer other than the driver is required. A 12"x 12" orange flag must be raised when a skier is starting or downed in the water.

Personal Watercraft (PWC)

- Ensure others who use your PWC have been properly instructed in boating safety and PWC operation.
- Look around for other traffic before beginning a turn.
- Avoid sudden changes in direction around other vessels.
- Maintain a safe distance between yourself and other vessels.
- Wearing of a PFD is required by state law.

Sheriff's Boating Patrol

The Madera County Sheriff patrols Bass Lake during the summer from mid-May to mid-September. The boat patrol offers assistance to disabled boaters and enforces applicable State and County boating regulations.

When Help is Needed

When an emergency strikes another boater is often your closest source of help. You may need to use recognized distress signals such as an orange flag or slowly waving your arms to attract another boater or the Boating Patrol. In addition, you may directly call 911 or the sheriff at:

Madera County Sheriff's Boat Unit	
(non-emergency dispatch)	559-675-7770
Sheriff's Boat Unit—Bass Lake	559-642-3606
Oakhurst Substation	559-642-3201

Accidents should be reported immediately to the Sheriff's Department. A written boating accident report must be provided to Cal Boating within 48 hours if the accident involved medical treatment beyond first aid or if the damage to all vessels and other property is greater than \$500.

Cal Boating	916-263-8190
-------------	--------------

Water Fluctuations

Bass Lake's water level fluctuates throughout the year in order to produce electricity, provide irrigation water, and maintain fish life downstream. Changing water levels can create boating hazards by exposing stumps, fallen trees, islands or other obstructions. Some of these dangers can lurk unseen just below the surface. These submerged obstructions may occasionally be marked by hazard buoys. Boaters must consider water level changes and potential resulting dangers whenever they choose to recreate at Bass Lake.

Don't Move a Mussel!

Don't move plants or organisms from one water body to another. Quagga/zebra mussels in California waters could result in an environmental and economic disaster. They can cause a shift in native species, disrupting the ecological balance of entire bodies of water. They clog water pipes, coat piers and ruin boat motors. Transferring a boat from infested waters can spread the mussels. You can stop them! For more information call:

1-866-440-9530

Or visit <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/invasives/>