

NEWS

Oregon State Marine Board
Boat Oregon



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Get Familiar with New Rules for Towed Watersport Operations in Newberg Pool

The “Newberg Pool” is a stretch of the Willamette River formed by the backwater of Willamette Falls at Oregon City and extends up to the Yamhill River near Newberg. The stretch is popular among watersport enthusiasts for its protected waters but is also heavily developed with residential homes. In February 2019, the Oregon State Marine Board implemented new recreational boating regulations from river mile 30 to river mile 50, creating “zones” for different boating and watersport activities in an attempt to manage boat wakes and their impacts on private residences.

To help boaters understand the new rules, the Oregon State Marine Board has placed new descriptive signs and informational flyers at all access points in the Newberg Pool, and created a phone app and online resources to help boaters operate legally. A series of 20, high-visibility buoys are being placed to mark the various zones of the river with different restrictions. Buoys currently mark river miles 30 and 50 and the others will be placed from June 17-20. Boaters are encouraged to use the [Newberg Pool phone app](#) with real-time mapping showing where they are on the river and the regulations that apply at that location.



The new rules separate the 20-mile stretch of the Newberg Pool, from River Mile 30 to River Mile 50, into eight zones – four “yellow zones” and four “red zones.”

For most activities, the rules are identical in both yellow and red zones. In the entire pool, all watercraft are restricted to slow-no wake speed within 100 feet of docks, boathouses, floating homes and other structures. Boats can be operated at higher speeds outside of this 100-foot buffer, including waterskiing. However, wakeboarding and towing inflatables (inner tubes, rafts, etc.) are only permitted at a distance of 200 feet or more from on-water structures.

For wakesurfers, the rules differ between zones. Within yellow zones, wake surfing is permitted, but surfers must remain 300 feet from docks and other structures or, if the river is not wide enough, the boat must operate in the middle of the river.

However, wakesurfing is not permitted anywhere in the red zones, regardless of distance from riverside structures. Operation of watercraft at moderate speeds, those between slow-no wake and planing speeds are also prohibited in red zones (no plowing).

Restrictions from Private Docks, Boathouses, Floating Homes or Moorages Permitted by DSL

YELLOW ZONES	RED ZONES
0-100' – All boats, slow-no wake of private docks, boathouses, floating homes or moorages permitted by DSL	0-100' – All boats, slow-no wake of private docks, boathouses, floating home or moorages permitted by DSL
100-200' – No wakesports (boarding or surfing) or inflatable devices. Waterskiing allowed	100-200' – No wakesports (boarding or surfing) or inflatable devices. Waterskiing allowed
200-300' - No wakesurfing. Wake boarding, tubing, waterskiing allowed	200' or more - No wakesurfing. Wakeboarding, tubing, waterskiing allowed
300' or more – All wakesports allowed. (wakesurfing may occur at centerline of river, as conditions allow)	

“By design, the regulation requires operators to manage their wake by operating near the center of the river,” said Randy Henry, Boating Safety Program Manager for the Marine Board. “Boaters must also maintain a sharp lookout at all times and steer right to avoid a collision in head-on situations and need to also look at the waterline to avoid hitting fallen boarders. If the river is too crowded to operate safely at the centerline, we ask operators to change activities or move to another area. Safety is paramount.”

Henry also cautions boaters to know the river. “If you do move right for oncoming traffic, watch for shoals and submerged trees, which can destroy your outdrive and cause injury. Stay as far away as possible from docks and boat houses. This section of river is now being treated as a high congestion waterway with enhanced enforcement. There is no green zone between river mile 30 and 50. Every person must operate with care, caution and courtesy. Make sure you understand the rules.”

The rules also restrict motorboat operators from anchoring further than 100 feet from the shoreline May 15 to September 15, between 3 pm and sunset on weekdays, and noon and sunset on weekends and holidays. This restriction doesn't apply to boaters engaged in fishing. The goal here is to keep the center of the river open for watersports during the busier periods.

“These regulations will be monitored throughout the summer,” said Henry. “Because they are complex, our focus is on education and compliance the first year, but officers will issue citations when needed.” Citations for these rules are \$265, Class B violations. Marine officers from Yamhill, Clackamas and Marion County sheriffs’ will be coordinating patrols to enforce compliance. “Expect saturation patrols throughout the summer,” Henry added.

The new [rule language](#), digital signage and information on how boaters can minimize their wake can be found on the Marine Board’s website at <https://www.oregon.gov/osmb/boater-info/Pages/Wake.aspx>.

