

Kayaking / Canoeing

Kayakers and canoeists are required to have a PFD onboard for each person and, if they choose to kayak from sunset to sunrise, must have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern capable of signaling in order to prevent a collision.

Swimming

Virginia Beach has miles of shoreline where people may swim and enjoy the water; however, there are a few rules you should be familiar with. Swimmers must stay within 50 yards of shore unless express permission is granted by a lifeguard. Additionally, the City Manager may prohibit swimming or wading in areas determined to be unsafe. These areas will either be posted by signage or a police officer, public safety official, or lifeguard will inform you that you may not swim there. And, of course, swimming in the nude is prohibited.

Miscellaneous

Lynnhaven Turning Basin

It is unlawful to anchor, fish, crab, swim, water ski, or in any way obstruct the Lynnhaven Turning Basin.

Camp Pendleton

No one may trespass upon the property of Camp Pendleton, including its waters. The United States military has authorized the Virginia Beach Police Department to enforce trespassing violations and due to the nature and use of this property, the Police Marine Patrol has adopted a zero tolerance policy.

“Float Plan”

The Virginia Beach Police Department recommends that individuals who are going to be out on the water for any significant period of time develop a “float plan”. Below are *some* questions you should ask before heading out on the water.

- Does anyone know where I am or where I am supposed to be going for the day?
- What time am I expected to return?
- Do I have a cell phone and/or VHF radio aboard my vessel?
- Do I have fresh water and provisions in case I am

unable to return when I originally planned?

- Do I have all of the necessary medications for me and/or my passengers?
- Do I have any type of light/flashlight in case I get stranded after dark?

Age Requirements

The General Assembly has enacted laws that mandate certain boating safety educational requirements in order to operate boats and/or personal watercraft. To ensure you are in compliance please read state code § 29.1-735.2, which can be found in a Virginia code book or online.

Fishing

It is unlawful to fish where prohibited by sign or from the sand from Rudee Inlet to 42nd Street between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Further, those wishing to fish must have the appropriate license to do so.

Marine Mammals

The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 makes it a violation of federal law to “take” or “harass” any marine mammal, which includes attempting to feed or pet them. The bottom line: If you see a dolphin, seal, whale, or other marine mammal while you are out on the water, enjoy their majesty, contemplate their existence, take pictures. **DO NOT** try to interact with them by petting, feeding, chasing, or in any other way annoying or tormenting these creatures. The penalty for such behavior is a \$10,000 fine courtesy of the federal government.

How to contact us on the water

The Virginia Beach Police Marine Unit routinely monitors marine VHF channel 16 and can be hailed by calling for the police unit, giving the area of water, and then identifying yourself. For example, you would say “Virginia Beach Police Marine Unit at Rudee Inlet, this is the vessel ...” If you have an emergency you may call 911. For non-emergencies please dial (757) 385-5000.



VIRGINIA BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

Rules & Regulations For Safe Boating, Jet Skiing, and Other Water Activities



Emergency Telephone: 911

Non Emergency Telephone: (757) 385-5000

A Certified Crime Prevention Community

VIRGINIA BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

Rules & Regulations For Safe Boating, Jet Skiing, and Other Water Activities

Everyone knows that Virginia Beach is famous for its beaches and waterways. It is a popular destination for locals and vacationers alike. In fact, several travel and vacation websites list Virginia Beach as having the longest pleasure beach in the world. In addition to the beaches along the Atlantic Ocean, there are numerous inland waterways, lakes, various parts of the Chesapeake Bay and Intracoastal Waterway, all of which are enjoyed by boaters, jet skiers, kayakers, surfers, swimmers, and others who love the water. Because so many people use the waters of Virginia Beach in a variety of ways, the Virginia Beach Police Department wants to ensure the safety and welfare of all citizens and visitors who choose to enjoy the various water activities the City has to offer.

NOTE: While this brochure is designed to inform individuals about city and state codes that may impact their particular water sport, hobby, recreational pursuit, etc., it is by no means an exhaustive list and each individual is personally responsible for knowing all of the applicable laws that govern their specific activity.

Boating

In Virginia Beach, boaters are required to have the following equipment **readily accessible** on

their boat at all times:

- At least one life preserver of correct size for each person on board
- At least one Type IV Throwable Personal Floatation Device (PFD) immediately accessible
- On power vessels, operable fire extinguishing equipment
- Visual distress signals on all vessels in the Chesapeake Bay or Atlantic Ocean, except vessels less than 16', which must have them from sunset to sunrise
- Operational navigation lights from sunset to sunrise
- On vessels thirty-nine (39) feet and over, audible signaling devices

Boaters should be aware that they **may not** operate their vessel within 100 yards of the sand beaches of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean (May 01 through October 15, from 10 a.m. until sunset) except when launching or landing where permitted, or within 25 yards of a boat displaying a dive flag. Additionally, boaters **may not** anchor or moor in a marked channel, obstruct or impede the passage of a vessel within a marked channel, or moor to any channel marker, buoy, or bridge.

Boaters should also be aware that there are numerous "no wake" zones in the waters of Virginia Beach, which are marked by signs and/or buoys. "No wake" speed is defined as the slowest speed necessary for safe navigation to maintain steerage and headway. A speed greater than necessary is a violation.

Jet Skiing

In Virginia Beach, jet skiers are required to wear a PFD, have the safety cut-off switch lanyard attached to his or her person, and have operable fire extinguishing equipment **readily accessible** on their

jet ski at all times.

Jet skiers **may not** operate their personal watercraft between sunset and sunrise. Further, they **may not** operate their personal watercraft within 100 yards of the sand beaches of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean (May 01 through October 15, from 10 a.m. until sunset) except when launching or landing where permitted. When launching or landing, jet skiers must approach or depart the shoreline at a perpendicular angle and at a speed no greater than necessary to maintain steerage and headway.

It is considered reckless operation to do any of the following:

- Operate in such a manner as to endanger life, limb, or property
- Weaving through vessels which are underway, stopped, moored, or anchored while exceeding a reasonable speed
- Following another vessel, crossing the path of another vessel, or jumping the wake of another vessel more closely than is reasonable
- Crossing between the towing vessel and a person on skis or other device
- Steer towards an object or person and turn sharply in close proximity in order to spray the object or person

Boating Under the Influence

Boaters, jet skiers, and other operators of motorized watercraft are cautioned that the laws for operating a vessel while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs are similar to those for operating a motor vehicle on the highways of the city and state. Help keep everyone safe and do not operate any watercraft after consuming alcohol and/or drugs. Designate a driver — even on the water!
